South Somerset

Authority Monitoring Report

September 2017

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Summary of Key Points

- The District's population and household formation continue to grow, with an increasing proportion of older residents. There is continuing pressure on new housing provision, particularly as affordability gets more acute.
- Business growth has been stable, with strong representation in manufacturing, although over-reliance on this sector could make the local economy vulnerable. Much of the commercial building stock is also ageing.
- There is little appetite for office building or for large-plate industrial buildings; although vacancy rates are low and there is continuing demand for smaller units. The strategic employment sites have not been brought forward and much of the economic development has taken place away from established centres.
- The District has fewer highly skilled workers than the regional and national average; and qualification levels are not as high as across the South West or Great Britain. Unemployment levels are, however, lower than elsewhere.
- Housing delivery in the 'Market Towns' and 'Rural Settlements' in South Somerset remains strong; is ahead of target and is greater than envisaged at this point in time in the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028).
- New housing in many of the District's larger towns has not been delivered at the rate anticipated by the Local Plan.
- Overall housing completions recorded from 2006 to 2017 show that the Council is behind its five-year housing land target and has a shortfall of 1107 dwellings. This has implications on how much weight can be attached to the housing land supply policies in the Local Plan in the determination of planning applications.
- Yeovil remains a strongly performing town centre, although vacancy rates are still quite high.
- The information in this AMR will feed in to the next stage of the Local Plan Review, with consultation on the Issues and Options scheduled to take place in the Autumn 2017. Nearly all the current Local Plan policies are used, but in many instances they require revision or clarification; and a few may no longer be necessary.
- Many of the monitoring indicators in the current Local Plan are not readily available, quantifiable, or appropriate and this is an issue that the Review of the Local Plan will seek to address.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) is intended by the Government to consider whether policies in the District Council's Local Development Documents are being implemented and are being effective. It also needs to summarise progress on preparing Local Development Documents according to the timetable set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme, including details of any Neighbourhood Plans and Community Infrastructure Levy. These requirements are set out in Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.

1.2 However, the AMR also represents an opportunity to provide an update on the context of South Somerset and how it compares with other areas on a range of issues; and a chance to reflect on the Council's planning achievements over the last year. Unless otherwise stated, the AMR provides data up to and including the 31st March 2017.

1.3 The AMR is organised into the following sections:

- **Part One** provides a **Snapshot of South Somerset**:
- **Part Two** summarises the position in respect of the Council's **Planning Policy programme**:
- **Part Three** sets out some **highlights** over the last year;
- **Part Four** considers the effectiveness of the Council's **planning policies**; and
- **Part Five** summarises how the Council's **Development Management** service is performing.

Part One: A Snapshot of South Somerset

2. Location, Geography and Environment

2.1 South Somerset is the largest district in the County, covering an area of 958 square kilometres (370 square miles); and has the largest population in the County at approximately 161,243 (2011 Census). South Somerset is largely rural with the population distributed across many towns, villages and hamlets, resulting in a population density of 1.7 people per hectare, less than half the national average.

2.2 The landscape is mainly undulating, agricultural land with some very fertile belts that have traditionally been farmed for top quality food production such as apples and dairy produce. Topography and agricultural practices have helped to secure special status for outstanding landscapes such as the rolling Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the south west, a small part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wilts AONB to the north east, and Dorset AONB running along the southern boundary of the District.

2.3 South Somerset is well known for its areas of high nature conservation value, with internationally recognised wildfowl habitat on the Somerset Levels and Moors in the north of the District and there are two other National Nature Reserves, at Hardington Moor and Barrington Hill, near Ilminster. In addition, there are areas totalling 2,789 hectares of land designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Just west of Yeovil is the heritage site of Ham Hill Country Park.

3. Transport and Accessibility

3.1 The District is well linked to other areas with three major railway lines with regular daily services to London, Exeter, Bristol and Weymouth. The A303 Trunk Road and A30 run east to west through the District, with the A358 to the M5 to the north, linking it with the rest of the South West and national motorway network. The Government and Highways England recognise these road routes as priorities for investment and consultation has recently been undertaken in respect to potential dualling of the A303 and A358 and creating a new junction between the A358 and the M5.

3.2 Coverage of public transport bus services is relatively poor reflecting the geographically dispersed population; and services are infrequent in all but the largest settlements. There is heavy reliance on the use of private vehicles for journeys to work and services, which is a challenge for the District in seeking ways to encourage more carbon friendly modes of travel and reduce congestion and pollution.

3.3 Figure 3.1 shows summary data about commuting to and from Somerset from the 2011 Census. The data shows that Somerset as a whole sees a small level of net out-commuting for work with the number of people resident in the County who are working being about 3% higher than the total number who work in the County. This number is shown as the commuting ratio and is calculated by dividing the number of people living in an area (and working) by the number of people working in the area (regardless of where they live). The ratio for South Somerset is marginally lower. The proportion of people out-commuting from South Somerset is less than 20% of the total working population in the District, suggesting a good degree of self containment.

Figure 3.1- Commuting patterns in South Somerset (2011)

	South Somerset	Somerset
Live and work in District	46,159	-
Home workers	10,805	-
No fixed workplace	6,246	-
Out-commute	15,228	-
In-commute	16,214	-
Total working in District	78,438	250,622
Total living in District (and working)	79,424	258,828
Commuting ratio	**1.01**	**1.03**

Source: 2011 Census

4. Population and Demographics

4.1 Population Trends

4.1.1 Figure 4.1 shows the total mid-year estimate of the population of the District being 165,600; a relatively small rise on that in 2015 compared with Somerset as a whole or the South West. It is also less than over the previous 15 years, during which time, the District's population grew by about 1000 a year.

Figure 4.1- Population Change in South Somerset (2015 – 2016)

	Population 2001	Population 2015	Population 2016	Change + (2015-2016)	Percentage Change (%) (2015 – 2016)
South Somerset	150,969	164,982	165,600	618	0.37
Somerset	498,093	545,390	549,447	4057	0.74
South West	4,928,434	5,471,180	5,516,000	44,820	0.82

Source: ONS – Mid-Year Population Estimate (July 2016 release)

4.2 Population in South Somerset's Main Settlements

4.2.1 The District is mainly rural, although as of 2011, there were 15 settlements with a population of about 2,000 or more, in addition to the many smaller towns, villages and hamlets.

4.2.2 Figure 4.2 sets out the 2001 and 2011 population figures for these larger settlements, based on the built-up area (BUA), and the intervening changes in population.

Figure 4.2 - Population of Settlements in South Somerset (2001 to 2011) (BUA)

Settlement	2001	2011	Change	% Change
Yeovil	40,282	45,339	5,057	12.55
Chard	11,631	13,074	1,443	12.41
Crewkerne	6,728	7,000	272	4.04
Ilminster	4,285	5,808	1,523	35.54
Wincanton	4,803	5,435	632	13.16
Martock	4,309	4,522	213	4.94
Somerton	4,133	4,339	206	4.98
Castle Cary	3,056	3,232	176	5.76
South Petherton	3,177	3,367	190	5.98
Langport	2,977	3,063	86	2.89
Bruton	2,611	2,593	-18	-0.69
Milborne Port	2,644	2,802	158	5.98
Ilchester and Yeovilton	2,570	3,824	1,254	48.79
Tatworth	2,211	2,259	48	2.17
Stoke sub Hamdon	1,965	1,968	3	0.15

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics – Census

4.2.3 Population growth in Yeovil and Chard was consistent over the decade, but the rate of growth in Ilminster outstripped almost everywhere else, suggesting that the housing market is particularly strong here. The apparently high rate of growth at Ilchester and Yeovilton is due to the changing nature of the military-linked population at RNAS Yeovilton and the relocation of service personnel from overseas. It is unlikely that this level of growth will be replicated in the future.

4.2.4 Conversely, some of the settlements experienced very limited annual growth of just 5% or less between the two Census periods; and the population of Bruton actually fell.

4.3 Age Profile

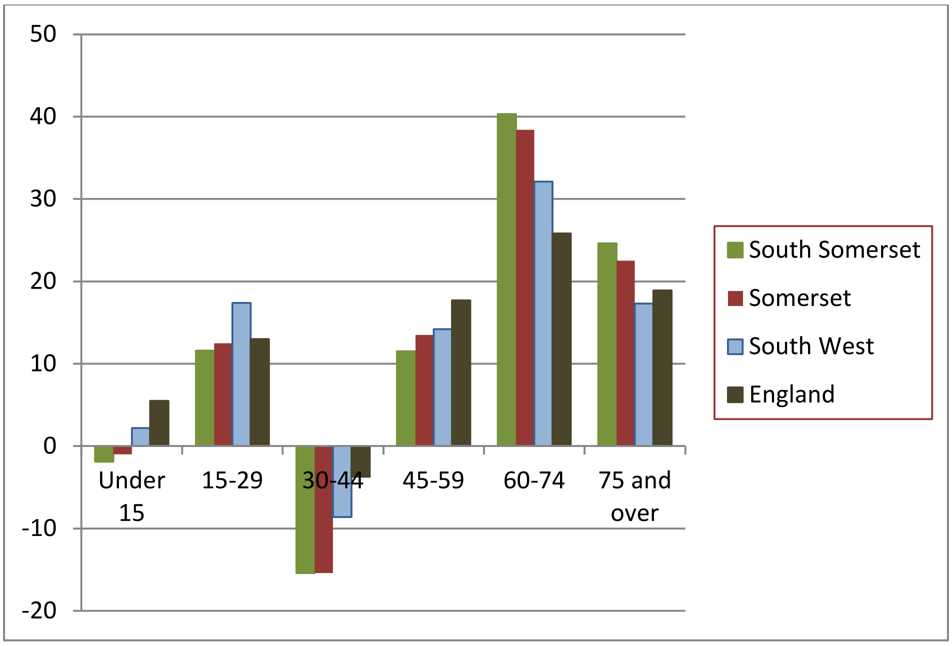
4.3.3 Figures 4.3 and 4.4 set out the changes in the comparative age profile of South Somerset. Since 2001, South Somerset has seen a decline in both the ‘Under 15’ and ’30-44’ age. This could, in the longer term, present some structural challenges about developing and maintaining a labour force within the area and the availability of future employees.

Figure 4.3 - Change in Age Structure (2001-2014)

Area	Under 15	15-29	30-44	45-59	60-74	75 & Over
South Somerset	-1.9%	11.6%	-15.4%	11.5%	40.3%	24.6%
Somerset	-1.0%	12.5%	-15.4%	13.5%	38.4%	22.5%
South West	2.2%	17.4%	-8.6%	14.2%	32.1%	17.3%
England	5.5%	13.0%	-3.7%	17.7%	25.8%	18.9%

Source: ONS

Figure 4.4 - Change in Age Structure (2001-2014) (%)



4.3.4 There has been some growth in the '15-29' and '45-59' age groups in South Somerset, but the greatest levels of growth, significantly greater than for the rest of the South West and England as a whole, have been in the '60-74' and 'over-75' age groups, who will have passed the state retirement age and will therefore not be economically active. The ever increasing proportion of the more elderly may affect future economic development, but it is almost certainly going to change attitudes to transport and accessibility, care and availability of services.

5. Housing and Households

5.1 Dwellings

5.1.1 Figure 5.1 demonstrates that, like the population itself, the growth in housing between 2001 and 2011 was not been equal across the District, although as referred to later in this report, the rate of expansion in some of the smaller settlements to the possible detriment of the main centres does raise policy-related issues that the Local Plan Review is going to need to address. Again, the growth of Ilminster was particularly strong, although the two largest settlements of Yeovil and Chard showed by far the greatest numerical increase.

Figure 5.1 - Change in Dwelling Numbers per Settlement in South Somerset (2001-2011)

Settlement	2001	2011	Change	% Change
Yeovil	19,469	21,691	2,222	11.41
Chard	5,769*	6,962	1,193	20.68
Crewkerne	3,084	3,427	343	11.12
Ilminster	1,588*	1,994	406	25.57
Wincanton	2,122	2,478	356	16.78
Somerton	1,909	2,065	156	8.17
Castle Cary	1,458	1,578	120	8.23
Langport	1,308	1,422	114	8.72
Bruton	1,073	1,141	68	6.34
Ilchester	789*	960	171	21.67
Martock	1,883	2,083	200	10.62
Milborne Port	1,170	1,325	155	13.25
South Petherton	1,213	1,339	126	10.39
Stoke Sub Hamdon	756	787	31	4.10

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics – Census – All Dwellings

* Data for four output areas in Chard, two in Ilminster and two in Ilchester are not available from the 2001 Census, but are available in the 2011 Census. Therefore 'change' and 'percentage' change in these settlements is likely to be over-estimated, albeit not to the extent that it has a significant bearing on the overall conclusion.

5.2 Households

5.2.1 The Census records all residents living in households at the time of the survey. Figure 5.2 compares the overall number of households in South Somerset in 2001 and 2011.

Figure 5.2 - Number of Households in South Somerset (2001 to 2011)

Households	2001	2011	Change	% Change
South Somerset	63,769	69,501	5,732	8.99

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics - Households (Census 2001 and 2011)

5.2.2 When compared with the changes to population and housing, there appears to be an imbalance between population growth and the overall number of dwellings delivered; and change in the number of households in the District. This is probably down to factors such as availability of capital, the existence of 'hidden households'; and conditions within the development industry.

5.2.3 The most up-to-date household projections are still the 2014-based Sub-National Household Projections (SNHP) published in July 2016. Those projections are underpinned by 2014-based ONS Sub-National Population Projections published in May 2016.

5.2.4 The data from the SNHP shows that the average household size in South Somerset in 2014 was 2.25 persons per household. Household sizes have continued to reduce; and it is likely that household formation rates will increase, which in turn will raise the overall number of households that will be created in the future.

5.2.5 Figure 5.3 sets out levels of household growth expected by the ONS over the period 2014 to 2039. Across the whole County, household growth of about 50,000 is forecast; a 21% increase; slightly below equivalent figures for England (23%). The rise in South Somerset is forecast to be a little lower at 18%.

