

2019

South Somerset
Local Plan
Review 2016-
2036 Preferred
Options
Consultation
(Regulation 18)

DRAFT

Foreword

This Preferred Options consultation represents the second formal stage of consultation on the South Somerset Local Plan Review and follows the Issues and Options consultation which took place during late 2017 and early 2018. The document reflects the latest Government Guidance in the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the evidence base produced to support the Plan process. The Local Plan Review will provide us with a refreshed policy framework that will guide and shape development in the District up to 2036.

The District is facing a number of issues. The population is continuing to grow, with an increasing proportion of older residents. There is sustained pressure on the need to achieve the delivery of new housing of all types and tenures to meet current as well as emerging need. Alongside this, affordable housing for local people is a key concern. Maintaining access to services and rural connectivity are also important factors.

From an economic prospective, business growth has been stable with strong representation in the manufacturing sector and unemployment levels are low. However, the allocated strategic employment sites have not been developed and there is little appetite for office building. Although only a 10 year blip, the scale and duration of having the construction of Hinkley C, Europe's largest engineering project, in relatively close proximity to South Somerset, will inevitably distort the picture in the short to medium term.

The issues in preparing a new plan are wide ranging and will involve not just the Council itself, but also many other organisations and individuals. This Preferred Options consultation provides an opportunity to get involved and give your views and comments.

It is vital that as many individuals and businesses as possible respond to this consultation and your comments will be taken into account in evolving the next stage of the Local Plan Review. Whilst this document is based upon evidence, by testing that against local knowledge and "live" economic factors, I believe that the final version will be more robust and relevant.

Insert Photo of Val

Val Keitch

Leader of the Council

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1. Introduction

Purpose of this document

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out for consultation the Council's proposed strategy for delivering new homes and employment over the period 2016 to 2036, including site allocations and policies against which planning applications will be assessed.
- 1.2 During December 2017 and January 2018, South Somerset District Council (the Council) consulted on the Local Plan Review (LPR) Issues and Options document. The comments made at that stage have been summarised and used to inform this Preferred Options document.
- 1.3 In July 2018 Central Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and some accompanying Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and these have been taken into account in the drafting of this document.
- 1.4 It is important that there is early and meaningful engagement in the LPR process. In accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, this consultation document has been prepared to support engagement with the general public, statutory consultees, local communities, businesses, voluntary groups, other public organisations, landowners and other bodies that the Council has a 'duty to cooperate' with (see p.14 – Duty to Cooperate).
- 1.5 We are seeking your views on the preferred approach / options for addressing spatial planning issues in the District.
- 1.6 Representations made at this stage will help to refine the Submission version of the Local Plan Review, that stage will include a further round of public consultation.

What is the Local Plan and why are we reviewing it?

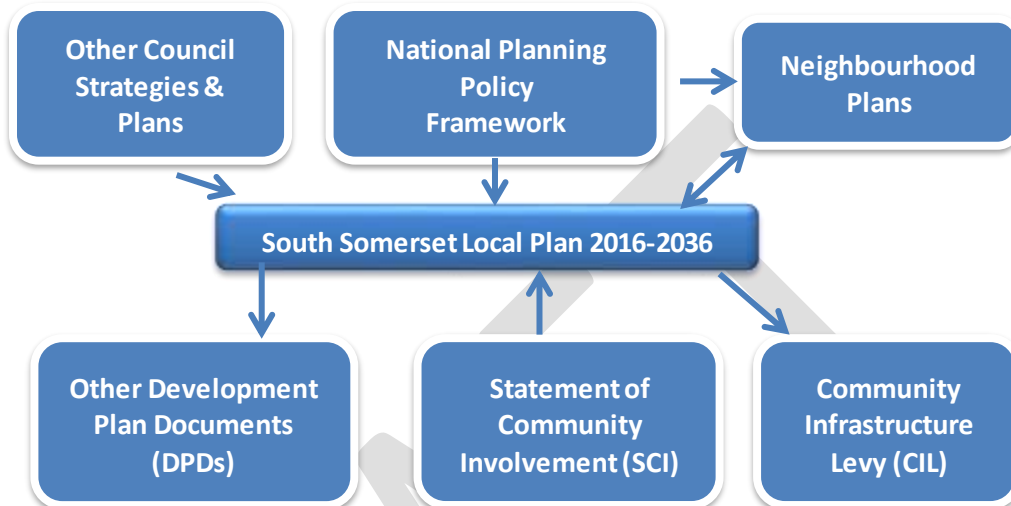
- 1.7 A Local Plan sets out the strategy and policies to support the Council's long-term vision as well as the strategic context for managing and accommodating residential and economic growth across South Somerset. This is in the context of national policy as well as other strategies and plans at District, County and sub-regional level.
- 1.8 The current adopted Local Plan covers the period 2006-2028¹. In his report to the Council, the independent Inspector who carried out the Examination into the Local Plan made it clear that an early review of part of the Plan should be

¹ <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/south-somerset-local-plan-2006-2028/adopted-south-somerset-local-plan/>

undertaken and the decision was subsequently made to review the whole Local Plan. The LPR rolls the plan period forward covering the timeframe 2016-2036.

- 1.9 Figure 1.1 shows the relationship between the South Somerset Local Plan and other policy documents.

Figure 1.1: Relationship between Local Plan and other policy documents



- 1.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights that Local Plans are key to delivering sustainable development. Planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan² unless material considerations indicate otherwise.³ Figure 1.2 shows in simple terms how the decision-making process for planning applications interacts with the Local Plan.

² The Development Plan consists of the adopted Local Plan and any 'made' neighbourhood plan.

³ Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

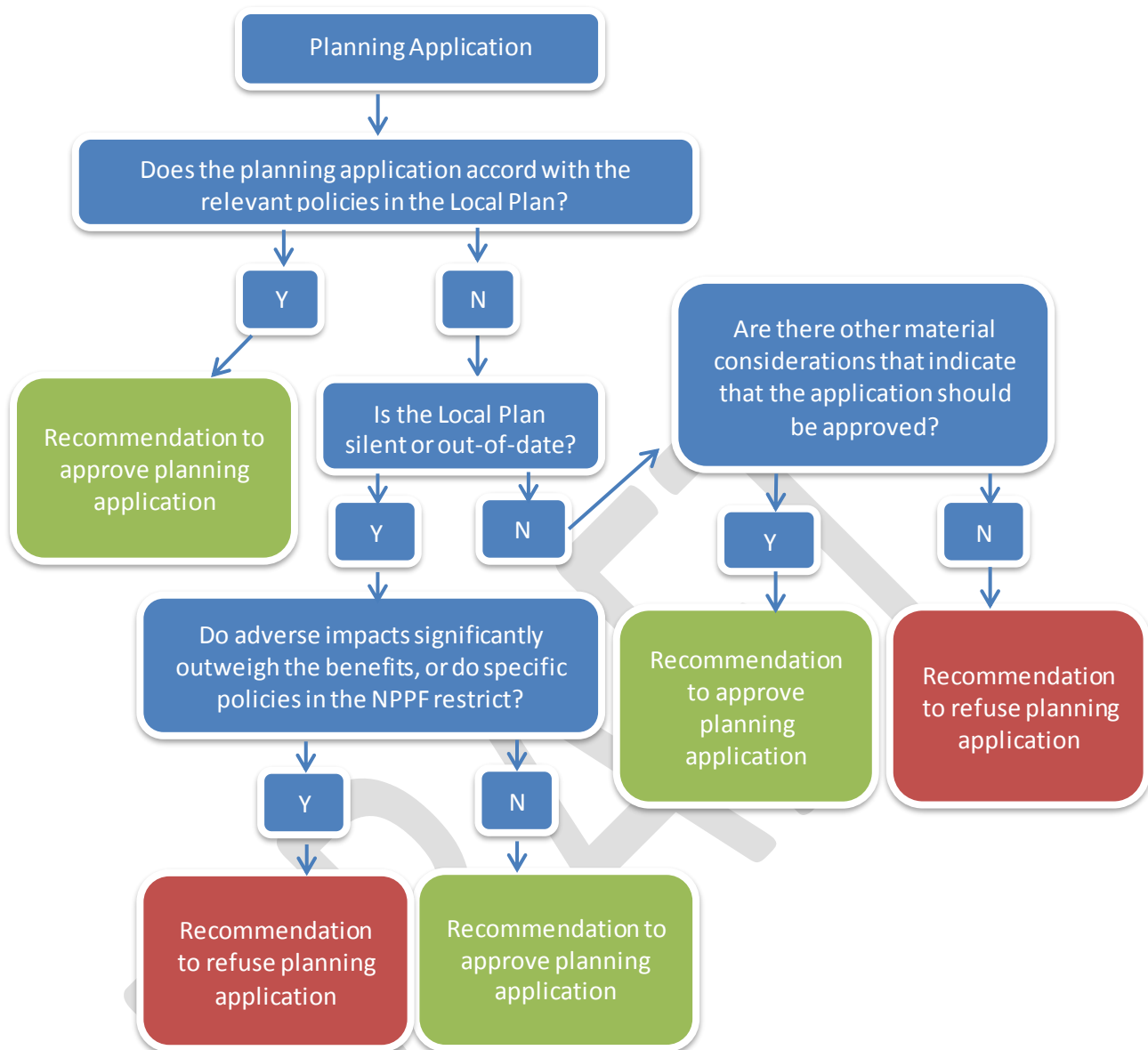


Figure 1.2: How planning applications will be considered against the Local Plan

- 1.11 It is important to have an up to date local plan to ensure that it is effective. Reviews should be completed within five years of the date of adoption to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the South Somerset community⁴.
- 1.12 The timeline for the Local Plan Review is set out in Figure 1.3 below.

⁴ Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and NPPF, 2018. Paragraph 33

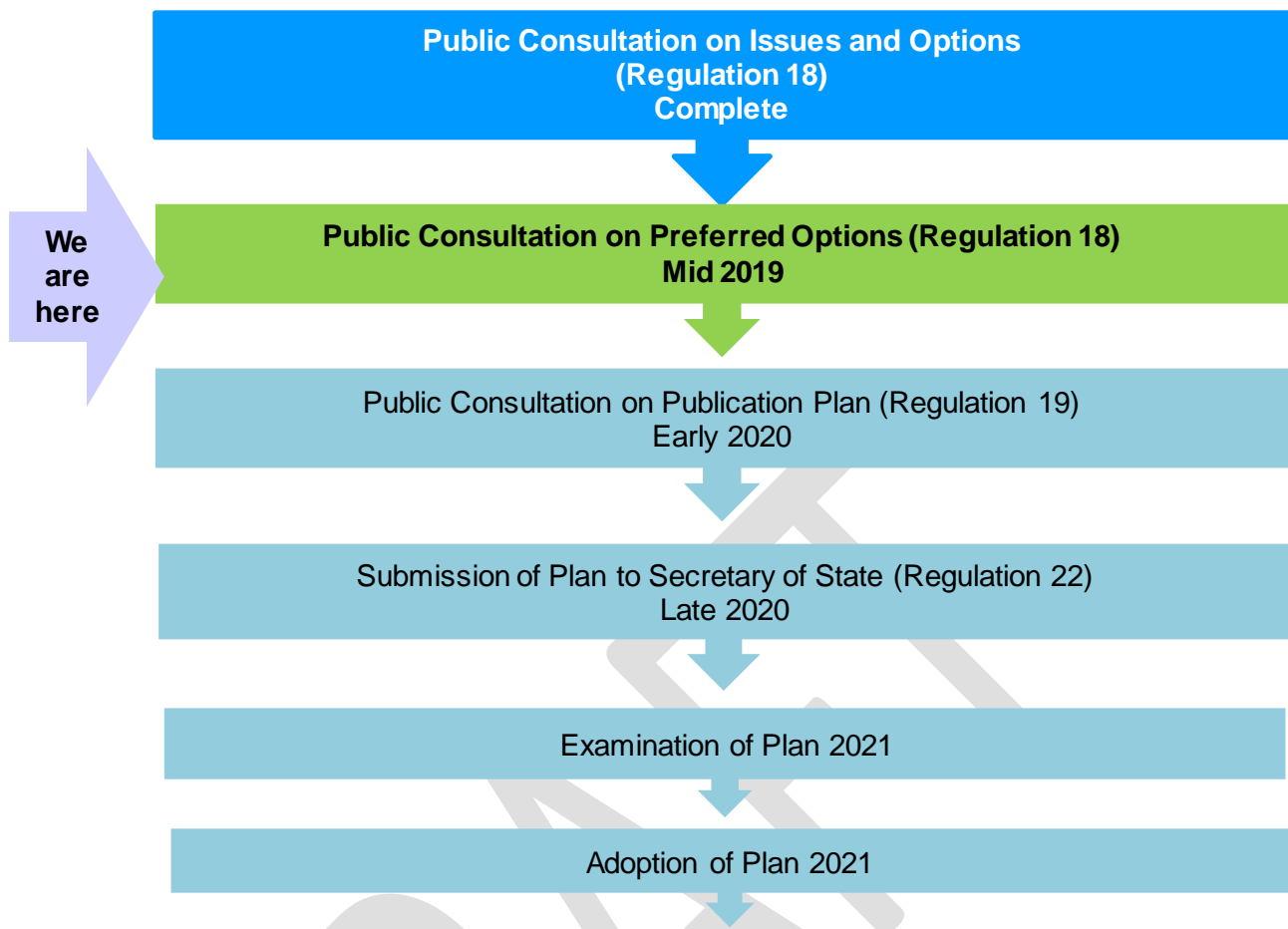


Figure 1.3 Local Plan Review Timeline

Evidence Base

- 1.13 The evidence base as well as the NPPF and accompanying guidance underpin the draft policies set out in this document.
- 1.14 Links or references to relevant evidence base documents are provided throughout this document.
- 1.15 In line with the approach set out in the NPPF, the Council will be commissioning a viability assessment of the Local Plan's policies. This assessment will be undertaken prior to the Local Plan being submitted to the Secretary of State.

