

APPENDIX 2

This appendix includes a summary of the issues raised by Members during the workshops held on 20, 22 and 29 of November 2018 and an officer response.

Members who attended:

Cllr Jason Baker	Cllr Stephen Page
Cllr Neil Bloomfield	Cllr Jo Roundell-Greene
Cllr Dave Bulmer	Cllr Dean Ruddle
Cllr Hayward Burt	Cllr Sylvia Seal
Cllr Nick Colbert	Cllr Gina Seaton
Cllr Nigel Gage	Cllr Peter Seib
Cllr Anna Groskop	Cllr Angie Singleton
Cllr Val Keitch	Cllr Alan Smith
Cllr Andy Kendall	Cllr Sue Steele
Cllr Mike Lewis	Cllr Rob Strickland
Cllr Sarah Lyndsey	Cllr Gerard Tucker
Cllr Paul Maxwell	Cllr Linda Vijeh
Cllr Graham Middleton	Cllr Colin Winder
Cllr Sue Osborne	Cllr Martin Wale
Cllr Sue Osborne	

Number	Issue Raised by Members	Response
1	Frustration at national policy position. Use of 2014 household projections rather than 2016 one which result in a lower housing figure - If we cannot achieve 726 dwellings per year now our Local Plan Review will go out if date very quickly. Could we have a lower housing figure? There is pressure on Members to approve planning applications to avoid going to appeal.	The new standard methodology has been set by the Government and all plan-making authorities have to use the same calculation to determine the minimum number of homes required over a ten year period. That figure for South Somerset is 726 new homes a year, this figure is the minimum number of homes to be delivered. The Government expects the 2014-based household projections to be used as the basis for this calculation as the 2016-based projections result in a lower housing requirements which would mean the objective of delivering 300,000 new homes a year would be less likely to be achieved.

		<p>The Council cannot control how quickly new homes are built all it can do is grant or refuse planning permission and ensure that there is an up to date Local Plan which sets out the strategy for the delivery of new growth. The NPPF expects Local Plan to be reviewed within five years of adoption.</p> <p>Whilst the Council does not have a five-year housing land supply the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies (paragraph 11 of the NPPF) and this has have an impact on how planning inspectors assess planning appeals.</p> <p>The level of buffer that has to be applied to the five-year housing land supply is set out in the NPPF (paragraph 73). Once the Local Plan review is adopted the backlog we currently have to take into account as part of the calculation (any under delivery since 2006) will be lost and we will only have to include any backlog from 2016 onwards, this will mean that there should be a greater possibility of maintaining a supply.</p> <p>All the housing figures for individual settlements take account of what has been completed, has planning permission or where planning applications are pending.</p>
2	Concern about the levels of development occurring in some settlements e.g. Milborne Port, Henstridge, Martock. Fear of over development.	The Preferred Options document sets out the proposed settlement hierarchy and distribution of growth. It is considered that the proposed distribution provides for a balanced approach to the delivery of new homes and employment across the District.
3	West Coker should be identified as a 'hub village' or Cluster.	West Coker is in close proximity to Yeovil with parts of parish extending to what is recognised as the urban edge of the Town. The main built settlement of West Coker is an acceptable location for growth under Local Plan Review Policy SS4 (SS2 in the adopted Local Plan). Hardington Mandeville qualifies for growth under policy SS4 as does Barwick and Stoford. Odcome and East Chinnock currently do not but are surrounded by settlements that do. See also response to Issue 8 below.
4	Support for Stoke sub Hamdon being designated a Village rather than a Rural Centre. Lack of shops.	Noted.