Figure 5.3 - Projected Household Change 2014 to 2039 (2014-based CLG household projections)

Area	Households 2014	Households 2039	Change in households	% change
South Somerset	71,585	84,824	13,239	18.49
Somerset	234,353	284,532	50,179	21.41
England	22,746,487	28,003,598	5,257,111	23.11

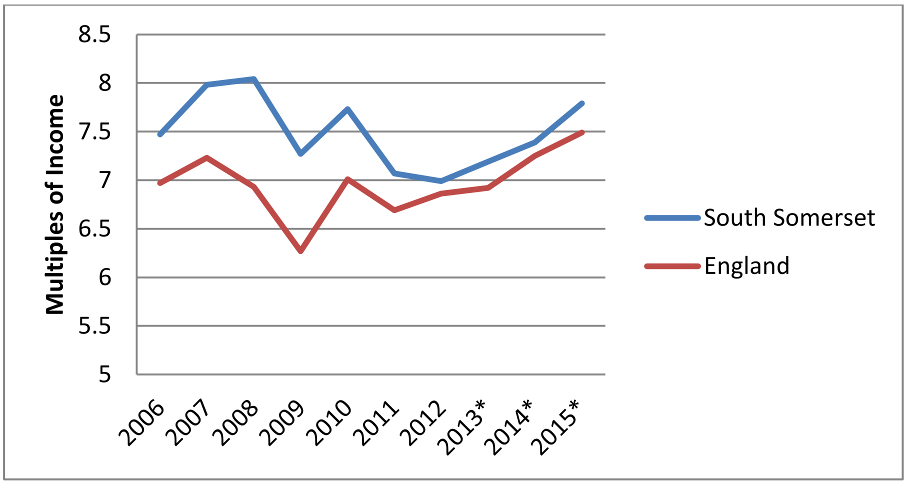
Source: CLG – 2014-based household projections

5.3 Housing Affordability

5.3.1 Figure 5.4 highlights the relative affordability of housing within South Somerset, compared with that across England. The Figure compares house prices and earnings at the median range, determined by ranking all property prices/incomes in ascending order. The lowest 50 per cent of prices are below the median; the highest 50 per cent are above the median.

5.3.2 This has fluctuated since 2006 and ratios are not presently as high as they were at the height of the housing market, although they have always been higher than nationally. In addition, they do appear to be rising again; and a ratio of over seven to one - the lowest its been over this period - cannot be deemed 'affordable' or indeed represent a long term sustainable housing market.

Figure 5.4 - Ratio of median house prices to median earnings in Somerset



Office of National Statistics (ONS) House Price Statistics for Small Areas (HPSSA) statistical release. Earnings data is sourced from The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). * New versions of the DCLG tables have been created using a different source of House Price data - the ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas datasets. This leads to slight differences in the distribution of affordability ratios from 2013 onwards.

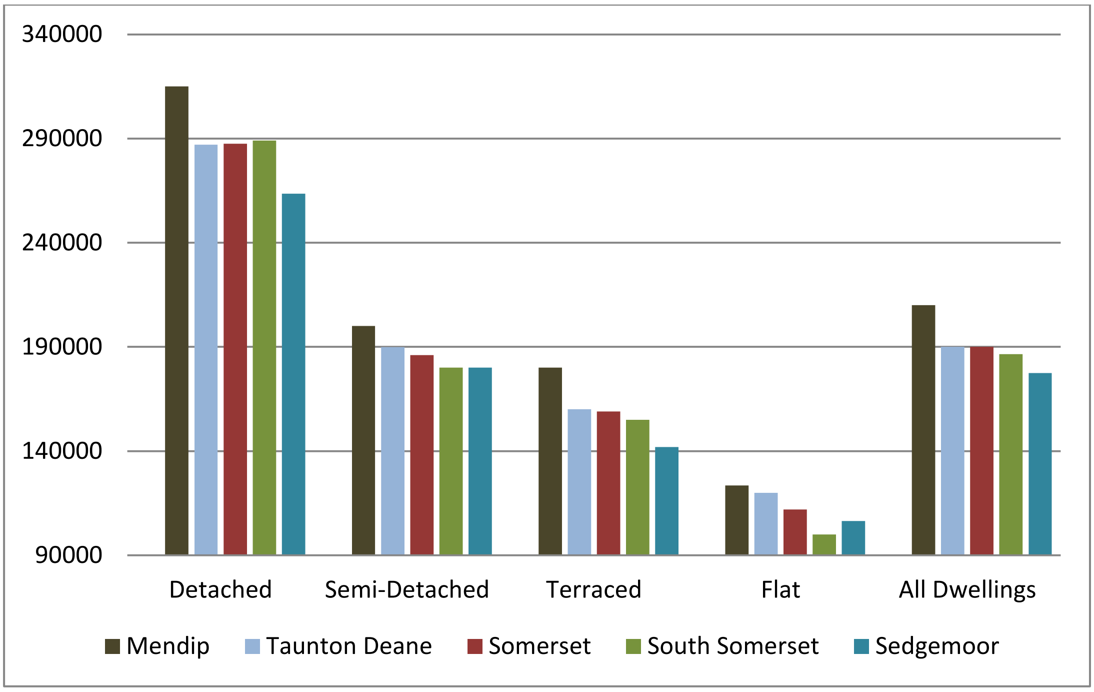
5.3.3 Figures 5.5 and 5.6 show how property prices in South Somerset compare with those in the other Districts in the County. Prices in Mendip are consistently higher than across the rest of the County, probably due to the proximity of many of its settlements to Bath and Bristol where the economies are especially strong. Prices in South Somerset are on a par with, albeit in some cases a little lower than in, Taunton Deane and the County as a whole, but higher in all but flats in Sedgemoor.

Figure 5.5 Average House Price by Type and Location (Year end March 2016) (£)

	Detached	Semi-Detached	Terraced	Flat	All Dwellings
Mendip	315,000	200,000	180,000	123,500	210,000
Taunton Deane	287,000	189,950	160,000	120,000	190,000
Somerset	287,500	186,000	159,000	112,000	190,000
South Somerset	289,000	180,000	155,000	100,000	186,500
Sedgemoor	263,475	180,000	142,000	106,475	177,500

Source – Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016/ Land Registry

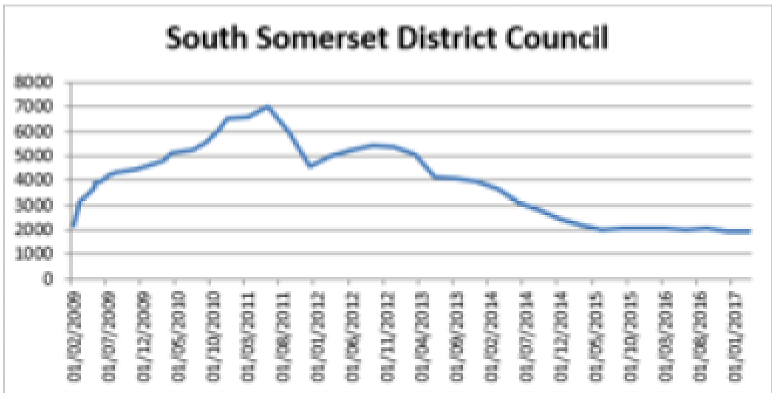
Figure 5.6 Average House Price by Type and Location (Year end March 2016)



5.4 Households on Housing Register

5.4.1 Figure 5.7 is an extract from the most recent quarterly report submitted to the Homefinder Monitoring Board. Since the creation of a single County wide system in December 2008, the number of applicants expressing a need through the Register has initially increased and then steadily fallen. The fall in applications can be attributed to better maintenance of the Register (removing redundant applications) and in part, the policy changes previously introduced which restricted applicants to those who have a local connection with the County. However for just over three years those on the Register assigned to South Somerset District Council has remained pretty steady at around 2,000.

Figure 5.7 - Expressed Need on Housing Register



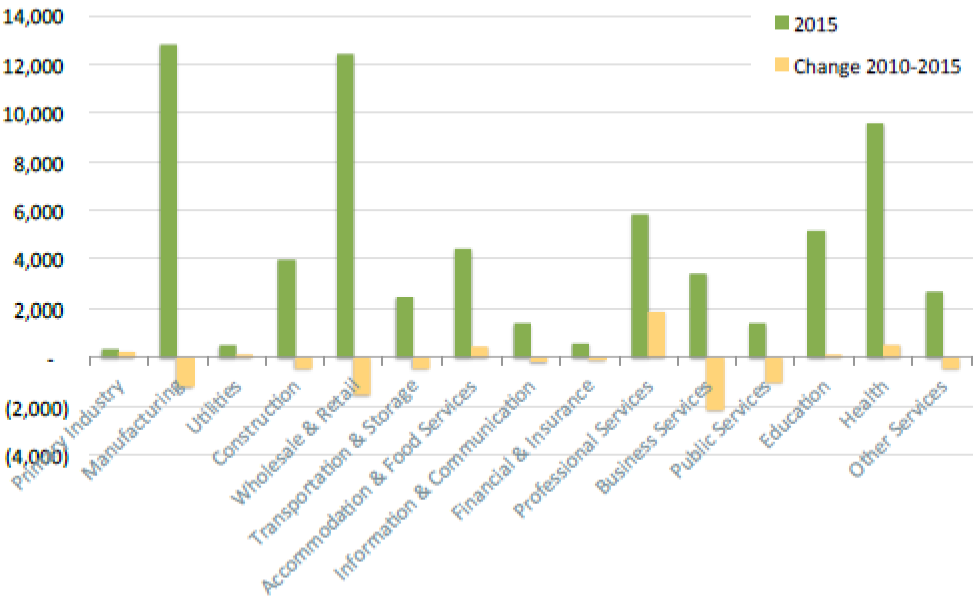
Source: Somerset Homefinder Housing Register

6 South Somerset's Economy

6.1 Economic Sectors in South Somerset

6.1.1 The economy in South Somerset has traditionally been dominated by agriculture and manufacturing. The District's long established link with the aerospace industry has provided a locational advantage that is unsurpassed in the rest of Somerset. Figure 6.1 clearly illustrates the dominance of the manufacturing sector in the District, together with retailing. It should be noted though, that there have been some falls in employment in these seemingly strong activities over the five-year period; and that employment in higher order sectors such as Information and Communication; and Financial and Business Services, is very low in comparison.

Figure 6.1 - Sectoral Employment Change in South Somerset 2010-15 (Number of Jobs)

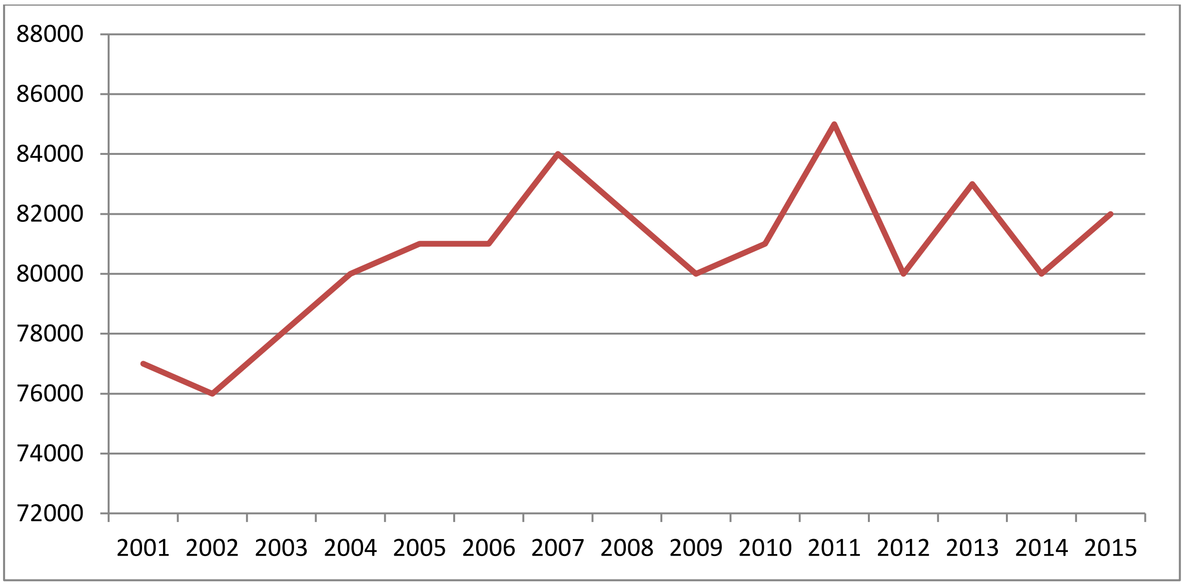


Source: South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: Long Term Economic Implications for Employment Sites and Premises. July 2017

6.2 Employment and Jobs

6.2.1 Figure 6.2 shows a fluctuation in total job numbers in South Somerset since 2001, although these have remained mainly within the range of 80- to 84,000; there does not appear to be any long term trend either upwards or downwards.

Figure 6.2 - Total Jobs (2001 – 2015)



Source: NOMIS / ONS

6.2.2 Unemployment rates amongst the economically active are relatively low in South Somerset. Figure 6.3 shows the percentage of the economically active out of work is noticeably lower than across the South West or Nationally.

Figure 6.3 – Rates of Employment and Unemployment in South Somerset

	South Somerset	South Somerset %	South West %	Great Britain %
Economically Active	80,000	78.4	80.8	78
In Employment	77,800	76.1	77.6	74.2
Unemployed	2,800	3.5	3.9	4.7

Source: Nomis/ ONS Annual Population Survey March 2017

6.3 Productivity

6.3.1 Productivity is considered the single most important determination of average living standards[1]. It is defined as the effectiveness of productive effort, as measured in terms of the rate of output per unit of input.

6.3.2 Figure 6.4 highlights general trends of economic value in South Somerset (as measured by Gross Value Added - GVA) from 2006 to 2015.

[1] Fixing the Foundations: creating a more prosperous nation, HM Treasury, 2015.

6.3.3 Manufacturing has consistently been the most productive sector in South Somerset, and remains hugely important to the short and long term future of the economy. Retailing and Real Estate are the next most valuable areas of activity, together accounting for about 22% of the economy.