What this document covers

- 1.16 The document is set out in sections which broadly reflect those in the current Local Plan. It has been written as a complete Draft Local Plan Review and as such includes a number of the policies in the existing adopted Local Plan, some remain unchanged and others have been modified or removed. It should be noted that due to the deletion of some policies, the addition of others and some re-structuring of the document to make it clearer and easier to use some policy names and reference numbers have changed.

- 1.17 Strategic policies are identified by being in a green box and non-strategic policies are identified by being in a blue box and are listed in Appendix One.
- 1.18 Maps showing the proposed site allocations can be found in the Appendix Two and a Glossary can be found in Appendix Three.

Why should I get involved?

- 1.19 It is important that you make your views known and take this opportunity to contribute to the LPR. Consultation is being undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)⁵. The main issues raised at this stage will help to inform the preparation of the Local Plan Review going forward.

How to comment

- 1.20 You can make comment in a number ways:



Online via the website

www.southsomerset.gov.uk/*****



Email

planningpolicy@southsomerset.gov.uk



In writing to

Strategy and Commissioning
Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil
BA20 2HT

- 1.21 Hard Copies of the document are available to view during normal opening hours at the following District Council offices and in libraries across the District:

- Brympton Way, Yeovil
- Petters House, Yeovil
- Churchfields, Wincanton
- Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard
- Library opening times can be found here:
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries-and-heritage/using-the-library/find-your-library/>

Strategic Environmental Appraisal / Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.22 The first stage in the production of a Local Plan is the preparation of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report. This document identifies the key environmental, social and economic issues for the LPR and establishes SA objectives for testing the Local Plan proposals. SA incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive⁶ which

⁵ South Somerset Statement of Community Involvement, December 2015
https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/806406/statement_of_community_involvement_final_adopted_dec_2015_.pdf

⁶ Directive 2001/42/EC

seeks to establish whether a programme or plan is to have widely significant environmental effects. The aim is to ensure that these policies contribute towards achieving sustainable development. A Sustainability Appraisal of this document has been prepared and is available on the Council's website.

Duty to Co-operate and Statements of Common Ground

- 1.23 There is an ongoing legal requirement for the Council to co-operate with statutory and non-statutory partners. In order to demonstrate on-going joint working the Council will prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, these will be produced using the approach set out in the planning guidance⁷.
- 1.24 This work ensures that strategically significant issues that have potential cross boundary impacts are discussed. The Council is mindful of its direct relationships with local authorities, as well as its functional relationships with a range of authorities. South Somerset adjoins West Dorset District Council, North Dorset District Council, Wiltshire Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and East Devon Council. The Council has been and will continue to engage with these adjoining councils and the other specified bodies.

⁷ NPPF, 2018. Paragraphs 24 to 27.

2. Spatial Portrait of South Somerset

Overview

- 2.1 The spatial portrait section aims to set out what South Somerset is like today. The following sections provide a snapshot of the key strategic and geographic issues affecting the demographic, economic, social and environmental structure of South Somerset.

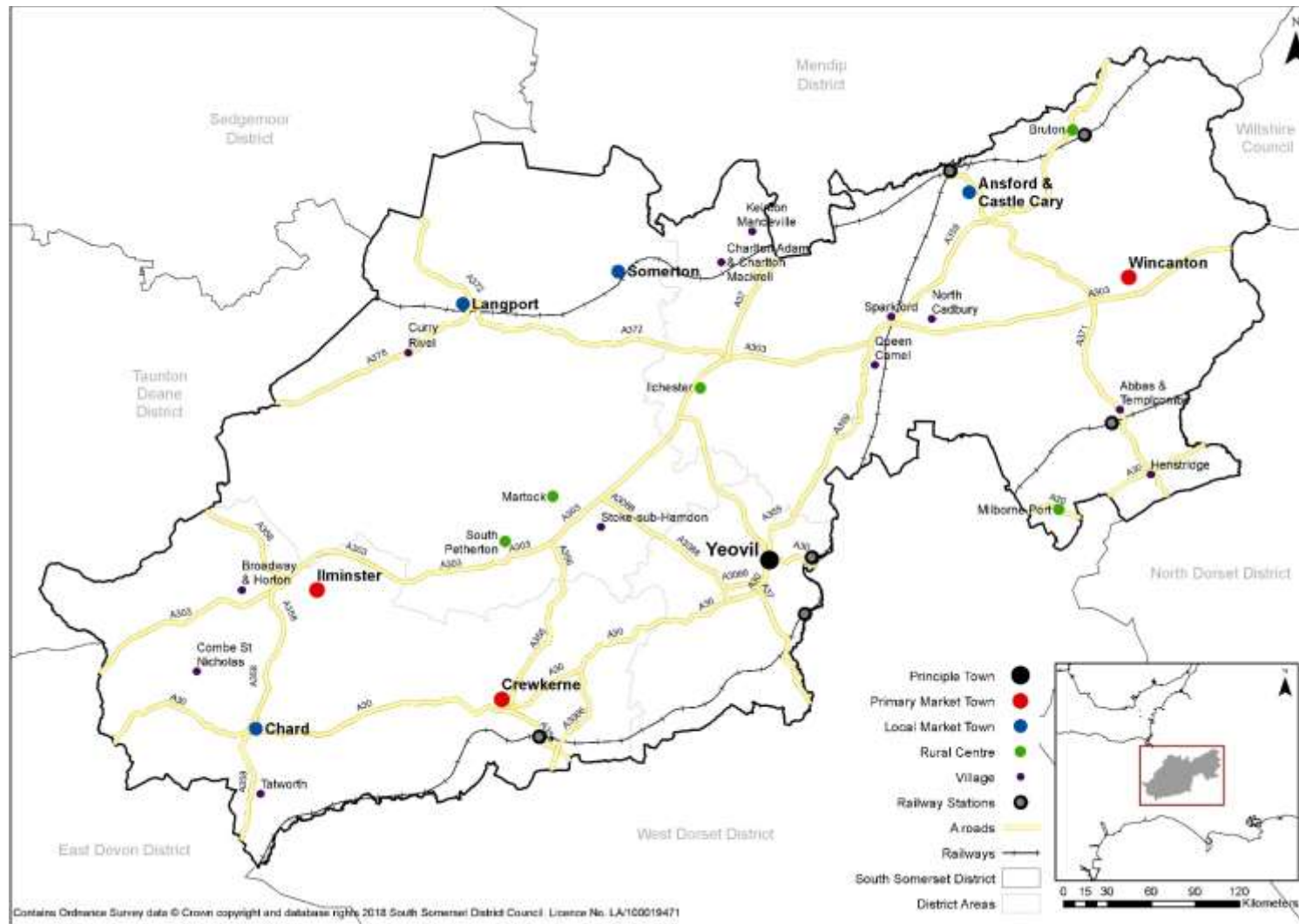
Location and Strategic Context

- 2.2 South Somerset is located within the south-west of England. It is the largest district in Somerset and covers an area of 958 square kilometres (370 square miles).⁸
- 2.3 It is a largely rural district which encompasses a number of towns, villages and hamlets. The rural nature of the area is emphasised by the low population density of 1.7 persons per hectare, less than half the national average.⁹
- 2.4 South Somerset has a number of settlements of similar size, this is reflective of their historic market town status and the geographical extent of the District.