5	Need to ensure that it is the Settlement that is designated a Village and not the whole parish.	The Local Plan Review directs growth within or adjacent to the existing built settlements.
6	Queried whether Merriott should be identified as a village.	<p>In the evidence base document The Potential for Rural Settlements to be Designated 'Villages' Merriott does not perform as well as other places in terms of employment opportunities and bus services.</p> <p>There will still be the opportunity to have development in the future under Local Plan Review Policy SS4 (SS2 in the adopted Local Plan).</p> <p>A case can be made for the inclusion of Merriott as a Village during the consultation period.</p>
7	Noted that Broadway and Horton are not one settlement – see themselves as separate.	The evidence based document used to identify potential villages uses the defined Office of National Statistics (ONS) Built up Areas (BUAs) as the starting point for the assessment – Broadway and Horton are identified by ONS as a single BUA.
8	<p>Policy SS2: Some Members felt that public transport should be one of the criteria in order to qualify as a Rural Settlement. Have we thought about identifying hub villages (clusters)? Should places with a shop/post offices rank higher – scoring system. We should define what would be acceptable in terms of employment and community facilities under Policy SS2. Fabric and structure of our rural settlements being fundamentally changed through having to take housing. Do not want to “pickle in aspic”. Are clusters going to be considered? Bear in mind changes to ward boundaries.</p>	<p>Note - Policy SS2 is now Policy SS4 in the Local Plan Review Preferred Options Document. This is due to some restructuring of the document.</p> <p>Whilst the NPPF recognises that there may be occasions when nearby smaller settlements effectively provide and support local services for each other having looked at the geographical distribution of the settlements within South Somerset, their status in the settlement hierarchy and the services they provide there is little evidence to show that there is a functional relationship between the Rural Settlements that meet the criteria with in Policy SS2 and those that do not.</p>

9	Concern about the assimilation of the hamlets around the towns i.e. Yeovil (Lufton, Cokers, Montacute, Stoke) - where is the protection to keep the villages as villages. There used to be a policy for this in the old Local Plans.	There are various policy mechanisms within the Local Plan which prevent the assimilation of settlements, these include Development Areas, Yeovil Flight Safeguarding Zone (Policy YV9), and policies to protect the landscape and heritage assets. Specifically criteria ii. c. and d. within Policy EQ2 includes considering proposals against conserving and enhancing the landscape and character of the area and reinforcing local distinctiveness and respect for local context. Furthermore a specific landscape policy is now included (Policy EQ4).
10	Mass development is a problem for villages, but some support for infilling. <i>Old PPG/PPS wording PPG 7: Sensitive infilling of small gaps within small groups of houses or minor extensions to groups may also be acceptable though much would depend on the character of the surroundings and the number of such groups in the area.</i>	<p>Infilling is acceptable under Policy SS4 (previously SS2). If we were to allow infilling in places that do not meet the requirements of Policy SS4 it is considered that it could lead to a proliferation of dwellings in countryside locations.</p> <p>The NPPF allows for new dwellings in the countryside where it meets an essential need, where it would secure a viable use of a heritage asset, where it would re-use redundant or disused buildings where it would subdivide an existing dwelling and where the design is of exceptional quality (NPPF, Paragraph 79). There are also the ability to convert premises in B1 Use to residential development without the need for planning permission. Since July 2014 51 new homes have been allowed using the new permitted development right, 10 of these have been completed (as at 31st March 2018). The Local Plan Review does not seek to change this.</p>
11	Concern that there may be a deficit in facilities to support development as planning applications that have not been implemented are not taken into account.	<p>Legally planning obligations can only be sought from a planning applications where they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; b) Directly related to the development; and c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development <p>The infrastructure providers who are consulted on planning applications are aware of this and can only ask for infrastructure related to the development itself.</p>
12	Concern about the impact of viability and a reduction in the number of affordable homes being delivered.	The NPPF requires that Local Plans undergo a whole plan viability assessment it is the intention that any obligation included in a Local is viable and therefore not negotiable, except in exceptional circumstances where the applicant can justify the need for a viability assessment.