6.3.4 Changes over the period 2006 to 2015 include sustained growth in the value of manufacturing, transport, accommodation and food services; and human health and social work activities. The rise in values attributed to the professional/scientific activities, and administration and support services is particularly encouraging, although these form a relatively low proportion of the economy as a whole.

Figure 6.4 - Gross Value Added by Industry Sector in South Somerset (2006 to 2015)

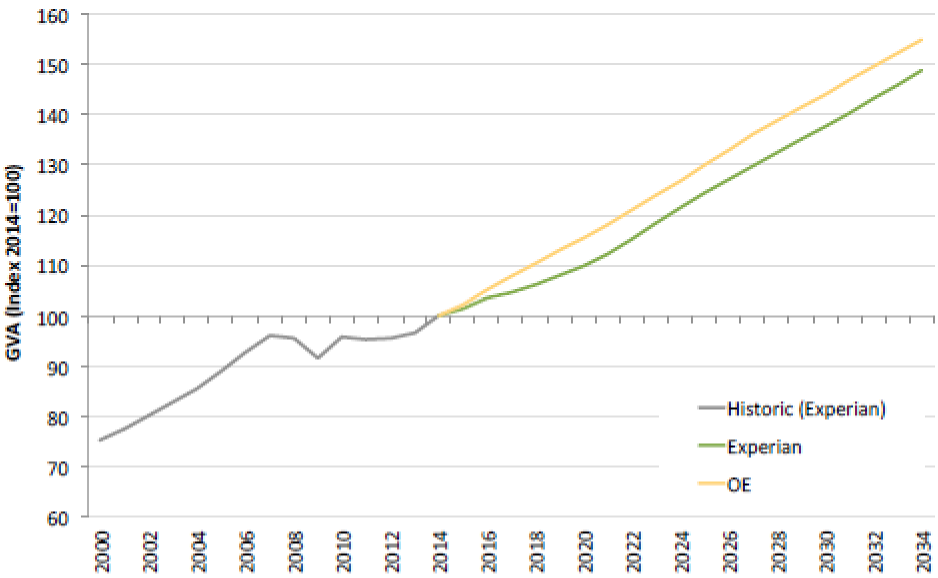
GVA (£m, 2011 prices)	2006	2009	2015	% in 2015	% change 2006 to 2015
A : Agriculture, forestry and fishing	61.92	59.63	56.19	**1.79**	**-9.2**
B : Mining and quarrying	7.83	3.90	6.17	**0.20**	**-21.2**
C : Manufacturing	616.62	637.10	784.78	**25.04**	**27.3**
D : Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	14.63	17.68	10.29	**0.33**	**-29.7**
E : Water supply; sewage, waste management and remediation activities	50.35	24.09	17.59	**0.56**	**-65**
F : Construction	219.84	196.23	213.05	**6.80**	**-3.1**
G : Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	406.99	356.29	358.07	**11.42**	**-12**
H : Transportation and storage	79.02	98.81	86.28	**2.75**	**9.2**
I : Accommodation and food service activities	58.77	65.21	80.13	**2.56**	**36.3**
J : Information and communication	92.83	90.73	88.95	**2.84**	**-4.2**
K : Financial and insurance activities	52.14	62.48	49.45	**1.58**	**-5.2**
L : Real estate activities	326.02	297.29	328.61	**10.48**	**-0.8**
M : Professional, scientific and technical activities	106.65	103.87	139.24	**4.44**	**30.6**
N : Administrative and support service activities	85.27	130.79	132.24	**4.22**	**55.1**
O : Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	262.98	248.68	223.85	**7.14**	**-14.9**
P : Education	203.48	162.31	184.12	**5.87**	**-9.5**
Q : Human health and social work activities	165.17	204.47	258.61	**8.25**	**56.6**
R : Arts, entertainment and recreation	29.24	38.80	31.36	**1.00**	**7.2**
S : Other service activities	93.96	73.06	85.58	**2.73**	**-8.9**
TOTAL	**2,933.72**	**2,871.4**	**3,134.6**	**100.00**	**6.8**

Source: Oxford Economics (from Heart of the South West LEP)

6.4 Economic Forecasts

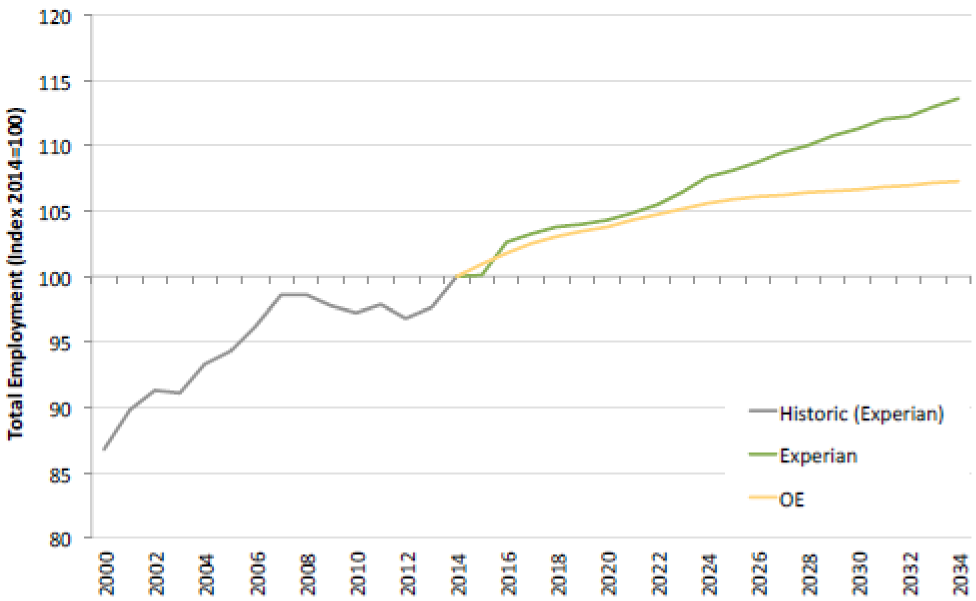
6.4.1 Economic forecasts from two sources, Experian and Oxford Economics (OE), have been reviewed[2]. The two forecasters use different models and have differing expectations of the growth potential of the UK economy and the respective sectors within it. The assumptions vary because of differing perspectives in relation to the outcome of the European Union Referendum result. Utilising more than one forecast is therefore useful for understanding the range of potential futures. Both forecasters anticipate stronger average annual growth in GVA) and lower average annual growth in employment over the period 2014- 34 than the historic period 2000-14 (See Figures 6.5 and 6.6). In order to achieve this productivity, growth will need to be higher than it has been historically.

Figure 6.5 – Forecast GVA Change 2014 -2034



[2] South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: Long Term Economic Implications for Employment Sites and Premises; July 2017

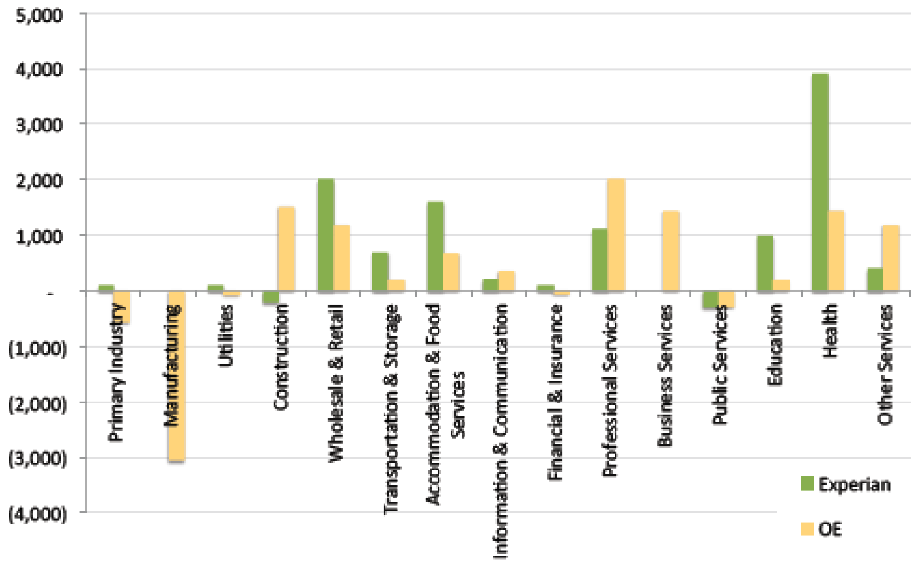
Figure 6.6 - Employment Growth Forecast Scenarios 2014 - 2034



Source: South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: Long Term Economic Implications for Employment Sites and Premises. July 2017

6.4.2 Reliance on a relatively small number of activities such as manufacturing does make the District vulnerable to changes in the market (See para 6.1.1). Figure 6.7 illustrates the forecast sectoral change from 2014 to 2034 These are particularly concerning given the predicted significant fall in employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector to 2034.

Figure 6.7 – Forecast Sectoral Employment Change 2014 -2034



Source: South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: Long Term Economic Implications for Employment Sites and Premises. July 2017

6.5 Employment by Occupation

6.5.1 A strong performing economy and successful local area will have a higher proportion of higher professional occupations and a more highly skilled workforce.

6.5.2 Figure 6.8 sets out the number of people employed by occupation / skill type across South Somerset. It compares those figures against the percentages seen across the South West and Great Britain. The data shows that South Somerset has a lower percentage of higher professional occupations (major group 1 to 3) than the South West and Great Britain as a whole.

6.5.3 Similarly, South Somerset has a much higher proportion of lower skilled occupations (major group 6 to 7; and major group 8 to 9) than the South West and Great Britain.

6.5.4 Attracting, developing and maintaining higher skilled and higher professional occupations to the area will ensure that South Somerset's economy is more competitive and resilient in the longer term.

Figure 6.8 - South Somerset Employment by Occupation (2016)

	South Somerset (numbers)	South Somerset (%)	South West (%)	Great Britain (%)
1 Managers, directors and senior officials	7,100	9.1	11.7	10.6
2 Professional occupations	12,800	16.4	19.4	20.3
3 Associate professional & technical	11,000	14.1	14.3	14.4
Soc 2010 major group 1-3	**30,900**	**39.7**	**45.5**	**45.5**
4 Administrative & secretarial	7,100	9.1	10.3	10.2
5 Skilled trades occupations	10,100	12.9	11.6	10.3
Soc 2010 major group 4-5	**17,200**	**22.1**	**21.9**	**20.6**
6 Caring, leisure and Other Service occupations	7,600	9.7	9.0	9.1
7 Sales and customer service occs	7,000	9.0	7.0	7.5
Soc 2010 major group 6-7	**14,600**	**18.7**	**16.1**	**16.8**
8 Process plant & machine operatives	5,000	6.5	5.9	6.4
9 Elementary occupations	10,200	13.0	10.7	10.7
Soc 2010 major group 8-9	**15,200**	**19.5**	**16.6**	**17.2**

Source: ONS

6.6 Qualifications

6.6.1 In looking to raise the profile of jobs and occupations in South Somerset it will be important to attract and retain more highly skilled and qualified individuals.

6.6.2 Figures 6.9 and 6.10 summarise the qualifications held by the resident population aged 16-64 in South Somerset in 2016.

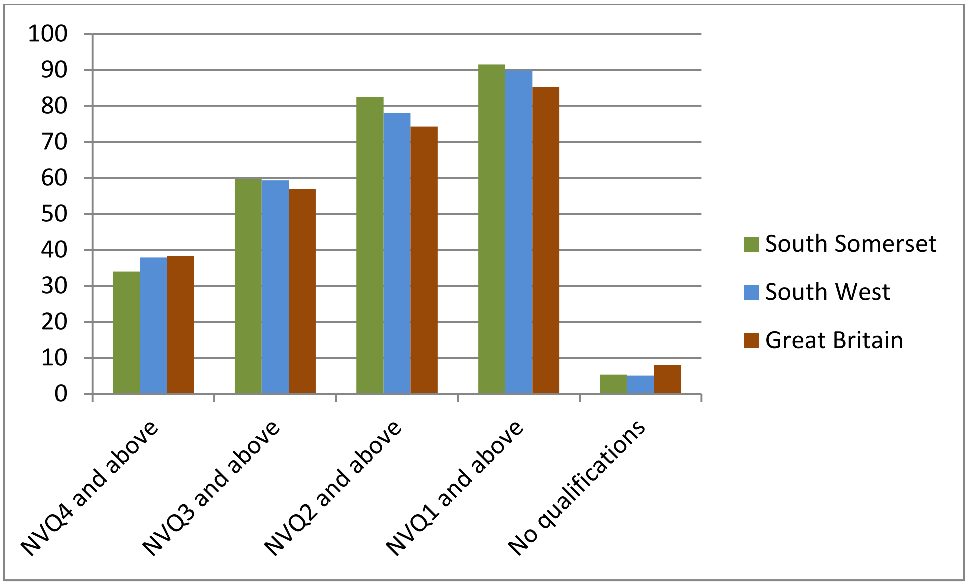
6.6.3 South Somerset has a higher percentage of people with no qualifications than in the South West, but considerably fewer than the Great Britain average. However, the District has a lower percentage of people with the highest level qualification, NVQ4 (eg Certificate of higher education), than either the South West or Great Britain.

Figure 6.9 - Qualification Levels in South Somerset (January 2016 to December 2016)

Individual levels	South Somerset	South Somerset (%)	South West (%)	Great Britain (%)
NVQ4 and above	32,400	34.0	37.9	38.2
NVQ3 and above	56,900	59.7	59.3	56.9
NVQ2 and above	78,500	82.4	78.1	74.3
NVQ1 and above	87,100	91.5	89.8	85.3
No qualifications	5,000	5.3	5.1	8.0

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey

Figure 6.10 - Qualification Levels in South Somerset (January 2016 to December 2016)



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey

6.7 Yeovil Town Centre

6.7.1 Yeovil is the largest town centre within South Somerset. The town centre is spread over a large area attracting £174.63 million in convenience goods expenditure in 2017, 48% of the total convenience goods spending attracted to the District. The comparison goods expenditure attracted to Yeovil town centre for the same time period is £372.33 million, equivalent to 84% of the total comparison goods spending in the District as a whole. Food and beverage expenditure attracted to Yeovil town centre is £90.86 million; 57% of the total[3].