⁸ 236,989 acres; 95,906 hectares

⁹ South Somerset Authority Monitoring Report, October 2018

Figure 2.1: Map of South Somerset



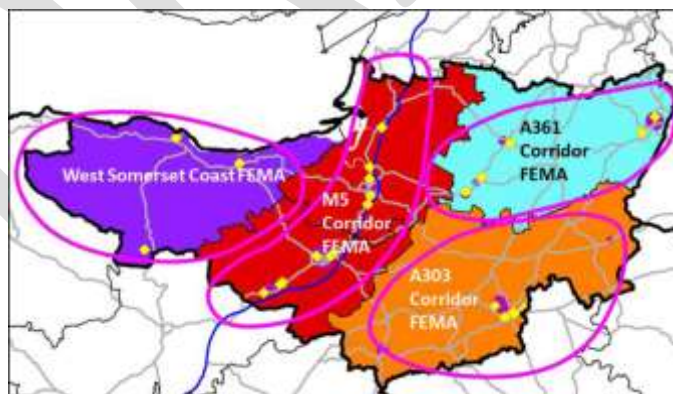
Demography & Population

- 2.5 South Somerset has a population of 164,982 people¹⁰; since 2001 it has grown at a relatively consistent rate of around one thousand people per year. Yeovil is the largest town in the District, with a population in 2016 of 47,780¹¹.
- 2.6 The main cause of population growth in South Somerset is internal migration from within the UK¹², mostly in the 65-69 age group, highlighting the attractiveness of the District to retirees.
- 2.7 South Somerset's population is ageing, with a sharp growth in those aged over 60. Recent data shows significant losses in those aged 30 to 44¹³. It is likely that this trend will continue over the long term, therefore the District may face challenges in providing a sufficiently large and competitive labour force in the future.

Economy

- 2.8 The functioning of the South Somerset economy is affected by influences at the national, regional and local levels. A Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) captures the way in which the economy and commercial markets operate in a given location. Local authorities are required to plan to meet the land and floorspace needs of businesses within the FEMA that is relevant to them. For planning purposes, South Somerset District broadly comprises a FEMA. The FEMA extends along the A303 corridor which is a strategic transport route that connects Somerset with the wider South West. The FEMA is shown in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: Functional Economic Market Areas in Somerset



Source: Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas in Somerset, ORS, 2015

¹⁰ ONS Mid -year Population estimate 2015

¹¹ Office for National Statistics: 2016 Mid-Year LSOA Estimates

¹² South Somerset Authority Monitoring Report, September 2016

¹³ South Somerset Authority Monitoring Report, October 2018

- 2.9 The A303 corridor provides a strong ‘east-west’ axis through the District, facilitating business connectivity as well as easy access to markets, labour, goods and materials.
- 2.10 Overall, there is a high degree of self-containment; 80% of people living in South Somerset also work in the District, and 81% of all jobs in the District are filled by residents¹⁴.
- 2.11 Whilst the population of South Somerset has been growing, the traditional working age population (those aged 16-64) has been falling since 2008. The economic activity rate and employment rate are both higher in South Somerset than the national average and unemployment is lower than the regional and national benchmarks, both of which suggests a high number of people of working age are working¹⁵.
- 2.12 South Somerset has a lower proportion of its working age population qualified to the highest level (NVQ Level 4 and above) than national and regional benchmarks. This is reflected in the occupational profile, with fewer residents employed in professional occupations or as senior managers. Earnings are lower in South Somerset than the South West and national average¹⁶.
- 2.13 The structure of the South Somerset economy has traditionally been dominated by agriculture, manufacturing and advanced engineering. There is a strong over representation of people working in the manufacturing sector, particularly aerospace manufacturing, reflecting the long history of rotorcraft manufacturing and its associated supply chains in the District. There is also a concentration of food manufacturing. The predominance of manufacturing exists alongside an under-representation of what might be termed “office based” activities such as financial, professional, and business services.
- 2.14 Tourism makes a significant contribution to the South Somerset economy and the planned improvement to the A303 and A358 should provide an opportunity to increase that expenditure.
- 2.15 South Somerset has experienced a much slower growth in its business base than comparator areas, although the survival rates of businesses which do form are good. Micro businesses (0-9 employees) are very important to the local economy; 89.7% of all enterprises are classed as micro-businesses¹⁷.
- 2.16 ONS Jobs Density is the most complete measure of all jobs in an area. This records 82,000 jobs in South Somerset in 2015, equivalent to 0.86 jobs per working age person, which is in line with national and regional averages¹⁸.

¹⁴ South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: review of FEMAs and Understanding Market Trends, HJA, 2017

¹⁵ South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: review of FEMAs and Understanding Market Trends, HJA, 2017

¹⁶ South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: review of FEMAs and Understanding Market Trends, HJA, 2017

¹⁷ South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: review of FEMAs and Understanding Market Trends, HJA, 2017

¹⁸ South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: review of FEMAs and Understanding Market Trends, HJA, 2017

- 2.17 Whilst current participation in the labour market is high, the economy has not seen any real growth in jobs in recent years. This, in addition to the reliance on the manufacturing sector, which is forecast to decline, and lower educational attainment and skills levels, is of concern. The micro businesses are incredibly important to the area.
- 2.18 Yeovil town centre is the largest in South Somerset in terms of physical size and trading ability. Yeovil is supported by a number of small market towns, district and local centres that serve a more local catchment area, according to size. Whilst Yeovil remains the most important centre within the District, the town centre has suffered mixed fortunes over recent years. It faces competition from out-of-town retail parks including the Peel Centre in West Dorset. In addition, since 2006, the recessionary impacts have been felt in the town centre, with an increase in vacancy rates; they currently stand at 16.9% which is higher than the national average 11.2%¹⁹.
- 2.19 Future plans for the regeneration of Yeovil, Chard and Wincanton Town Centres are integral to the Council's "investing in infrastructure" programme.

Housing

- 2.20 The housing market in which South Somerset operates and for which the LPR must plan to meet housing need is known as the Housing Market Area (HMA). The HMA for South Somerset has been confirmed as being the District boundary²⁰.
- 2.21 Affordability remains an issue across the District, with an average home in South Somerset costing around 7.5 times the average income.²¹ This makes it difficult for those people who are not yet on the housing market to buy a home. Prices in South Somerset are on a par with the County as a whole; albeit in some cases a little lower than in Taunton Deane. Prices are higher than in Sedgemoor, except for flats. 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.
- 2.22 Average house prices in the District (December 2017) range from £131,722 for a flat to £373,803 for a detached property²².