13	Is a Garden Town or Village being proposed?	<p>Not at this time. But is it something the Council may wish to consider in the future – this would require a significant amount of work and resources and delivery would be dependent on securing funding form central Government.</p> <p>The identification of a Garden Town or Village would not mean that development elsewhere would stop as the requirement to deliver a specific number of homes per year remains as does the requirement to have a five-year supply of housing land. Typically such settlements take at least 10-15 years to begin delivery.</p>
	Some support for re-use of old buildings in the countryside for employment use – example of old glove factory outside of Bradford upon Avon.	The NPPF and Policies in the Local Plan Review support the re-use of buildings in the countryside for economic purposes.
14	Some concern about the loss of employment land.	<p>The South Somerset Economic Development Monitoring Report (April 2017) demonstrates that there is a significant supply of employment land in South Somerset, despite some losses to other uses. The Employment Land Review will update this position at a settlement by settlement basis and the strategy in the Local Plan Review will seek to ensure that there is sufficient employment land to meet the needs of the District going forward.</p> <p>Other policies in the Local Plan Review support the delivery of new employment land both urban and rural locations.</p>
15	Concern that all office space will be directed to Yeovil.	The evidence base work carried out by Stuart Hardisty Associates shows that there is an under representation of ‘office based activities’ in South Somerset and that the only noticeable “office market” is in Yeovil. Whilst it is important to encourage office based business to be located in Yeovil, particularly in the Town Centre the Local Plan Review does not preclude office based development in other locations across the District.
16	Improved rail facilities at Castle Cary may provide an opportunity for an employment allocation nearby.	The employment needs for Ansford and Castle Cary will be determined through the Employment Land Review. It is agreed that improved rail services could make it a more attractive location for employers.

17	Support for the Yeovil Refresh and the development of brownfield sites within the town and the rest of the District for residential.	Noted.
18	A Member suggested an employment allocation at Wincanton including the southern part of the Wincanton PO to the west extending along towards Hook Farm. Suggestion that there should be development south of the A303 at Wincanton for employment use.	The ELR will determine the amount of employment land required in Wincanton. This suggestion is noted and will be investigated further in due course.
19	Concern that homes and jobs will not be balanced. Queried why if jobs growth over the plan period is declining, housing is at the level it is.	As explained under Issue 1 the minimum housing requirement for the District is set by the new standard methodology. The requirement and justification for employment land in the future is explained in the Employment Land Review 2018. Factors such as the existing supply of employment land and floorspace and the make of the District's population are factors that have an influence on the economy of the District.
20	Concerned that there should be support for housing solutions for the ageing population particularly in town centres – care homes, extra care, retirement villages, bungalows.	The Local Plan Review is supportive of this.
21	Government announced in the budget that Local Authorities are allowed to borrow in future to build affordable homes – what opportunity is there for us to do this?	This is being investigated a part of the Council's commercial strategy and in relation to the Council Priority to accelerate the delivery of key housing sites and associated infrastructure.
22	How do we encourage national builders to complete schemes, particularly the Yeovil SUEs?	The Council can grant planning permission and support developers in any attempt to seek Government funding to deliver infrastructure or homes. Unless the District Council becomes a developer or development partner it cannot control when homes are built on the site once planning permission is given and implemented. The Yeovil SUE's do not yet have planning permission.

		Delivery of homes on site with planning permission is an issue the Government has been looking into and Sir Oliver Letwin has produced a report on the matter and this can be found online. Sir Oliver recommends a number of measures that could be taken to encourage the development industry to build more homes faster. It remains to be seen if the Government will implement any of the recommendations.
23	Concern that developers will ignore the viability evidence.	The viability evidence will be tested through the Local Plan Review Examination process and if the Local Plan review is found to be sound then it should be accepted except in exceptional circumstance as explain in the NPPF
24	Concern about further development at Ansford and Castle Cary and proposed Keyford Extension.	The Local Plan Review Preferred Options document does include some small scale allocation of growth at Ansford and Castle Cary, within the Direction of Growth and a modest extension to the Keyford SUE is proposed. If members agree that the current document can be consulted upon including these proposals then there will be an opportunity to respond during the consultation process. This is not the Publication Plan and the Local Plan Review is still evolving.
25	A Member was interested to know how many new dwellings have been approved through the new permitted development rights.	The answer to this question is provided under the response to Issue 10 above.
26	Noted that some of the proposed allocations at settlements such as Crewkerne are in other Parishes and therefore when they are developed the parish share of CIL will go to that parish.	This is correct. Although parishes can decide to let the Council keep their proportion of CIL to put towards an item of infrastructure on the 123 list.
27	Member sought clarification on whether the figure for South Petherton includes Lopen Head or not.	The role of Lopen Head and employment land requirements for South Petherton will be considered as part of the Employment Land Review.
28	Will transport including rail be addressed in the Local Plan Review?	Yes, there is a transport section. Somerset County Council are the Highway Authority and are responsible for the roads across the County.

29	A Members sought clarification that the listed building and conservation areas will still be protected.	Yes, they continue to be protected by legislation and Local Plan Review policies.
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