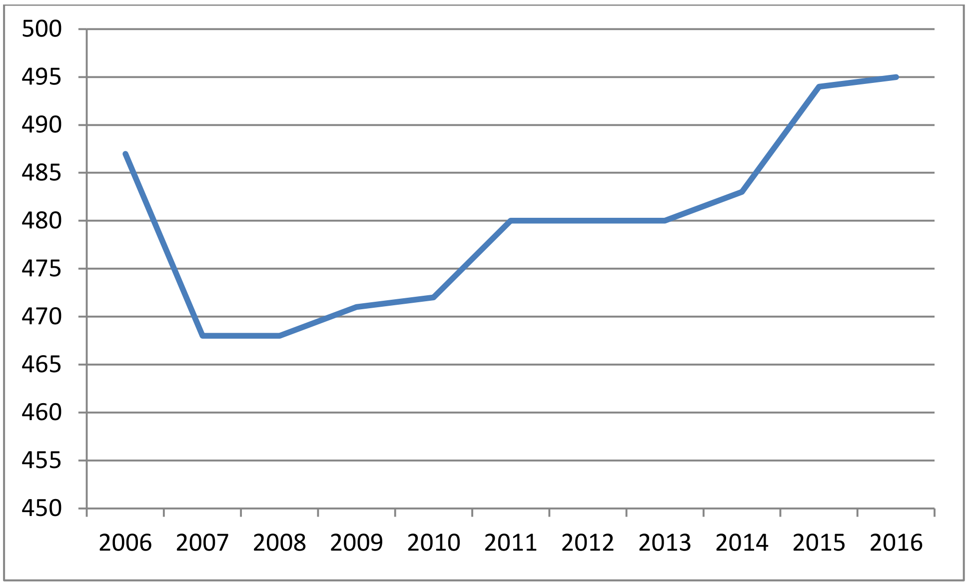
6.7.2 By way of comparison with other town and city centres Yeovil is ranked 160th by Venuescore (2016)[4], Taunton 90th, Exeter 22nd, Bath 19th and Bristol 13th.

[3] South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, Lichfields 2017. Appendix 5

[4] VENUESCORE™ is an annual survey compiled by Javelin Group, which ranks the UK's top 3,500+ retail venues (including town centres, stand-alone malls, retail warehouse parks and factory outlet centres).

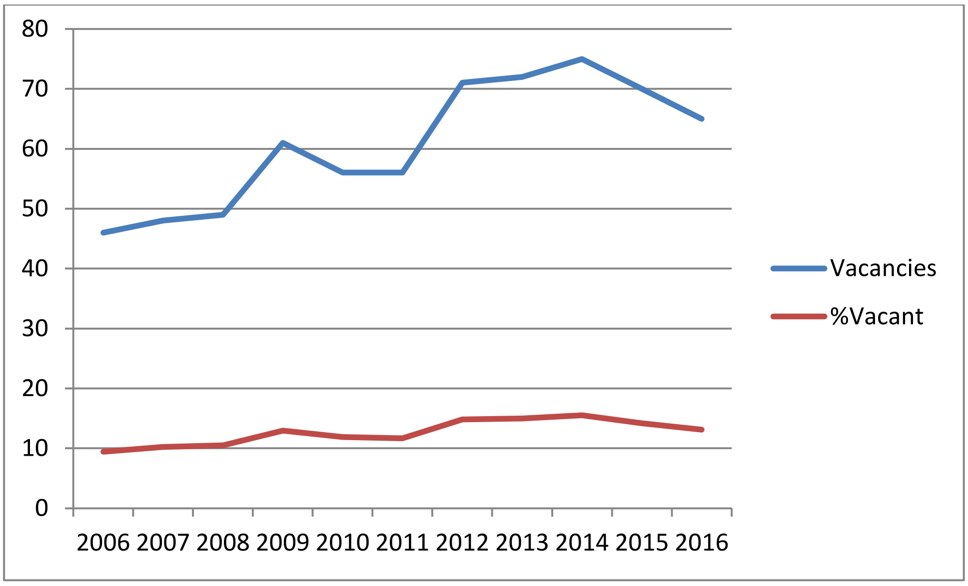
6.7.3 Figure 6.11 illustrates the change in numbers of all premises in Yeovil town centre from 2006 to 2016, showing a steady rise since about 2007. During this period, vacancies have fluctuated; and although perceptions seem to be that the situation is worsening, the percentage of vacancies has actually been falling for the last couple of years.

Figure 6.11 - Total Premises in Yeovil Town Centre (2006 to 2016)



Source: SSDC

Figure 6.12 – Vacant Premises in Yeovil Town Centre (2006 to 2016)



Source: SSDC

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Part Two: Planning Policy Programme Update

7 Introduction

This Section of the AMR explains what comprises the Council's Local Development Framework, the progress made with the Early Review of the Local Plan, an update on Neighbourhood Plans; and provides an update on the various streams of work being undertaken in respect of Spatial Policy and the Local Plan Evidence Base.

7.1 Local Development Documents

7.1.1 The Council's series of Local Development Documents (LDDs) will deliver the spatial planning strategy for the District and include:

- **Local Development Scheme (LDS)** - the three year project plan for implementing the Local Development Framework. It explains how the development planning system will operate and how the documents and strategies at different levels will fit together. (See 7.4 below)
- **Development Plan Documents (DPDs)** - statutory parts of the Local Development Documents setting out policies and proposals. The adopted Local Plan sets out the key elements of the long-term planning framework for the District up to 2028 (See 7.2 below). They also include Neighbourhood Plans (See 7.3 below).
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) -** expand or provide further detail on policies or proposals in Development Plan Documents but do not have the same status as these documents. The Council is not currently planning to produce any SPDs.
- The **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - sets out the approach to involving the community in the preparation of Local Development Documents and also consultation on planning applications.
- This **Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)**
- The **Housing Trajectory** - provides details of sites available for housing development for the next five years and when these sites could potentially come forward for development.

7.2 Early Review of the Local Plan

7.2.1 The Local Plan was adopted in March 2015. The Inspector, in accepting that the Local Plan was 'sound', stated that the Council should undertake an early review of the policies relating to housing and employment provision in Wincanton. This early review was to be completed within three years of the date of adoption, which would have been no later than March 2018.

7.2.2 The Council previously stated that it would produce a 'Site Allocations Development Plan Document' to provide the additional detail on proposals for 'Sustainable Urban Extensions' in Yeovil and 'Directions of Growth' in Market Towns.

7.2.3 It has now been agreed, however, that it would be more efficient to produce the additional site-specific detail on growth locations in parallel with the work to carry out an early review of housing and employment provision in Wincanton. Both would involve formal processes.

7.2.4 A revised evidence base has now been produced and consultation on Issues and Options is expected to commence in the Autumn of 2017. The new evidence base documents are referred to in Section 7.4 below and include:

- the Strategic Market Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
- the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)
- Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study
- Employment Land Evidence - market trends, economic forecasts; and implications for employment sites and premises
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan

7.3 Supporting Neighbourhood Plans

7.3.1 The Localism Act has introduced 'Neighbourhood Plans' (NP) as part of the National Planning Policy Framework. These are locally prepared documents which set out what type and scale of development is needed to help a community achieve the right mix of affordable housing, employment opportunities and services. The Council continues to support those Parish and Town Councils who wish to progress a Neighbourhood Plan. Figure 7.1 below summarises the current status of NPs being progressed.

Figure 7.1 - Status and Progress of South Somerset Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood Plan	Date Area Designated	Pre-Submission Date	Submission Date
Queen Camel	March 2013	-	-
East Coker	September 2013	January 2017	-
Wincanton	March 2014	November 2016	June 2017
South Petherton	April 2015	March 2017	-
Castle Cary and Ansford	June 2015	-	-
Martock	April 2016	-	-
Ilminster	June 2017	-	-

Source: SSDC Database

7.4 The Local Development Scheme

7.4.1 The Local Development Scheme must specify (among other matters) the documents which, when prepared, will comprise the Development Plan for the area. It must be made available publically and kept up-to-date.

7.4.2 The most recent version of the LDS covers the period 2017 – 2020 and sets out a programme and resourcing plan for various documents to be prepared and finalised. It also identifies inter-dependencies, risks and contingencies associated with their delivery.

7.4.3 In accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, the LDS is available to the public. Progress against the LDS and the authority's compliance with the timetables set out will be monitored and reported at least annually (and earlier if and where appropriate) alongside this AMR. The current programme of work is set out in Figure 7.2 below.

Figure 7.2 - Timetable for delivery of Local Plan Documents

Evidence Base Document		Start Date LDS 2015-2018	Completion Date LDS 2015-2018	Produced	Progress	Comments / Revised Completion Date 2017-2020
1.	Statement of Community Involvement	May 2015	September 2015	In-house	Completed Adopted December 2015	
2.	Infrastructure Delivery Plan	January 2015	October 2015	In-house	Completed January 2016	Consideration of need to update IDP based upon progress toward preferred options stage consultation on Early Review of Local Plan.
3.	Confirmation of Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Area	March 2015	September 2015	Externally	Completed September 2015	
4.	Community Infrastructure Levy	March 2015	April 2016	In-house / Externally	Adopted November 2016	The Charging Schedule and Regulation 123 list have been approved. The Development Manager will be taking responsibility for setting out governance arrangements. **Now December 2017**
5.	Settlement Profiles & Assessment	July 2015	July 2016	In-house	Ongoing	These documents will be used to highlight place specific issues arising from the evidence base and will be drawn together as part of the overall process as it progresses. They will be a product of the evidence base. **Now September 2017**
6.	Full Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	September 2015	March 2016	In-house / Externally	Completed October 2016	

Evidence Base Document		Start Date LDS 2015-2018	Completion Date LDS 2015-2018	Produced	Progress	Comments / Revised Completion Date 2017-2020
7.	Housing and Employment Land Availability & Detailed Sites Assessment (including Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople sites) (HELAA)	October 2015	June 2016	In-house / Externally	Completed February 2017	Consideration of the need to update the HELAA based upon progress toward preferred options stage consultation on Early Review of Local Plan.
7a.	Employment Land Review	NA	NA	In-house / Externally	Nearing completion; HJA reports published July 2017	Employment Land Monitoring Report 2017 and the HELAA published.
8.	Landscape Assessment & Strategy	October 2015	October 2016	In-house	Not required	The existing Peripheral Landscape Assessments are considered to be fit for purpose.
9.	Historic Environment Strategy	October 2015	October 2016	In-house	Completed January 2017	
10.	South Somerset Transport Strategy	January 2016	August 2016	In-house / Externally	Not required	The need for this project has been superseded by existing transport assessments and work that has been carried out as part of the Yeovil Town Centre Refresh project.
11.	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	March 2016	October 2016	In-house / Externally	On-going	It has been agreed to jointly commission an update with Taunton Deane Borough Council. **Now Autumn 2017**
12.	Retail and Town Centre Needs Assessment	March 2016	October 2016	In-house / Externally	Completed and published August 2017	
13.	Authority Monitoring Report		Every Six Months	In-house	Up-date completed and published Oct 2017	
14.	Five-year Housing Land Supply		Annually	In-house	Completed September 2017	

	Evidence Base Document	Start Date LDS 2015-2018	Completion Date LDS 2015-2018	Produced	Progress	Comments / Revised Completion Date 2017-2020
15.	Processing and Liaising with Neighbourhood Plans		On-going	In-house	On-going	South Somerset District Council currently has six designated neighbourhood areas. The Spatial Policy Team provides on-going technical advice and carries out Sustainable Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening. As plans reach the later stages of preparation more input will be required.
16.	Development Management Responses / Preparing Proofs of Evidence / Attending Appeals		On-going (Reviewed every six months)	In-house	On-going	
17.	Local Plan Viability Assessment		NA	In-house / Externally	Not started	A plan wide viability assessment is required as part of the local plan evidence base. Work would commence as preferred options begin to emerge. **2018**

N.B. Dates do not include time required for Council sign-off processes, or additional time required to secure approval from District Executive and/or Full Council.

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Part Three: Highlights Over the Last Year

8 Introduction

Officers continue to progress a number of other projects and workstreams as part of their wider role in developing the Council's overall policy position on key matters. They work closely with internal departments; for example Economic Development, Community Health and Leisure, and Strategic Housing, to bring a consistency of approach across the Council on important matters. The following sections of the report outlines some of the achievements made in related activities.

8.1 Implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

8.1.1 The District Council adopted a CIL charging schedule in November 2016 and this came into effect from 3rd April 2017. This means that for most qualifying developments, funding for infrastructure will be collected via this method rather than Section 106 of the Planning Act, although developments within the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions and the Chard Eastern Development Area are exempt.

8.1.2 The relevant Regulations[5] require the Council to set out a list of those projects or types of infrastructure that it intends to fund, or may fund, through the Community Infrastructure Levy in a 'Regulation 123 List', informed by the Council's 'Infrastructure Delivery Plan'. The Regulations restrict the use of pooled contributions towards items that may be funded via the Levy. From April 2015, no contributions may be collected in respect of a specific infrastructure project or a type of infrastructure through a Section 106 Agreement if five or more obligations for that project or type of infrastructure have already been entered into since 6 April 2010. Infrastructure included within the Council's List to be funded by CIL include transport, flood risk management, outdoor play, sports and community facilities and open space. Educational facilities are excluded.

8.1.3 The Levy charges are £40 per square metre for all new residential development (except in the Yeovil and Chard Urban Extensions); and £100 per square metre on all large-format retail stores outside of the defined town centres.

8.1.4 Most developments being implemented at the time of writing were approved under the previous regime and are subject to S106 agreements where necessary, so the Council has not yet collected any CIL funds.

8.2 Meeting the Duty to Co-Operate

8.2.1 The requirement for the Council to co-operate with statutory and non-statutory partners is an ongoing one. This work ensures that strategically significant issues that could affect a number of different locations are discussed and resolved. The Council is mindful of its direct relationships with local authorities, as well as its functional relationships with a range of other authorities.