¹⁹ South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, 2017

²⁰ Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas in Somerset, ORS, 2015

https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/797657/2015_09_29_somerset_hma_and_fema_final_report.pdf

²¹ South Somerset Authority Monitoring Report, October 2018

²² South Somerset Authority Monitoring Report, October 2018

- 2.23 In terms of housing need, given the population aged 65+ in South Somerset is set to increase by 57.5% between 2014 and 2039²³ – there will be a need to consider housing options to meet the needs of older people.
- 2.24 There is a continuing need to find accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, both for transit and for permanent residence²⁴.
- 2.25 Housing delivery in the ‘Market Towns’ and ‘Rural Settlements’ in South Somerset remains strong, it is ahead of target and is greater than envisaged at this point in time in the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028).²⁵

Transport and Accessibility

- 2.26 South Somerset is linked to other areas by three major railway lines with regular daily services to London, Exeter, Bristol and Weymouth. The A303 Trunk Road and the A30 run east to west through the District and link it with London and the South West peninsula.
- 2.27 Highways England has recently submitted the Development Consent Order for proposals to upgrade the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester to dual the carriageway (2018) and also plan improvements to the A358 Taunton to Southfields (Ilminster).
- 2.28 Bus service coverage is poor, reflecting the rural nature of the District, and services are infrequent except in the largest settlements. However, there are three Community Transport Schemes in South Somerset providing essential journeys for those who do not have access to a car or public transport and meet certain eligibility criteria. Typical journeys include medical appointments, Day Care Centre visits and shopping.
- 2.29 South Somerset Community Transport operates a fleet of wheelchair accessible minibuses in the Yeovil, Chard, Ilminster, Somerton and Langport areas. The scheme also operates South Somerset Community Cars offering bespoke journeys and the pre-bookable Chard & Ilminster Slinky bus.
- 2.30 South Somerset Community & Accessible Transport (SSCAT) similarly provides accessible transport to the communities of Wincanton, Bruton, Castle Cary and the surrounding villages including the ring & ride ‘CAT’ bus and a community car scheme.
- 2.31 Crewkerne Voluntary Transport, which is run entirely by volunteers, offers group transport for residents of Crewkerne, Merriott, Hinton and surrounding areas. However, this scheme does not offer hospital or medical transport.

²³ Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Taunton Deane Strategic Housing Market Assessment, October 2016, Figure 11.2, page 216 https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/862544/somerset_final_shma_oct2016_revised.pdf

²⁴ Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment Update, September 2013
https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/856723/final_copy_12_september_2013.pdf

²⁵ South Somerset Authority Monitoring Report, October 2018

- 2.32 Congestion is an issue of concern in Yeovil, Crewkerne and Chard. There is a heavy reliance on the car for journeys to work and services. This presents a challenge for the District to move to more carbon friendly modes of travel.

Health and Wellbeing

- 2.33 The residents of South Somerset are generally in good health; in 2011 only 1% of people ranked themselves as having very bad health²⁶. National health issues such as increasing levels of obesity, declining physical activity levels and an ageing population bring their challenges.
- 2.34 The life expectancy at time of birth for South Somerset residents in 2014 was 80.9 years for males and 84.40 years for females²⁷; this compares well to the South West life expectancy of 80.2 years for males and 83.2 years for females. The national average is a life expectancy of 79.5 years for males and 83.2 for females²⁸.
- 2.35 A number of Local Super Output areas in Yeovil and Chard are within the most deprived 20% in England; conversely both towns have areas within the least deprived 20% in England²⁹. Those living in the most deprived areas are likely to suffer poorer health and need more support.
- 2.36 Some residents, particularly in rural areas, suffer inequalities. High house prices make it difficult to enter the housing market and have an impact on rent prices, thereby making it more costly to rent. Whilst very limited public transport can make access to employment and services such as health facilities, shops and schools difficult. These inequalities can be compounded by poor mobile and broadband services, making online alternatives for example, for healthcare, also inaccessible.

Environmental Quality

- 2.37 South Somerset has a mainly undulating, agricultural landscape with some very fertile belts that have traditionally been farmed for top quality products such as apples and dairy produce. Much of the District is best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land.³⁰ Topography and agricultural practices have helped secure special status for outstanding landscapes such as the 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 the Dorset AONB which runs along the southern boundary of the District. Management Plans are

²⁶ Census 2011: Key Figures for Health Care

²⁷ Somerset Intelligence Partnership: Index of Multiple Deprivation

²⁸ ONS Census 2011

²⁹ Super Output Areas are units of area used by the Office of National Statistics to gather and compare data.

³⁰ Best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land is defined in the Annex 2 of the NPPF, 2018 as land in grades 1,2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

produced by the AONB areas. The Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-24 is currently in draft form.

- 2.38 The District is known for areas of high nature conservation value. The European designation of Special Protection Area and RAMSAR³¹ site applies to parts of the Somerset Levels and Moors in the north of the District. There are two other National Nature Reserves at Hardington Moor and Barrington Hill, near Ilminster.

Historic Environment

- 2.39 South Somerset has a rich and diverse historic environment. The villages and historic parts of the larger settlements are built with distinctive local stone such as Ham Stone and Blue Lias. The area has a high concentration of listed buildings and Conservation Areas as well as Listed Parks and Gardens and estates owned by the National Trust. There are 97 Grade I Listed buildings in South Somerset, and 89 Conservation Areas.
- 2.40 There is a strong link between the environmental quality and productivity of the area and the success of the local economy, through commerce, recreation, tourism and providing an environment where people want to live and work.

³¹ Designated by the RAMSAR Convention (The Convention on Wetland of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat) as a term to identify wetland sites of international importance.

3. Strategic Objectives and Vision

Current Approach

- 3.1 The current Council Plan 2016 - 2021³² provides a clear focus for the Council and what it will deliver during a period of major change. The Council's Aims are to:
- Protect Core services to the public by reducing costs and seeking income generation.
 - Increase the focus on jobs and economic development.
 - Protect and enhance the quality of our environment.
 - Enable housing to meet all needs.
 - Improve health and reduce health inequalities.
- 3.2 That Council is now in the process of updating that Council Plan and has already identified the Priority Projects for the year 2019 to 2020.
- 3.3 The Council's Priority Projects for 2019 to 2020 are:
1. To complete and fully realise the benefits of Transformation and implement the Commercial Strategy.
 2. To finalise plans and progress implementation of the Chard regeneration project.
 3. To continue the refresh of Yeovil Town Centre.
 4. To implement the town centre action plan for Wincanton.
 5. To develop proposals to accelerate the delivery of key housing sites and associated infrastructure.
 6. To assess options for improving community transport links.

The Vision for 2036

- 3.4 The Vision to 2036 provides a positive basis for the future building upon the Council Plan :

South Somerset will be a thriving, attractive, healthy and socially inclusive place to live, work, study and visit. A place where businesses flourish and become more productive, communities are safe, vibrant and healthy, where residents enjoy good housing and cultural, leisure and sporting activities. It will have sustainable, low carbon towns with enhanced infrastructure of all types and improved public transport links. The District will have high quality distinctive, historic, urban and rural environments, with vital and vibrant town centres with regeneration plans in Yeovil, Chard and Wincanton successfully accomplished. It will have a prosperous and productive economy building on existing strengths and provide a choice of high quality housing options for all. Inequality between urban and rural areas will be reduced with improved digital accessibility. The role of South Somerset as a gateway to the South West will be enhanced.