8.2.2 On important matters such as housing, transport, economic development, and retail the Council has regular dialogue with these other authorities to ensure that critical issues are

[5] The Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended)

proactively addressed, and preferably in a co-ordinated manner. For example, the Council, jointly with Taunton Deane BC, Mendip and Sedgemoor District Councils, procured the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which has considered the functional housing and economic market areas across Somerset.

8.2.3 In completing the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, there was in-depth dialogue with agencies responsible for health, education, transport, utilities, flood prevention, ecology, environment, and waste and minerals.

8.2.4 As the Council progresses the early review of the Local Plan, it will maintain this level of discussion with partners to ensure that its responsibilities linked to the Duty to Co-operate are discharged.

8.3 Maintaining a Self-Build and Custom-Build Register

8.3.1 Under the terms of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, and reinforced by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the Council is required to hold a Register of those interested in building their own home on their own parcel of land and/or accessing a serviced plot of land to commission a custom-build project. The Council has held a Register of persons who have declared such an interest since 2015.

8.3.2 As at August 2017, the Council's database held a list of 63 interested parties who have applied to be on the Register; a rise from 23 in May 2016. This equates to 63 plots of land which are being sought across the District. The locations where plots have been requested range from the largest settlements (e.g. Yeovil and Chard) through to the smallest settlements (e.g. Babcary and Fivehead).

8.3.3 Those wishing to put themselves forward to be on the Register should do so by completing the Council's online form, which can be found on the Council's website: http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/self-build--custom-build/ .

8.3.4 The information collated from the Register was used as part of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment to understand the scale of demand in South Somerset and the overall effect on housing need in the District.

8.4 Working towards a Brownfield Land Register

8.4.1 New Regulations[6] mean that all local planning authorities must publish by the end of 2017 a Register of previously development land – or 'brownfield' land that is suitable, available and achievable for residential development. If such sites are larger than 0.25ha in area or are capable of delivering five or more dwellings, they must be included within the Register, although local authorities can choose to enter smaller sites if they wish. The Register should be in two parts; one simply a list of sites that meet the criteria for inclusion; and a second part which allocates land for residential development with 'Permission in Principle'. Sites can only be entered into part two following extensive consultation procedures and environmental screening.

8.4.2 Whilst the Council has commenced preparation of a Brownfield Land Register, it has not yet been finalised because a further very technical statement on how the information

[6] The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017

should be presented has only recently been published by the Government. Nevertheless, the Council is now in a good position to finalise its Register with the minimum of delay once the requirements of the recent statement have been incorporated. It is not currently envisaged that the Council will embark on the process of including sites within a Part Two Register (Permissions in Principle).

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Part Four: Monitoring of Planning Policies

9. Introduction

9.1 Having a Local Plan in place provides a formal policy framework through which to make decisions on planning applications and the Local Plan ensures that the Council can make positive decisions on sustainable development within the District. The relevant Regulations[7] require that where a local planning authority are not implementing a policy specified in a local plan, the AMR must identify it and include a statement of the reasons why and set out the steps the authority intends to take to secure its implementation.

9.2 Figure 9.1 sets out the number of times that the policies in the Local Plan have been used over the 12 months from April 2016 to March 2017.

Figure 9.1 - Use of South Somerset Local Plan Policies between 01/04/2016 and 31/03/2017

Policy	Ref	Number of cases where used as a reason for refusal	Number of Approvals where Policy relevant
Sustainable Development	SD1	34	721
Settlement Strategy	SS1	18	380
Development in Rural Settlements	SS2	14	112
Delivering New Employment Land	SS3	2	19
District-wide Housing Provision	SS4	-	46
Delivering New Housing Growth	SS5	3	85
Infrastructure Delivery	SS6	2	23
Phasing of Previously Developed Land	SS7	-	7
Urban Framework and Greenfield Housing for Yeovil	YV1	1	16
Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs)	YV2	-	-
Yeovil Summerhouse Village	YV3	-	-
Yeovil Air Flight Safety Zone	YV4	-	1
Delivering Sustainable Travel in the Yeovil SUEs	YV5	-	-
Chard Strategic Growth Area	PMT1	-	1
Chard Phasing	PMT2	-	1
Ilminster Direction of Growth	PMT3	1	-
Wincanton Direction of Growth	PMT4	-	1

[7] Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Policy	Ref	Number of cases where used as a reason for refusal	Number of Approvals where Policy relevant
Ansford / Castle Cary Direction of Growth	LMT1	-	2
Langport/ Huish Episcopi Direction of Growth	LMT2	-	1
Somerton Direction of Growth	LMT3	-	2
Strategic Employment Sites	EP1	-	1
Office Development	EP2	-	6
Safeguarding Employment Land	EP3	1	24
Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside	EP4	3	24
Farm Diversification	EP5	1	4
Henstridge Airfield	EP6	-	-
New Build Live / Work Units	EP7	-	-
New and Enhanced Tourist Facilities	EP8	1	24
Retail Hierarchy	EP9	-	7
Convenience and Comparison Shopping in Yeovil	EP10	-	2
Location of Main Town Centre Uses	EP11	2	12
Floorspace Threshold for Impact Assessments	EP12	-	3
Protection of Retail Frontages	EP13	-	1
Neighbourhood Centres	EP14	1	2
Protection and Provision of Local Shops, Community Facilities and Services	EP15	2	15
Strategic Housing Site (Crewkerne)	HG1	-	-
Use of PDL for Housing	HG2	-	7
Provision of Affordable Housing	HG3	2	18
Provision of Affordable Housing (Sites of 1-5 Dwellings)	HG4	-	24
Achieving a Mix of Market Housing	HG5	-	12
Care Homes and Specialist Accommodation	HG6	-	2
Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	HG7	1	2
Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside	HG8	-	12
Housing for Agricultural and Related Workers	HG9	3	21

Policy	Ref	Number of cases where used as a reason for refusal	Number of Approvals where Policy relevant
Removal of Agricultural and Other Occupancy Conditions	HG10	2	2
Low Carbon Travel	TA1	-	13
Sustainable Travel at Chard and Yeovil	TA3	-	5
Travel Plans	TA4	1	9
Transport Impact of New Development	TA5	27	988
Parking Standards	TA6	3	747
Provision of Open Space, Outdoor Playing Space, Sports, Cultural and community Facilities in new Development	HW1	1	26
Sports Zone	HW2	1	-
Protection of Play Spaces and Youth Provision	HW3	-	2
Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset	EQ1	5	42
General Development	EQ2	104	1717
Historic Environment	EQ3	33	926
Biodiversity	EQ4	4	174
Green Infrastructure	EQ5	3	43
Woodland and Forests	EQ6	-	4
Pollution Control	EQ7	6	118
Equine Development	EQ8	-	14

Source: SSDC Database

9.3 By far the most consistently used policy is perhaps unsurprisingly EQ2 (General Development), although this is followed by the general policies linked to the impacts on the transport network (Policy TA5 and Policy TA6); whether the proposed development generates unacceptable impacts on the natural environment (Policy EQ3); and whether development is considered sustainable (Policy SD1).

9.4 Nearly all policies are being used in the determination of planning applications and are therefore being implemented, apart from policies specifically addressing the Sustainable Urban Extensions to Yeovil; whilst planning applications for these have been submitted, they remain to be determined. However, in the preparation of the Local Plan Review Issues and Options Document and through consideration of the Evidence Base, it has become clear that many policies could be changed or improved; there are also gaps in some policy areas.

9.5 What has also become clear in the preparation of this AMR is that the monitoring indicators and targets in the current Local Plan are, in many cases, not readily available, quantifiable, or appropriate and this is an issue that the Local Plan Review will need to try and address.

10. Settlement Strategy (Policies SS1, SS2, SS3, SS4 and SS5)

10.1 The hierarchy of Yeovil as the Principal Town; Market Towns and Rural Centres forms the basis of the Settlement Strategy in the Local Plan. The bulk of growth outside Yeovil should be in the Market Towns and Rural Centres in order to take advantage of employment and service opportunities available in these places; minimise the infrastructure investment required across the district; and increase the level of self-containment.

10.2 Figure 10.1 summarises the current Local Plan requirements for housing, employment land and jobs in each of the designated settlements.

Figure 10.1 - Housing and Employment Requirements by Settlement

Settlement	Total Housing Requirement 2006-2028 (Policy SS5)	Total Employment Requirement 2006-2028 Land (ha) (Policy SS3)
Yeovil	7,441 1,565 of which to be delivered in the two Sustainable Urban Extensions	44.84 plus 5.16 in the two Sustainable Urban Extensions
Chard	1,852	17.14
Crewkerne	961	10.10
Ilminster	496	23.05
Wincanton	703	7.94
Ansford and Castle Cary	374	18.97
Langport and Huish Episcopi	374	4.01
Somerton	374	6.63
Bruton	203	3.06
Ilchester	141	1.02
Martock and Bower Hinton	230	3.19
Milborne Port	279	0.84
South Petherton	229	2.47
Stoke sub Hamdon	51	1.09
Settlements that offer two or more of the services listed in paragraph 5.41 of the Local Plan.[8]	2,242	No figure given
TOTAL	**15,950**	**149.51**

Source: South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028

[8] Paragraph 5.41 lists: local convenience shop; post office; pub; children's play area/sports pitch; village hall/community centre; health centre; faith facility; and primary school.

10.3 The proposed housing growth has been distributed in the following proportions:

- Yeovil 47% of growth;
- Market Towns 32% of growth - 25% in Primary Market Towns and 7% in Local Market Towns;
- Rural centres 7% of growth; and
- Rural Settlements 14% of growth.

10.4 Figure 10.2 shows the actual residential completions and commitments within each of the Settlements as at 31st March 2017.

Figure 10.2 – Residential completions and commitments against Local Plan Requirements

Settlement	Local Plan 2006-2028 Total Housing Requirement	Annualised Target for 2017 (11/22 Years)	Total Completions 2006 - 2017 (net)	Difference Against Annualised Target for 2017	Existing housing commitments as at 31st March 2017 (net)	Total Completions and Commitments as at 31st March 2017 (net)	Performance against Local Plan Target (F-C) (+ or -)
Strategically Significant Town							
Yeovil	7441	3720	2385	-1335	1361	3746	**-3695**
Primary Market Towns							
Chard	1852	926	655	-271	201	856	**-996**
Crewkerne	961	481	355	-126	610	965	**4**
Ilminster	496	248	264	**16**	120	384	**-112**
Wincanton	703	352	638	**286**	306	944	**241**
Local Market Towns							
Ansford/Castle Cary	374	187	68	-119	523	591	**217**
Langport /Huish Episcopi	374	187	297	**110**	152	449	**75**
Somerton	374	187	108	-79	366	474	**100**
Rural Centres							
Bruton	203	102	108	**6**	76	184	**-19**
Ilchester	141	71	0	-71	161	161	**20**
Martock	230	115	93	-22	127	220	**-10**
Milborne Port	279	140	227	**87**	29	256	**-23**
South Petherton	229	114	232	**118**	28	260	**31**
Stoke Sub Hamdon	51	25	7	-18	48	55	**4**
Rural Settlements	2242	1121	1431	**310**	1100	2531	**289**
Total	15950	7975	6868	-1107	5208	12076	**-3874**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

10.5 The picture that emerges is that, in many cases, the Primary and Local Market Towns are not successfully delivering the level of residential development that the Local Plan anticipated; whilst the Rural Settlements have provided nearly 21% through completions. Delivery of housing in Wincanton, Langport, South Petherton, Milborne Port, Ilminster and Bruton has been successful, but delivery in Yeovil and Chard is considerably less than the expected annualised average through to 2017.

10.6 The District's new Five-Year Housing Land Supply Paper (September 2017) concludes that The Council's five-year housing land supply requirement is currently 5,678 dwellings. Based upon the current assessment of future housing land supply for the period 2016/2017 to 2021/2022, the Council's deliverable five-year housing land supply is 4,746 dwellings.

10.7 As such, the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing sites and can only demonstrate a supply equivalent to about 4.2 years.

10.8 One of the probable consequences of this is that, whilst Policy SS2 has been referred to in officer reports on planning applications on 126 occasions in 2016/17, there have been only 14 in which the application was refused as being contrary to the Policy. This is because the housing supply policies of the Local Plan would be considered out of date, with more weight being attached to the NPPF.

10.9 Strategic Employment sites have been allocated at Yeovil, Crewkerne and Ilminster, whilst a number of smaller allocations in settlements across the District have been carried forward in saved policies from the 1998 Local Plan.

10.10 Figure 10.3 sets out the level and distribution of employment land completed and under construction since the adoption of the current Local Plan .

10.11 The level of new employment land provided at the larger settlements has also fallen short of the Local Plan targets, although the net gain in floorspace is significant. A total of about 65% of new employment land has been delivered in the 'Rest of the District', whilst these areas have accounted for nearly 46% of new employment floorspace. Of the total floorspace under construction as of March 2017, nearly 93% was taking place in the 'Rest of the District'.

10.12 As a result of the pattern of new development in the District since the adoption of the Local Plan, the forthcoming Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation is perhaps going to need to reflect on the current spatial distribution strategy for new housing and employment activities. It also appears that the measure of new employment land may not the best way to monitor economic growth and that an alternative means of doing so should be considered.

10.13 Given the likely significant rise in the need for specialist accommodation for an ever increasingly ageing population and especially for care homes, it would also be prudent if the Authority started to monitor this accommodation for the employment that such homes could provide. (See also paragraphs 19.08 and 19.09 if this report).

Figure 10.3: New Employment Land and Floorspace (net) Completions and Under Construction (2006 -2017) as at 31/03/2017

Settlement	Local Plan Employment Land Requirement (Ha)	Total Employment Land Completions (Ha)	Additional Floorspace Completed (m^2)	Total Employment Land *Under Construction* (Ha)	Additional Floorspace *Under Construction* (m^2)
Strategically Significant Town					
Yeovil	50.00	2.85	25,037	1.9	-124
Primary Market Towns					
Chard	17.14	-0.19	24,432	1.3	1,028
Crewkerne	10.10	1.31	3,513	-0.07	-250
Ilminster	23.05	4.03	15,647	-0.06	583
Wincanton	7.94	1.40	11,400	0.51	-122
Local Market Towns					
Somerton	6.63	1.17	9,664	0	0
Ansford & Castle Cary	18.97	8.91	16,313	0.19	484
Langport & Huish Episcopi	4.01	0.04	1,325	-0.07	-589
Rural Centres					
Bruton	3.06	0.21	2,933	0.2	110
Ilchester	1.02	-0.02	1,160	0.43	1,140
Martock & Bower Hinton	3.19	0.00	-278	-0.1	-132
Milborne Port	0.84	-3.79	-7,709	0	0
South Petherton	2.47	2.26	6,788	-0.2	-184
Stoke Sub Hamdon	1.09	-0.01	222	0	0
Rest of the District	n/a	35.24	96,679	13.2	24,382
Total	**149.51**	**53.41**	**207,126**	**17.23**	**26,326**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

11. Infrastructure Delivery (Policy SS6)

11.1 Policy SS6 of the Local Plan supports the use of planning agreements under S106 of the Planning Act to secure facilities and/or funding for new infrastructure necessary for a development to proceed. Although now largely superseded by the introduction of the CIL, the implementation of the Policy has assisted in the delivery of the following examples of new buildings and facilities:

- A new primary school (now completed) to serve the community at Yeovil Wyndham Park.
- A new school (under construction) at Yeovil Lufton
- A major new classroom extension (under construction) at Wincanton Primary School.
- Schemes of Affordable Housing.
- Play Areas, MUGAs and recreational facilities.
- Funding and construction of major highways works and new bus routes.

11.2 As at June 2017, the amount deposited with the Council by developers as contributions for infrastructure necessary to make developments acceptable totalled over £7.7m (relating to 'live' planning permissions), whilst the unspent balance stood at £4.7m.

12. Use of Previously Developed Land (Policy SS7)

12.1 Local Plan Policy SS7 encourages 40% of new housing development to be on previously developed land (PDL), often referred to as 'brownfield land', but also notes that a five-year supply of housing land needs to be maintained. Policy HG2 (The Use of Previously Developed Land for New Housing Development), also states the Council's intention to seek to provide 40% of new dwellings on PDL over the Plan period.

12.2 There have been changes in the definition of what constitutes brownfield land since the introduction of the NPPF in 2012 and the revoking of the old PPG3 'Housing'; and private residential gardens are no longer included. However, the Council's monitoring database indicates that 46% of new housing since 2006 has been on what is now considered to be PDL and this policy requirement has therefore been met.

13. Yeovil (Policies YV1, YV2, YV3, YV4 and YV5)

13.1 The Local Plan proposes 7,441 new homes at Yeovil; 1,565 located within the Sustainable Urban Extensions and the remainder in the main urban area – Policy YV1 (Urban Framework and Greenfield Housing for Yeovil).

13.2 In accordance with Local Plan Policy YV2 (Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions), outline planning applications have been submitted for 800 dwellings, land for economic development and associated infrastructure at Keyford (South Area); and for 765 dwellings, land for economic development and associated infrastructure at Upper Mudford, Primrose Lane (North Area)[9].

[9] Upper Mudford, Primrose Lane: 14/02554/OUT and Keyford: 15/01000/OUT

13.3 Local Plan Policy YV3 (Yeovil Summerhouse Village) proposes an 'urban village' to deliver at least 278 dwellings on land between Stars Lane, Park Street/ South Street and Dodham Brook in Yeovil town centre. There are viability issues associated with the delivery of this proposal and its feasibility will be addressed as part of the Yeovil Urban Regeneration Framework Refresh project.

13.4 Over the Plan period so far, housing delivery at Yeovil has been below the annualised housing target. The position as at 31/03/17 is set out below:

Figure 13.1 - Housing Completions and Commitments in Yeovil

	Dwellings
Net Completions (01/04/06 to 31/03/17)	2,385
Existing Commitments (as at 31/03/17)	1,361
Total	**3,746**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

13.5 On a more positive note, the Wyndham Park, Lufton and Brimsmore key sites are all progressing, the planning applications are in for the sustainable urban extensions and there are the existing commitments as set out in Figure 13.1. The regeneration projects to be identified as part of the Yeovil Refresh will include some residential development and this will contribute towards boosting the housing supply within the main urban area.

13.6 Yeovil has delivered the most employment land in gross terms (12.58 hectares) of all the settlements in the District but once losses have been taken into account (9.73 hectares) this figure falls to just 2.85 hectares. Policy SS3 of the Local Plan (Delivering New Employment Land) is focused on net, new employment land delivery, and so the 2.85 hectares is someway off the target for Yeovil. However, the gross land delivery figure should be borne in mind when reflecting on what is happening in the settlement, and it demonstrates that the town is clearly capable of realising a reasonable level of new employment land. But, what the data is also showing is that other changes are occurring in the town, with high levels of existing employment land being lost to other uses, and changes of use generating net additional floorspace but without necessarily requiring new land.

14. Primary Market Towns - Chard (PMT1, PMT2); Crewkerne; Ilminster (PMT3); and Wincanton (PMT4)

Chard

14.1 Policy PMT1 allocates at least 2,716 dwellings within and beyond the Plan period as well as 13 hectares of employment land, two primary schools, four neighbourhood centres, highway infrastructure and improvements and sports and open space provision. Policy PMT2 allocates at least 1,220 of the total number of dwellings in the Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA), 13ha of employment land, one new primary school, two neighbourhood centres and sports and open space provision to be delivered in the Plan period. The remainder of the growth is to be delivered post 2028.

14.2 Figure 14.1 shows the housing completions and commitments in Chard up to 31st March 2017.

Figure 14.1- Housing Delivery in Chard (net)

	Dwellings
Net Completions (01/04/06 to 31/03/17)	655
Existing Commitments (as at 31/03/17)	201
Total	**856**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

14.3 As of 31st March 2017, the overall annualised delivery rate of new housing fell below the Local Plan Target, although it has been exceeded on occasions. Unfortunately the CEDA has not significantly progressed, but there have been several planning applications submitted and/or approved for a total of 601 dwellings in the area (Figure 14.2).

Figure 14.2 : Significant residential planning applications in the CEDA

Application Reference	Site	Proposal	Status
16/02874/FUL	Land adjoining Holbear, Forton Road, Chard	323 dwellings and associated employment, community, and leisure uses, and accompanying infrastructure	Application pending
15/04772/OUT	Land Between Forton and Tatworth Road	200 dwellings and associated employment, community, and leisure uses, and accompanying infrastructure	Application approved subject to section 106 agreement
15/02165/REM	Land off Oaklands Avenue, Chard	78 dwellings and associated access and highway infrastructure	Approved

14.3 There has been a net gain of 24,432m^2 of employment floorspace in the town, with significant new employment developments including extensions to Oscar Mayer and Brecknell Willis, the redevelopment of Numatic International, development at Chard Business Park and an extension to Cerdic Foundries. Conversely, there has been a small net loss in employment land.

Crewkerne

14.4 Local Plan Policy SS5 states that Crewkerne should deliver 961 new dwellings over the Plan period. Figure 14.3 below shows that to date, there have been 965 completions or commitments, meaning that if built out the plan target would be reached.

Figure 14.3 - Housing Delivery in Crewkerne (net)

	Dwellings
Net Completions (01/04/06 to 31/03/17)	355
Existing Commitments (as at 31/03/17)	610
Total	**965**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

14.5 However, these commitments include the Strategic Site KS/CREW1 (known as the CLR Site), which has been granted outline permission but remains unimplemented to date and there have been continuing concerns expressed about the viability of the scheme. Policy HG1 of the Local Plan allocates the CLR site as a Strategic Housing Site.

14.6 Whilst the Local Plan sets out a requirement for 10ha of new employment land in the town, this was re-assessed during the consideration of the CLR site application and it was determined that this amount could actually be reduced to four. There has been a small gain in employment land[10] since the beginning of the Plan period and reasonably large gains in areas of floorspace, but significant losses in floor area which have either occurred or been granted planning permission mean that as of 31st March 2017, there was a net gain of 3,513m^2.

Ilminster

14.7 Local Plan Policy SS5 states that Ilminster should deliver at least 496 new dwellings over the Plan period. Figure 14.4 illustrates that the settlement is delivering growth to meet this requirement. Given that it has already achieved over 50% of the Local Plan target and we are less than halfway through the life of the Local Plan, it clearly can accommodate growth at a significant pace. This further illustrates its market attractiveness; and there is pressure from the development industry to deliver more housing in Ilminster.

Figure 14.4 - Housing Delivery in Ilminster (net)

	Dwellings
Net Completions (01/04/06 to 31/03/17)	264
Existing Commitments (as at 31/03/17)	120
Total	**384**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

14.8 Local Plan Policy PMT3 (Ilminster Direction of Growth) (DOG) states that the strategic direction of growth for the town is to the South West. An outline application for 400 dwellings within the DOG was received by the Council in January 2017[11] and a decision is pending.

14.9 Local Plan Policy SS3 (Delivering New Employment Land) identifies existing employment land commitments in Ilminster of about 23 hectares[12], resulting in no need for additional employment land provision up to 2028. The commitments include the three Strategic Employment Sites identified in Local Plan Policy EP1 (Strategic Employment Sites).

14.10 The three Strategic Employment Sites in Ilminster are:

- Land West of Horlicks (saved allocation ME/ILMI/3)
- Land off Station Road (saved allocation ME/ILMI/4), and
- Land adjacent to Powrmatic (saved allocation ME/ILMI/5)

14.11 These sites have been carried forward from previous Local Plans because their location on the A303/A358 intersection with good links to the M5 is considered a strong locational advantage which could secure major investment into the District. It should be noted though that the land

[10] SSDC Monitoring Database
[11] Application reference 16/05500/OUT
[12] As at April 2011

west of Horlicks and land adjacent to Powrmatic have been carried forward from the Chard and Ilminster Local Plan, which was adopted in 1995; over twenty years ago.

14.12 Development has occurred on the land west of Horlicks (ME/ILMI/3) and now only one hectare of the original three remains available. The Highways Agency operate a maintenance depot from here and a motor home storage and hire business was set up in 2015. It is likely that the remaining hectare will come forward over time.

14.13 There has been developer interest in the Station Road site (ME/ILMI/4) but site viability has made delivery challenging. The site is large (about 13 hectares) and straddles either side of Station Road. Significant works are required to achieve highways access to the site and developer contributions are required for flood remediation from the Environment Agency and to upgrade the Southfields roundabout from Highways England. The site cannot be developed without this infrastructure.

14.14 The land adjacent to Powrmatic (ME/ILMI/5) has no planning history but the site was originally earmarked in the 1991-2011 Local Plan for the expansion of Powrmatic Ltd. The site is currently owned by Powrmatic and accessed through their existing business and therefore is unlikely to contribute to the wider supply of employment land in Ilminster.

14.15 It is likely that the Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation will need to consider whether these sites should remain as allocations.

14.16 Monitoring information shows how Ilminster has delivered the second largest amount of employment land (in net terms) than any other settlement in the District; as at March 2017, there had been a net gain of 4.03ha. It has delivered a strong amount of floorspace (15,647m^2).

14.17 This can in part be attributed to the development of some key infrastructure, a supermarket at Shudrick Lane and a new medical centre at Canal Way. The majority of land and floorspace delivered is still in traditional employment uses (known as B uses for planning purposes) and reflecting the manufacturing history of Ilminster.

15 Wincanton

15.1 Local Plan Policy SS5 states that Wincanton should deliver 703 new dwellings over the Plan period. Just over half way through this period, the settlement is delivering growth to meet this requirement and will exceed it if or when the existing commitments are built. This means that Wincanton could accommodate more housing growth going forward in its role as a Primary Market Town.

Figure 14.5 Housing Delivery in Wincanton

	Dwellings
Net Completions (01/04/06 to 31/03/17)	638
Existing Commitments (as at 31/03/17)	306
Total	**944**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

15.8 Local Plan Policy SS3 identifies a requirement for 4.38 additional hectares of employment land in Wincanton over the Plan period and a Direction of Growth to the west of the town has been identified for strategic employment growth. At the time of writing, no planning application has been received for economic development uses within the Direction of Growth. The potential for the land to be identified for mixed use, employment and housing has been raised.

15.9 Some key developments at Wincanton include delivery of plots at Wincanton Business Park, the development of the Travel Lodge, Wagtail public house and KFC drive-thru at Long Close, the completion of the new health centre and a new building for Roachfords Garden Machinery. The total net gain in floorspace has been 11,400m^2, although some floorspace has been lost to a number of alternative uses.

15. Local Market Towns - Ansford/ Castle Cary (LMT1); Langport/ Huish Episcopi (LMT2); and Somerton (LMT3)

Ansford/ Castle Cary

15.1 Local Plan Policy SS5 states that Ansford and Castle Cary should deliver 374 new dwellings over the Plan period. A Direction of Growth is identified to the north of the settlement (Policy LMT1).

15.2 The existing planning policy position, including the lack of a five-year supply of housing land and recent appeal decisions, has meant that planning permission has been granted for a number of dwellings far exceeding the Local Plan requirement. The majority of these new residential planning permissions are located within the Direction of Growth and form part of the existing commitments in Figure 15.1.

Figure 15.1- Housing Delivery in Ansford/ Castle Cary (net)

	Dwellings
Net Completions (01/04/06 to 31/03/17)	68
Existing Commitments (as at 31/03/17)	523
Total	**591**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

15.3 Local Plan Policy SS3 identifies a requirement for 8.9 additional hectares of employment land in Ansford and Castle Cary over the Plan period; the expectation is that the growth will primarily be delivered within the Direction of Growth. There is currently outline planning permission for two hectares of employment land within the Direction of Growth [13]

15.4 Ansford and Castle Cary have delivered the highest amount of land and floorspace in the District (a total of 16,313m^2) although there have been losses, nearly all of which have been to residential use.

[13] Planning application 15/02347/OUT

15.5 Some key developments in Ansford and Castle Cary have been on the Torbay Road Industrial Estate and include the completion of the Royal Canin pet food factory; and the erection of a large workshop and extension to Centaur Services.

Langport/ Huish Episcopi

15.6 Policy SS5 sets a housing target of at least 374 dwellings to be delivered. Policy LMT2 directs housing growth to the north and east, with a different Direction of Growth (DOG) to the south-east for employment uses.