³² https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/883940/council_plan.pdf

Strategic Objectives

3.5 The objectives of the Local Plan Review are derived from the Council Plan and the NPPF. The Strategic Objectives form the overall strategic approach by which the Vision for South Somerset will be achieved and are as follows:

- 1. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes:** Promote sufficient high quality housing in sustainable locations, of a size, density and tenure required to meet the needs of the residents of South Somerset, delivered through a sustainable settlement strategy and hierarchy.
- 2. Building a strong, competitive economy:** To establish an environment where there is sustainable economic growth in South Somerset, where all new and existing businesses both urban and rural can invest, where they are supported, can flourish, be competitive and become more productive.
- 3. Ensuring the vitality of town centres:** Support and sustain a hierarchy of vital and vibrant town centres across the District to be the focus for commercial, retail and leisure uses and to deliver planned regeneration proposals in Yeovil, Chard and Wincanton town centres.
- 4. Promoting healthy and safe communities:** Create a health enhancing, socially interactive, safe environment through the promotion of walking, cycling and non-car based transport and design. This will enable access to leisure opportunities, sports facilities, local shops, health care facilities, meeting places, open spaces, green infrastructure and other local services with a clear legible and integrated approach to locating housing, economic uses, services and facilities.
- 5. Promoting sustainable transport:** Working with partners to address the impact of development on transport networks and maximising the opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure such as the planned improvements to the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester and the A358 Taunton to Southfields. Supporting the use of non-carbon fuel cars and commercial vehicles.
- 6. Supporting high quality communications:** In both rural and urban areas, to support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections.
- 7. Making effective use of land:** Promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 8. Achieving well designed places:** Support the creation of high quality buildings and places responding to local distinctive character and setting through the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials.
- 9. Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding:** Promote the reuse of resources, the principles of sustainable construction and the use of new technologies to combat and adapt to climate change to minimise impact of all new development on

the environment. Help to achieve the national aim of reducing the carbon budget by 57% below 1990 levels by 2030³³.

10. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment: Protection and enhancement of our distinctive natural environment, valued landscapes and biodiversity, retaining the distinctiveness of settlements and taking account of known environmental constraints, including flood risk, and noise and air pollution in distributing growth.

11. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment: To sustain and enhance the significance of the District's distinctive heritage assets, recognising the character they bring to places, and the wider social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits the conservation of the historic environment can bring.

Strategic Polices

- 3.6 The strategic policies in this Local Plan Review deliver the strategic objectives set out above. Where policies allocate land for development most are identified as being strategic, including brownfield sites, sites that are expected to deliver about 100 homes in Yeovil and the Market Towns and about 50 homes in Rural Centres.
- 3.7 Neighbourhood Plans are expected to generally accord with the strategic policies of the Local Plan Review and are expected to meet the housing requirement identified.
- 3.9 As explained in the Introduction the strategic policies in this Local Plan Review are shown in a green box whereas non-strategic policies are in a blue box. Additionally, to make it clear Appendix One includes a list of all the policies within the Plan and shows whether they are considered to be strategic or not.

³³ Current Government Policy is to reduce the carbon budget to 57% below 1990 levels by 2030. This is based on update advice from the Climate Change Committee in June 2016.

4. Delivering Sustainable Development

Overview

- 4.1 The achievement of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF, this is through both plan-making and decision-taking. Achieving sustainable development means the planning system has three interlinked objectives; an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.
- 4.2 The presumption in favour of sustainable development has informed the policies and site allocations in this Plan. They combine to deliver a positive and flexible approach to meeting the housing and economic development needs of the District and to ensure that development proposals that are sustainable are approved without delay.
- 4.3 The NPPF³⁴ confirms that the development plan is the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, including any neighbourhood plans that forms part of the development plan, permission should not normally be granted unless material considerations in a particular case mean the plan should not be followed.³⁵

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 4.4 Policy SD1 reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF. It provides the overarching framework to ensure a positive and flexible approach is taken to new development whilst protecting designated areas and heritage assets.³⁶
- 4.5 Where there is a neighbourhood plan in place³⁷, the policies considered most important to determining a planning application are **not** considered to be out of date if all of the following apply:
- a) The neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan two years or less before the date on which the decision (on the planning application) is made.
 - b) The neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.
 - c) The Council has at least a three year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five year housing supply requirement, including the appropriate buffer).
 - d) The Council's housing delivery was at least 45% of that required³⁸ during the previous three years.

³⁴ NPPF, 2018

³⁵ NPPF, 2018. Paragraph 12.

³⁶ NPPF, 2018. Paragraph 11 of the, footnote 6.

³⁷ Formally adopted or 'made' by the District Council

³⁸ Assessed against the Housing Delivery Test from November 2018 onwards.

- 4.6 In all other circumstances the Local Plan or neighbourhood plan policies which are the most important for determining the planning application are considered to be out of date if the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. This means that part iii) of Policy SD1 and paragraph 11d) of the NPPF applies.
- 4.7 The “policies in the Framework” referred to in part iii) 1 of Policy SD1 are those set out in footnote 6 of the NPPF and relate to those on habitats sites (listed in paragraph 176 of the NPPF) and /or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast, irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 63 of the NPPF); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

POLICY SD1 – DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- i) When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will work proactively with applicants to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
- ii) Where planning applications accord with the policies in this Local Plan Review (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) the Council will grant permission without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- iii) Where there are no relevant policies, or the relevant policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date at the time of making the decision, then the council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise - taking into account whether:
 1. The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 2. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole.

5. Settlement Strategy

Overview

- 5.1 The settlement strategy guides the overall delivery of housing and economic growth in South Somerset. This includes two key elements:
- A hierarchy of settlements identified on the basis of their current and potential role and function, with future growth concentrated in the larger more sustainable locations; and
 - An established scale of growth for housing and employment and associated land uses for the main settlements identified in the hierarchy.

Settlement Hierarchy for South Somerset

- 5.2 The Local Plan identifies the quantity and location of new development over the Plan period to 2036. This includes allocations for both housing and employment growth.
- 5.3 This Plan is based upon a statistical analysis of the employment, housing, retail and community use provision within settlements. In conjunction, evidence of sustainable travel opportunities and the relationship between where people live and work (self-containment) is also taken into account. The South Somerset Role and Function Study³⁹ identified a hierarchy of 14 main settlements:

Figure 5.1. Settlement Hierarchy in adopted Local Plan 2006-2028

Strategically Significant Town
Yeovil
Primary Market Towns
Chard
Crewkerne
Ilminster
Wincanton
Local Market Towns
Ansford and Castle Cary
Langport and Huish Episcopi
Somerton
Rural Centres
Bruton
Ilchester
Martock and Bower Hinton
Milborne Port
South Petherton
Stoke sub Hamdon
Rural Settlements
Settlements that meet the criteria for Policy SS2

³⁹ Settlement Role and Function Study, Baker Associates (April 2009)

- 5.4 The Issues and Options consultation document identified that development in Rural Settlements has made a significant contribution to housing delivery in South Somerset and more homes have been delivered in these locations than the settlement strategy envisaged. Larger Rural Settlements appear to be the focus for most development but there are also significant commitments in other smaller locations.
- 5.5 Option 5.2(c) considered the introduction of a 'Villages' category of settlement where a specific level of growth could be focused on more sustainable settlements and reduce the pressure on the smaller settlements which meet the criteria for adopted Local Plan Policy SS2.
- 5.6 The Council has carried out an assessment of Rural Settlements in order to determine if any have the potential to be designated Villages and as such have an identified level of growth⁴⁰. The assessment takes a staged approach which takes into account factors that are thought to contribute to the sustainability of settlement.