15.7 A total of 297 dwellings have been delivered, leaving a residual figure of 77 to meet the Plan's expectations. There remain 152 commitments, suggesting that the settlement should meet and could surpass its target by 2028.

Figure 15.2 - Housing Delivery in Langport/ Huish Episcopi (net)

Housing Commitments	Dwellings
Net Completions (01/04/06 to 31/03/17)	297
Existing Commitments (as at 31/03/17)	152
Total	**449**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

15.8 Policy SS3 sets a target for 4.01ha of employment land to be delivered. The majority of land delivered for employment has been in connection with the North Street Surgery extension (0.1 hectares for D1 use) in 2010. At the time of writing, the only economic development application located in the DOG was for a helicopter landing pad associated with an existing industrial use at the Tanyard Lane industrial site.

15.9 Overall, there has been a net gain of 1,325m^2 of employment floorspace. Much of the economic development has been through changes of uses, so new net floorspace has been quite modest. Most of the new additional floorspace in the town has been delivered at the Great Bow Yard offices, community space and a café development; and the additional classrooms at Huish Academy. Due to Langport's role as a tourist destination[14], most of the employment growth has been in the service and leisure sector.

Somerton

15.10 Policy SS5 expects 374 dwellings to be delivered at Somerton and Policy LMT3 (Somerton Direction of Growth) directs growth to the west of the town. Less than a third of this has delivered, leaving a residual requirement of 266 dwellings. However, the significantly increased rate of delivery over the last two years along with a high number of commitments suggests that there remains potential to achieve the Plan target. (Figure 15.3)

[14]Economic Development Monitoring Report: Land and Floorspace Delivered in South Somerset (April 2017)

Figure 15.3 - Housing Delivery in Somerton (net)

Housing Commitments	Dwellings
Net Completions (01/04/06 to 31/03/17)	108
Existing Commitments (as at 31/03/17)	336
Total	**474**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

15.11 Policy SS3 seeks 6.63ha of employment land to be delivered in Somerton by 2028. Planning applications for employment land have been limited. The delivery of economic land and floorspace can mostly be attributed to the expansion of the Bancombe Road Trading Estate, but delivery against the employment land target has been slow, with around a sixth having been provided by March 2017. Nevertheless, a total of 9,664m^2 net of new floorspace has been completed.

16. Rural Centres

16.1 The Local Plan identifies six Rural Centres; Bruton, Ilchester, Martock and Bower Hinton, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hamdon.

16.2 These are settlements that act as focal points for the surrounding area for retail and community service provision and in some instances have an employment role. The strategy requires these settlements to accommodate some housing and employment growth. Community facilities and services, which meet the needs of the settlement and surrounding areas are also encouraged.

16.3 Figure 16.1 replicates how each settlement has been performing against its housing and employment targets within the Local Plan, as referred to in Section 10 of this AMR.

Figure 16.1 - Local Plan Housing and Employment Requirements and Completions

Settlement	Local Plan Housing Target	Total Housing Completions and Commitments	Local Plan Employment Land Requirement	Employment Land Completed (Net) (Ha)	Employment Floorspace Completed (Net) (m^2)
Bruton	203	184	3.06	0.21	2,933
Ilchester	141	161	1.02	-0.02	1,160
Martock/ Bower Hinton	230	220	3.19	0.0	-278
Milborne Port	279	256	0.84	-3.79	-7,709
South Petherton	229	260	2.47	2.95	10,346
Stoke Sub Hamdon	51	55	1.09	-0.01	222
Totals	1133	1136	11.67	-0.66	6,674

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

16.4 As stated earlier in Section 10, the Rural Centres have, on the whole, been performing strongly in respect of housing development and delivered significantly in excess of their annualised requirement for housing. The exceptions are Ilchester, where there haven't actually been any completions during the Plan period thus far; and Stoke Sub Hamdon, where there have been just seven. If the schemes granted planning permission in these two settlements come forward, however, the Local Plan targets would be met.

16.5 Conversely, the amount of new employment land and floorspace that has been delivered has been disappointing. What gains in employment development have been achieved have been countered with notable losses like the Sparrow Works in Martock/ Bower Hinton; and the Tannery site, Clark House and Wheathill Nurseries in Milborne Port. The increase at South Petherton can mostly be accounted for by the Lopen Head Nursery site rather than at the settlement itself, although Bruton has seen new buildings at Kings and Sexey's Schools, development at Durslade Farm, the change of use of piggery units for light industrial purposes and the opening of the 'At The Chapel' restaurant and facilities.

16.6 This may be at least in part due to the permissive approach that the District Council has adopted as set out in Policies SS3 and SS5; and the consequent expectations of land owners of achieving residential land value on the edges of settlements. There does not seem to be much appetite for new speculative or bespoke employment facilities in these locations.

17. Rural Settlements

17.1 The Local Plan identifies a certain amount of growth in the District's 'Rural Settlements', with a total of 2,242 dwellings being expected in these areas during the Plan period. These are the smallest locations within the District and are villages and hamlets that are spread across South Somerset.

17.2 Policy SS2 seeks to strictly control and limit development in Rural Settlements, subject to providing employment opportunities, creating or enhancing community facilities, and/or meeting identified housing need. Policy SS2 also states that development should be commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, be consistent with community-led plans, and generally have the support of the local community following robust engagement and consultation.

17.3 In terms of meeting identified housing need, 1,431 dwellings have currently been delivered in the Rural Settlements since 2006, which is at a much higher rate than the Local Plan anticipates, equating to about 21% of all dwellings built since the start of the Plan period. This proportion is higher than that envisaged to be delivered in the Rural Settlements, which is set out in Policy SS5 as only 14%.

17.4 It appears that there will continue to be a need consider potential impacts on facilities, services and the natural environment in these locations, to ensure that development does not occur that would be out of scale and character. However, for so long as the District Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, Planning Inspectors at appeal are likely to attach less weight to Policy SS2 in favour of the National Planning Policy Framework and to grant consent for sustainable development.

18. Economic Prosperity

Policies EP1 - Strategic Employment Sites; and EP3 - Safeguarding Employment Land

18.1 There has been very little demand for new office development in South Somerset since 2006[15], although there have been exceptions such as the Yeovil Innovation Centre and Motivo; even if these are not located within Yeovil town centre. There has been demand for smaller scale industrial units, mostly by start-ups and existing companies growing; and new floorspace has been provided on existing sites. There does not currently seem to be an appetite for large floorplate buildings. Employment development appears not to have been brought forward on the current Strategic locations, partly because of the high associated infrastructure costs.

18.2 The potential dualling of the A303 and A358 offer opportunities to consider whether it would be appropriate to allocate land for employment activities on this important transport corridor. Furthermore, it might be necessary to encourage further employment at settlements which have been successfully attracting residential developers to build new homes.

18.3 Many existing businesses in Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 rely on existing employment sites in order to allow them to grow and yet significant areas or land and buildings are still being lost to other uses, either through the grant of planning permission for alternative uses, or through the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order. It therefore remains important to limit the loss of these sites where possible, particularly where new employment development appears to be difficult to encourage.

18.4 Policy EP3 has been referred to as relevant to the consideration of planning applications on 25 occasions in 2016/17; only in one case was the application refused. The Policy requires a period of marketing for an 18-month period before a loss of an employment use can be considered acceptable, so it must be assumed that in all cases this marketing takes place, but the premises simply are not attractive to the market.

Policies EP4 - Expansion of Businesses in the Countryside; EP5 - Farm Diversification; and EP8 - New and Enhanced Tourist Facilities

18.5 The Government's Policy[16] is to create conditions for strong employment growth in rural areas, making it easier for people to work there close to where they live. The NPPF also states that Local Plans should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new ones. Policies EP4 and EP5 help to meet these aims. Policy EP8 of the Local Plan encourages sustaining the vitality and viability of tourism in the District, including the provision of holiday let accommodation, which may often be in converted farm buildings.

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[15] South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: Review of FEMAs and Understanding Market Trends (April 2017)
[16] Towards a one nation economy: A 10-point plan for boosting employment productivity in rural areas. (August 2015)

18.6 The volume and value of tourism in South Somerset seems to fluctuate between years, but in 2015, over one million nights were spent in the District by visitors and 2.8m days, which combined with other visitor spend, equated to over £163m of spending. This is actually less than that in Sedgemoor, West Somerset and Mendip, but about equal with that in Taunton Deane[17].

18.7 The Council recognises the importance of supporting opportunities to provide rural employment opportunities outside settlement limits as a means of ensuring a diverse and healthy rural economy. There is a range of employment activities, particularly those associated with tourism, recreation and rural diversification that can be accommodated in countryside locations, without any adverse effects upon the character of South Somerset's rural areas. In the absence of a policy relating to new employment opportunities in rural areas, the Local Plan Review could address this issue.

Policies EP2 - Office Development;
EP9 - Retail Hierarchy;
EP10 - Convenience and Comparison Shopping in Yeovil;
EP11 - Location of Main Town Centre Uses;
EP12 - Floorspace Threshold for Impact Assessments;
EP13 - Protection of Retail Frontages;
EP14 - Neighbourhood Centres; and
EP15 - Protection and Provision of Local Shops, Community Facilities and Services

18.8 Policy EP9 sets out the retail hierarchy and determines how new net growth will be distributed over the Plan period. Yeovil will continue to be the main focus for new retail and leisure investment and the Market Towns[18], District Centres[19] and Local Centres[20] will accommodate development which will maintain their retail and service role and support their position in the retail hierarchy, thereby maintaining the vitality and viability of these centres.

18.9 Policy EP10 quantifies upper limits of new retail floorspace that will be permitted in Yeovil. This was intended to give some protection to the other main shopping centres by seeking to direct other new retail developments to them. However, there is a renewed focus on regenerating Yeovil through the Refresh and the policy actually curtails the potential for growth of the town. The Local Plan review should therefore consider whether the policy should be continued.

18.10 Policies EP2 and EP11 both relate to the sequential approach, which requires that applications for town centre uses that are not in an existing town centre and not in accordance with an up to date development plan should be refused planning permission where the applicant has not demonstrated compliance with the sequential approach to site selection, as set out the NPPF.

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[17] The Economic Impact of Somerset's Visitor Economy 2015; South West Research Company Ltd Oct 2016; and other South West Research Company Ltd monitoring data.
[18] Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton
[19] Ansford/ Castle Cary, Langport/ Huish Episcopi and Somerton
[20] Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hambdon

18.11 The respective amounts of new retail or office floorspace in town centre or out-of-centre locations has not been monitored and this will need to be developed. The amount of new non-retail uses in shopping frontages is not currently monitored either.

18.12 The Yeovil Brimsmore development is under construction and will include a new neighbourhood centre, with buildings capable for use as shops in close proximity to a primary school and community hall.

Policy EP6 - Henstridge Airfield

18.14 Policy EP6 seeks to limit intensification of commercial activity at the Airfield because of its location in open countryside remote from any large centres of population.

18.15 Since the adoption of the Local Plan, there has been no such intensification other than the granting of permission for development in accordance with an approved masterplan.

Policy EP7 - New Build Live/ Work Units

18.16 The District Council does not support new build live/ work units as evidence from consented units in South Somerset suggests that live/ work units are not really practical and can result in residential development by default on sites where such permission would not normally be granted. Policy EP7 therefore seeks to limit such uses in inappropriate locations.

18.17 There have been no applications for live/ work units since the adoption of the Local Plan.

19. Housing

Policy HG3 - Provision of Affordable Housing; and Policy HG4 - Provision of Affordable Housing - Sites of 1-5 Dwellings

19.01 The target and threshold for the provision of affordable housing is addressed in Local Plan Policy HG3. At the time the Local Plan was being adopted, the Government's approach to contributions for affordable housing was subject to legal challenge. The legal position has now been established by the Court of Appeal and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that "contributions should not be sought from developments of ten units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of no more than 1,000 square metres (gross internal area)"[21]. It is therefore not appropriate to continue to apply Policy HG4.

19.02 The current target for affordable housing is 35% of the total number of dwellings on qualifying sites. The SHMA[22] indicates that there is a net annual requirement for 206 affordable dwellings in South Somerset, which equates to about 34%[23] of the annual need.

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[21] Paragraph: 031 Reference ID: 23b-031-20161116

[22] Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Taunton Deane Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Final Report October 2016: https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/862544/somerset_final_shma_oct2016_revised.pdf

[23] 206 dwellings = 33.9% of 607 dwellings.

19.03 Since the beginning of the Plan period, 38% of completions in the District have been on sites of 10 dwellings or less. In the current policy context, affordable housing contributions through planning obligations could not be sought on such sites.

19.04 The Strategic Housing Team's monitoring of affordable housing delivery allows the Council to track completions over time. This information is set out in Figure19.1.

Figure 19.1: Total Affordable Housing Provision

Year	Net	Replacements	Gross
Completed			
2006/07	n/a	n/a	227
2007/08	n/a	n/a	157
2008/09	172	48	220
2009/10	123	18	141
2010/11	357	97	454
2011/12	272	78	350
2012/13	90	44	134
2013/14	102	59	161
2014/15	181	0	181
2015/16	128	0	128
2016/17	59	0	59
Programmed			
2017/18	81	0	81
2018/19	74	0	74
TOTAL	**1639**	**344**	**2367**

Source: SSDC Strategic Housing Monitoring Database

19.05 In 2016/17, the total of 59 new affordable dwellings equated to just 10% of all new dwellings across the District.

Policy HG5 - Achieving a Mix of Market Housing

19.06 Local Plan Policy HG5 seeks to achieve a range house types and sizes across the District, particularly on large sites of ten or more dwellings. On small sites, the type and size of homes should be taken in the context of the surroundings and contribute towards sustainable development. The mix of housing type and size sought is informed by the 2016 SHMA and is shown in Figure 19.2.

Figure 19.2 - Indicative targets for market housing by type and size

Size	Market
1 bedroom	5-10%
2 bedrooms	30-35%
3 bedrooms	40-45%
4+ bedrooms	15-20%

Source: SHMA, 2016

Policy HG6 - Care Homes and Specialist Accommodation

19.07 The Housing White Paper[24] supports the provision of housing for older people and those with disabilities. Local Plan Policy HG6 allows for the provision of care homes or similar specialist accommodation such as Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Extra Care housing.