Stage One/ Level 1 Criteria:

- Size of existing population and number of dwellings.
- The level of existing community services.
- Whether opportunities for housing and employment growth have been identified.

Stage Two/ Level 2 Criteria:

- Existing employment levels.
- Accessibility by road, bus and rail.
- Apparent attractiveness to the housing and employment market
- Flood risk.
- The presence of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land.
- Ecological designations.
- Conservation Areas.

- 5.7 Undertaking this assessment has provided the opportunity to reassess the status of Stoke sub Hamdon within the settlement hierarchy. Stoke sub Hamdon is the smallest of the Rural Centres; the settlement has very limited scope for growth due to landscape constraints including the presence of Ham Hill Country Park and the number of commercial outlets in the centre is relatively restricted. This means that it is more appropriately designated as a Village than a Rural Centre.
- 5.8 The assessment concludes that there are 12 settlements (including Stoke sub Hamdon) which emerge as the most sustainable locations for development due to their performance against the criteria set out above, these are:
1. Abbas and Templecombe
 2. Broadway and Horton

⁴⁰ The Potential of Rural Settlements to be Designated 'Villages', December 2018

3. Charlton Adam and Charlton Mackrell
4. Combe St Nicholas
5. Curry Rivel
6. Henstridge
7. Keinton Mandeville
8. North Cadbury
9. Queen Camel
10. Sparkford
11. Stoke sub Hamdon
12. Tatworth

- 5.9 The hierarchy set out in Policy SS1 forms the basis of the Local Plan Review. The majority of the growth outside Yeovil should be in the Market Towns and Rural Centres in order to utilize the available employment and service opportunities, minimize the infrastructure investment required across the District, and increase the level of self-containment.
- 5.10 A Sustainability Appraisal of alternative settlement strategy options has been undertaken to ensure that the strategy is appropriate in terms of environmental, economic and social implications.

POLICY SS1 - SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

- i. **Principal Town:** Yeovil is the main focus for development in South Somerset.
- ii. The following are Market Towns where provision will be made for housing, employment, shopping and other services. These measures will increase their self-containment and enhance their roles as service centres:

Primary Market Towns: Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton.

Local Market Towns: Ansford and Castle Cary, Langport and Huish Episcopi and Somerton.

- iii. The following are Rural Centres which are settlements with a local service role, provision for development will be made that meets local housing need, extends local services and supports economic activity appropriate to the scale of the settlement:

Rural Centres: Bruton, Ilchester, Martock and Bower Hinton, Milborne Port and South Petherton.

- iv. The following are Villages where provision will be made for limited development to meet local need, support local services and economic activity appropriate to the scale of the settlement:

Villages: Abbas and Templecombe, Broadway and Horton, Charlton Adam and Charlton Mackrell, Combe St Nicholas, Curry Rivel, Henstridge, Keinton Mandeville, North Cadbury, Queen Camel, Sparkford, Stoke-sub-Hamdon and Tatworth.

- v. **Rural Settlements:** In Rural Settlements where Policy SS4 applies development will be restricted.
- vi. **Countryside:** Development within and outside of Rural Settlements where Policy SS4 does not apply will be limited to that for which a countryside location is essential or where it is in accordance with Policies EP4 and EP5.

Yeovil

- 5.11 The evidence base states that Yeovil remains the principal settlement within South Somerset. This is because of the size and scale of housing supply and economic activity, the extent of travel to work patterns and retail catchments and the extent of leisure, cultural, and transport services. Consequently, most new development is proposed at Yeovil.
- 5.12 Yeovil can deliver further development sustainably and promote a better balance between jobs and growth where people choose to live. A critical mass, economies of scale and better use of existing infrastructure can be secured

through Yeovil's continued designation as the primary focus for growth in this Local Plan Review.

- 5.13 Yeovil already acts as the focal point for economic activity in the District and has good manufacturing links with high tech industries and advanced engineering, building upon the strong links to the aeronautical industry. Growth in these sectors and in green technologies features prominently in the HOSW Local Economic Partnership's proposals for the town as defined in the Strategic Economic Plan and Growth Deal.

Market Towns

- 5.14 Outside Yeovil, there is to be more limited growth in other larger settlements. These are identified as Market Towns and Rural Centres and act as focal points for their area.
- 5.15 Market Towns should provide locally significant development and meet the following criteria:
- Have an existing concentration of business and employment with potential for expansion.
 - Have shopping, cultural, faith, educational, health and public services.
 - Have sustainable transport potential.
- 5.16 Classifying a place as a 'Market Town' has been achieved through identifying the range of important roles a settlement fulfills in their local setting. Most notably, whether they provide jobs and services for their residents, and the residents of the surrounding areas and elsewhere⁴¹. These towns are the focal points for locally significant development including the bulk of the District's housing provision outside Yeovil. This growth aims to increase the self- containment of these settlements and enhance their service role, reflecting the aspirations of national policy in promoting stronger communities.
- 5.17 The types of Market Town do differ across the District, due to their current level of services, facilities and economic activity. Therefore, two tiers of market town have been identified: Primary Market Towns and Local Market Towns. The scale of future growth allocated to these two tiers is proportionate, with the larger Primary Market Towns planned to receive a higher level of growth, and the smaller Local Market Towns a lower level of growth. The specific amounts are set out in Policy SS2.

Rural Centres

- 5.18 The Rural Centres 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 places to accommodate some housing and

⁴¹ Settlement Role and Function Study, Baker Associates (April 2009)

employment growth. Community facilities and services which meet the needs of the settlements and surrounding areas, are also encouraged.

Villages

- 5.19 New housing has been delivered in the Rural Settlements far in excess of what the Local Plan anticipated. Similarly, new commercial buildings have predominantly been provided away from the established employment locations and sites that have been allocated for that purpose. Rather than continue with this somewhat arbitrary situation, the Local Plan Review offers the opportunity to review the various smaller settlements around the District and to ascertain which may offer the best and most sustainable locations for limited growth and designation as 'Villages'.
- 5.20 Villages are settlements which are considered to be sustainable locations for small scale growth. This verdict is a result of having undertaken an assessment of a number of larger Rural Settlements. The assessment has followed a methodology taking account of the level of community services, population mass, employment opportunities, level of accessibility and constraints that currently exist (as at October 2018)⁴².
- 5.21 The Villages do not have identified development areas but growth is expected to take place adjacent to the existing built settlement.