19.08 The 2016 SHMA highlights the need for specialist care home bedspaces in the District[25]. At present the population of older people in the County is relatively high when compared with other areas – some 23% of people were aged 65 and over in 2015. Over the 2014-39 period the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase by 61% with a higher (150%) increase in the number of people aged 85 and over. This demographic change would be likely to see an increase in the number of people with specific disabilities (e.g. dementia and mobility problems) as well as a general increase in the numbers with a long-term health problem or disability.

19.09 The SHMA analysis identifies that, over the 2014-39 period, there may be a need for 395 specialist units of accommodation for older people (generally considered to be sheltered or extra-care housing) per annum across the County. This figure represents about 17%-19% of all housing provision suggested in demographic modelling. However, this could be artificially limited by the lack of support services funding forthcoming from the County Council. Such provision would be within a C3 use class and would therefore be part of the objective assessment of need. Additionally, the analysis highlights a potential need for an additional 186 registered care bedspaces per annum for older people (aged 75 and over) in the 2014-39 period. As these would be in use class C2, they would be in addition to the estimates of housing need from demographic modelling. In South Somerset specifically, the total requirement for residential care housing equates to 51 per annum.

19.10 The Key sites at Keyford and Upper Mudford will include new care homes; and new provision has been made at, for example, La Fontana in Martock and Wessex House in Somerton.

Policy HG7 - Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople

19.11 Figure 19.3 shows the net gain per year of pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople.

[24] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/590464/Fixing_our_broken_housing_market_-_print_ready_version.pdf

[25] Strategic Housing Market Assessment October 2016

Figure 19.3 - Delivery of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople (2006 -2017)

Settlement	Residential Pitches	Transit	Travelling Showpeople
2006 – 2007	-	-	-
2007 – 2008	1	-	-
2008 – 2009	6	-	-
2009 – 2010	1	-	-
2010 – 2011	6	-	-
2011 – 2012	3	-	-
2012 – 2013	3	-	-
2013 – 2014	2	-	-
2014 – 2015	1	-	-
2015 – 2016	12	-	-
2016 - 2017	5	-	-
TOTAL	**38**	**-**	**-**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

19.12 The data shows that the Council has consistently managed to deliver residential pitches (i.e. where people can permanently stay), but has been less able to facilitate transit sites and sites specifically for travelling showpeople.

19.13 The Local Plan identifies the need for 23 pitches, and so in simple terms the Council is currently exceeding this target, having realised 38 residential pitches since 2006. However, the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment[26] shows that over the period 2016 to 2020 the Council will need to deliver a further three residential pitches. The more serious gap in provision is for temporary (transit) provision, of which there remains a shortage of ten pitches and the Council will therefore still be required to take a proactive stance to continuing to meet needs.

Policy HG8 - Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

19.14 Policy HG8 aims to give protection to traditional smaller properties in the countryside which in turn meets the objective of providing housing to meet the needs of the community.

Policy HG9 - Housing for Agricultural and Related Workers; and HG10 - Removal of Agricultural and other Occupancy Conditions

19.13 Policy HG9 sets out the criteria against which planning applications for these dwellings will be assessed. In order to retain a property approved under Policy HG9, a restrictive condition will be included limiting its occupation by a person solely, mainly or last working in agriculture, forestry or a rural enterprise. It is accepted that there will be circumstances where these dwellings are no longer required for the purpose they were originally intended. Policy HG10 ensures that any planning permission to remove a restrictive occupancy condition for any dwelling in the countryside is adequately justified.

[26] https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/856723/final_copy_12_september_2013.pdf

20. Transport and Accessibility

Policy TA1 - Low Carbon Travel

20.1 Policy TA1 states that all new residential and employment development provides electric charging points adjacent to all car parking spaces; space suitable for homeworking; cycle parking; Travel Plans; Travel Information Packs; Green Travel Vouchers; improved public transport connections; and to ensure that sustainable transport measures are in place prior to first occupation.

20.2 Although referred to on several occasions, this policy may be too onerous and vague with a lack of detail; and no thresholds for each of the requirements; The Local Plan Review could therefore consider what amendments may be appropriate.

Policy TA2 - Rail

20.3 Policy TA2 seeks to protect sites of rail infrastructural significance, and encourage and promote the development of land for both passenger rail facilities and rail freight hubs, where there is robust evidence in support of developing infrastructure. To date, no such business case has been made.

Policy TA3 - Sustainable Travel at Chard and Yeovil

20.4 Because of their larger urban nature, it had been considered appropriate to encourage an even greater choice of sustainable transport modes in Yeovil and Chard through Policy TA3 of the Local Plan. However, use of this Policy has been limited, which may be because no thresholds are in place for its use, making it unclear and potentially onerous. The Local Plan Review could consider whether it is appropriate to carry this policy forwards.

Policy TA4 - Travel Plans

20.5 Policy TA4 uses development thresholds to determine if and what level of Travel Plan is required; ie Measures Only Statements, Travel Plan Statements, or Full Travel Plans.

20.6 The thresholds provide a clear structure for travel plan requirements; however, the current thresholds only cover uses A1, B1, and C3, so the Local Plan Review should consider the series of thresholds being expanded to take full account of the Somerset Travel Planning Guidance.[27]

Policy TA5 - Transport Impact of New Development

20.7 The Policy's aim to promote sustainable transport by addressing the transport implications of all development is in line with national planning polices and guidance, although the Local Plan Review could consider areas where the policy may be made clearer.

[27] http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?alId=118883

Policy TA6 - Parking Standards

20.8 Policy TA6 requires that parking provision in new development should be design-led and based upon site characteristics, location and accessibility; and accord with Somerset County Council's Parking Strategy. The Strategy requires only optimal parking standards, which seek to encourage parking provision rather than restrict it; and the extent of provision will usually depend on the particular circumstances of individual sites.

21. Health and Well Being

Policy HW1 - Provision of Open Space, Outdoor Playing Space and Sports, Cultural and Community Facilities in New Development

21.1 Policy HW1 addresses the provision of open space, outdoor playing space, sports, cultural, and community facilities in new development. It requires contributions or the provision of additional open space and other facilities to be delivered as appropriate. Many of the projects contained in the Council's CIL Regulation 123 List[28] are in relation to open space and outdoor playing space; as are a large proportion of those to be funded by Section 106 contributions.

Policy HW2 - Sports Zone

21.2 Policy HW2 relates to the Council's wish to significantly expand the provision of top quality sports and recreation facilities within Yeovil, through a 'sports zone' facility of at least 1.5ha, although no such site has yet been finalised.

Policy HW3 - Protection of Outdoor Sports, Play and Youth Provision

21.3 Policy HW3 protects equipped play areas and youth facilities by permitting development to them, in full or in part, only if the facilities benefit as a result; if there is a proven oversupply, or they are inappropriately located. It complements paragraph 74 of the NPPF, which refers to the protection of playing fields and recreational buildings.

22. Environmental Quality

Policy EQ1 - Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset

22.1 Policy EQ1 supports proposals for development where they have demonstrated how climate change mitigation and adaptation will be delivered. However, some of these measures will need revision following three changes in Government advice:

- that emerging local plans should not include policies requiring any level of the Code for Sustainable Homes to be achieved[29];

[28] https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/878504/cil_regulation_123_list_november_2016.docx
[29] www.gov.uk/government/speeches/planning-update-march-2015

- that applications for wind energy development should only be granted if the site has already been identified as suitable for wind energy development in a local or neighbourhood plan; and if it has the backing of the local communities that it may affect[30]; and

- the Government's intentions not to go ahead with on-site energy efficiency standards, or the zero carbon Allowable Solutions carbon offsetting scheme.[31]

Policy EQ2 - General Development

22.2 Policy EQ2 is concerned with achieving a high quality development, considering a wide range of indicators. As it applies to all development, it is unsurprising that it is the most used policy in the Local Plan.

Policy EQ3 - Historic Environment

22.3 Policy EQ3 seeks to conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic significance and important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place of the District's many heritage assets; and it accords with current national planning policy and guidance.

Policy EQ4 - Biodiversity

22.4 Policy EQ4 seeks to protect and, where appropriate, enhance biodiversity; and accords with the Council's statutory duty[32] and to national planning policy and guidance.

Policy EQ5 - Green Infrastructure

22.5 Policy EQ5 promotes the provision of green infrastructure including the enhancement of existing areas such as open space, accessible woodland, green corridor links and river corridor; and is in-line with current national planning policy and guidance.

Policy EQ6 - Woodlands and Forests

22.6 Policy EQ6 (Woodland and Forests) supports the implementation of the South West Woodland and Forestry Framework[33] which seeks to protect and enhance the value and character of the District's trees; and ensuring woodland areas do not fall below the levels recorded in 2005. This Policy is in-line with national policy and guidance[34].

Policy EQ7 - Pollution Control

22.7 National policy and guidance[35] make clear that local planning authorities should have a role in controlling pollution, which Policy EQ7 (Pollution Control) seeks to do.

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[30] www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm150618/wmstext/150618m0001.htm
[31] www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/443898/Productivity_Plan_web.pdf
[32] Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
[33] https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/462976/71._sw-rff-implementation-plan_1_.pdf
[34] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment
[35] NPPF, March 2012; and PPG Sections: Air quality; Light pollution; Natural environment; Noise; and Water supply, wastewater and water quality

22.8 The Council's Air Quality Annual Status Report (2016)[36], produced by the Council's Environmental Protection Team, provides air quality monitoring information and an action plan, in particular for the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) of Yeovil.

22.9 During 2016, the concentration of nitrogen dioxide within the Yeovil AQMA was measured to be greater than the annual mean objective value in four locations. This is consistent with measurements made in previous years.

Policy EQ8 - Equine Development

22.10 South Somerset's rural nature means it is suited to equine activities. A policy seeking to ensure that equine-related development is appropriate is therefore necessary. Policy EQ8 is helpful in ensuring that, for example, equine development is well related to existing buildings, respects the landscape context, is of an appropriate scale; and doesn't have an adverse ecological impact.

[36] South Somerset District Council - Air quality reports

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Part Five: Development Management

23. Performance

23.1 On average, the Authority receives over 2000 planning applications a year. During the period April 2016 to March 2017, the Authority received 2297 planning applications and determined 2208; of these, 2070 were given approval. National targets are set for the time taken for determining applications at 60% within 13 weeks for major, 65% within eight weeks for minor; and 80% within eight weeks for other applications (unless an application is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, in which case a 16 week limit applies). The Council has met and exceeded these targets for the past five years.

23.2 In recently published planning application statistics[37], the Council achieved a place in the top 100 authorities for speed of determination of minor and other applications, with 91% being decided within the statutory time limit.

23.3 During the same period, the Authority received 61 appeal decisions, of which the Planning Inspectorate allowed 22 and 35 were dismissed. Of these, 49 were dealt with by Written Representations, seven by Hearings; and five by Public Inquiry.

24. Managing Strategically Important Planning Applications

24.1 Over the last 12 months, the Council has been considering and managing a number of strategically important planning applications, with examples being included in Figure 24.1.

Figure 24.1 - Major Planning Applications and Decisions Reached

SITE NAME	PROPOSAL	DECISION
Land at Crewkerne Road, Chard	72 dwellings and infrastructure	Refused Dismissed at Appeal
Land at Shudrick Lane, Ilminster	220 dwellings, access, open space, landscaping and engineering works	Refused Dismissed at Appeal
Land to the North of Thorne Lane, Yeovil	298 dwellings, Primary School, Link Road, public open space, structural landscaping	Approved
Land Os 1445 Part Torbay road, Castle Cary	165 dwellings, 2ha employment, infrastructure and primary school	Approved
Land at Avishayes Road, Oaklands Avenue, Chard	78 dwellings and infrastructure	Approved
Land at Station Road, Castle Cary	75 dwellings, landscaping	Approved

[37] Table P151a: District planning authorities performance – speed of major development decisions England April 15 to March 17

Land South of Cemetery, Cemetery Lane, Wincanton	60 dwellings, Landscaping and Infrastructure	Approved
Wayside Farm, Station Road, Castle Cary	125 dwellings, landscaping and infrastructure	Allowed on Appeal
Land OS 4700 East of Station Road, Castle Cary	75 dwellings, landscaping and infrastructure	Appeal in progress
Land at Court Farm, Ilton, Ilminster	74 dwellings, community sports facilities	Approved
The Tannery, Eastland Road, Yeovil	81 dwellings	Refused
Land Os 4575 Cartway Lane, Somerton	59 dwellings, open space and infrastructure	Approved
Land off Cuckoo Hill, Bruton	68 dwellings, public open space and infrastructure	Approved
Southern Phase of Crewkerne Key Site, Land off Station Road, Crewkerne	110 dwellings, 60 bed nursing home, employment land	Approved
3 Newton Road, Yeovil	85 dwellings	Approved
Land adj Holbear, Forton Road, Chard	323 dwellings and infrastructure	Pending
Land South West of Canal Way, Ilminster	450 dwellings	Pending
Land at East Street, Chard	79 dwellings and landscaping	Pending
The Trial Ground, Land OS 5949 Somerton Road, Langport	94 dwellings and open space	Pending
Yeovil District Hospital	New 650-place multi-storey car park; and erection of acute day surgery unit	Approved
Land North Of Bunford Lane, Yeovil	Erection of new serviced office building (Yeovil Innovation Centre, Phase II)	Approved
Land North Of Bunford Lane, Yeovil	The erection of a research and development building, incubator office and light engineering facility (Aerospace Industry Hub)	Approved

Land At Bunford Park, Bunford Lane,Yeovil	Hybrid application on 21.6 hectares of land comprising the erection of 2,040m^2 Class B1 offices and light industrial/Class B8 storage and distribution unit; erection of 8,443m^2 Class A1 foodstore and petrol filling station; and formation of remainder of a 56,051m^2 gross business park including erection of Class B1 office and light industrial and Class B8 storage and distribution uses; together with associated car parks and infrastructure	Pending

Source: SSDC Planning and Monitoring Databases