Rural Settlements

- 5.22 The NPPF promotes sustainable development in rural areas, with housing and employment to be located where it enhances or maintains the vitality of rural communities.
- 5.23 Rural Settlements are considered as locations where there will be a presumption against development unless key sustainability criteria can be met. This is explained in Policy SS4. These settlements do not have identified development areas but are locations where some limited development could help to create more sustainable settlements which better cater for the needs of the existing and future residents.
- 5.24 Future delivery of housing and economic activity in rural locations needs to carefully balance the sustainment of communities against the protection and enhancement of the rural environment. The rural lifestyle provided by the many small villages and hamlets in South Somerset is one of the unique qualities of the District, and in turn, creates a range of challenges and opportunities that require delicate management.
- 5.25 Evidence indicates that rural areas experience higher property prices and have associated issues with housing affordability. These areas are usually populated by an increasingly aged population and can suffer from socio-economic disadvantages stemming from rural isolation, a low-wage economy and poor

⁴² The Potential of Rural Settlements to be Designated 'Villages', December 2018

transport (especially public transport) links. At the same time, these areas provide attractive, tranquil environments prompting a higher quality of life, support diverse and innovative economic activity, and foster a strong sense of community.

- 5.26 The NPPF⁴³ expects planning policies for rural areas to be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs and should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites which will provide affordable housing to meet local needs.
- 5.27 Furthermore, it is important that planning does not pre-determine the future of rural communities by only assessing communities as they are now and not what they could be. In too many places this approach writes off rural communities in a 'sustainability trap' where development can only occur in places already considered to be in narrow terms 'sustainable'. The question that should be asked is: "*how will development add to or diminish the sustainability of this community?*". This requires a better balance of social, economic, and environmental factors to form a long term vision for all scales of communities.

Countryside

- 5.28 Isolated new homes in the countryside will be resisted unless the special circumstances set out in the NPPF⁴⁴ and Policies HG7 and HG8 are met.
- 5.29 The NPPF supports the sustainable growth and expansion of existing business in rural areas, this includes through conversion of existing buildings or well-designed new ones; conversion and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses; sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments in keeping with the countryside; and the retention of accessible local services and facilities⁴⁵. This is supported by Policies SS4, EP4 and EP5 in this Local Plan Review.
- 5.30 The NPPF recognises that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements and in locations that are not well served by public transport.⁴⁶
- 5.31 When proposing a non-agriculture related greenfield development for business or community use in a countryside location, which is away from an existing settlement; applicants will be expected to justify why that location is essential. Applicants will also be expected have first explored opportunities of previously developed land or through the conversion of existing agricultural buildings elsewhere in the District.

⁴³ NPPF 2018, Paragraph 77.

⁴⁴ NPPF, 2018. Paragraph 79

⁴⁵ NPPF, July 2018. Paragraph 83

⁴⁶ NPPF, July 2018. Paragraph 84

Scale of Growth – Housing

- 5.32 The standard methodology published alongside the revised NPPF⁴⁷ has been used to calculate the annual local housing need figure set out in this document. The starting point for the calculations are the national household growth projections for South Somerset and an affordability ratio is then applied to determine the annual number of homes needed.
- 5.33 The Government's Technical Consultation on Changes to Planning Policy Guidance published in October 2018 confirms that for the time being the 2014-based household projections should be used as the baseline for determining local housing need. In the longer term, central government intends to review the formula with a view to providing greater stability and certainty for Councils and communities. This future improved formula should also ensure that the methodology responds to household projections and price signals as well as ensuring that planning policy supports a housing market that works for everyone⁴⁸.
- 5.34 Figure 5.2 sets out the component parts of the calculation of the local housing need figure for South Somerset using the standard method and using the 2014-based household projections as the starting point.

Figure 5.2: Calculation of Minimum Annual Housing Need for South Somerset (2014-based household projections)

	Annual Households (2018-2028)	Affordability Ratio 2017	Adjustment Factor	Plus 1	Annual average housing growth	Minimum Annual Local Housing Need	Overall Minimum Local Housing Need for 10 year period	Overall Minimum Local Housing Need for 20 year period
Components of the calculation	5,758	8.16	0.26	1.26	575.8	725.508	7255.08	14510.16
Notes	Difference = 5,758 (79,711 - 73,953)	Table 5C (2017 affordability ratio)	$(8.16 - 4) / 4 \times 0.25$	$0.26 + 1$	$5,758 / 10$	1.26×575.8	725.08×10	7255.08×2

- 5.35 The 2014-based calculation results in an overall housing requirement of at least 14,510 dwellings over a 20 year plan period and a minimum annual local housing need figure of 726 (rounded) dwellings.

⁴⁷ How is the minimum annual housing need figure calculated, July 2018
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728247/How_is_a_minimum_annual_local_housing_need_figure_calculated_using_the_standard_method.pdf

⁴⁸ Technical Consultations on Changes to Planning Policy and Guidance, October 2018

- 5.36 Once adopted, the annual local housing need figure will be the target against which the Council will be judged for the purposes of the Housing Delivery Test (HDT)⁴⁹. The Council will be expected to maintain a five-year supply of housing land in accordance with the NPPF.⁵⁰
- 5.37 Policy SS2 identifies levels of growth which provides for housing in excess of the minimum local housing need target of 14,510 new homes. This is in order to allow for a level of flexibility as the Local Plan Review progresses and to avoid having to carry out additional consultation if levels of growth need to be adjusted or through the consultation process it becomes clear that a site/sites is no longer deemed to be deliverable. Subsequently, the Council may wish to consider identifying some of the sites as 'reserve sites' where development would be directed first, should it be in the position where it is unable to identify a five-year supply of housing land. At this point in time it is not proposed that the final Local Plan Review will have a housing requirement in excess of the 14,510 minimum local housing need figure.

Distribution of Housing Growth

- 5.38 The distribution of housing will be in accordance with Policy SS1. This results in the majority of housing being directed towards Yeovil as the Principal Town in the District, followed by a smaller amount in each of the Market Towns, and then a lesser allocation for each of the Rural Centres. An overall housing target is identified for the Villages and Rural Settlements. Decisions on how much, and where development will take place in a Rural Settlement should be determined in conjunction with the aims of Policy SS4.
- 5.39 The rate of delivery of new homes in Yeovil has been identified as an issue in terms of maintaining a constant supply of new homes. This is largely due to the fact that large urban extensions take longer to masterplan and advance through the planning application process resulting in delays in delivery. As a way of addressing this, the Local Plan Review sees a lower proportion of the overall growth being directed towards Yeovil than in the adopted Local Plan, reducing the proportion from 47% to 33%.
- 5.40 The focus nationally on the delivery of new homes and the introduction of the new Housing Delivery Test means that the Local Plan Review needs to focus on a wider choice of development sites in terms of location and size in order to help improve the prospect of maintaining a five-year housing land supply. This is reflected in the levels of growth apportioned to the different settlement categories.
- 5.41 The evidence used to inform the apportionment of housing growth for each of the settlements includes but is not limited to: The Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, economic growth projections, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the Authority Monitoring

⁴⁹ Housing Delivery Test Rule Book, July 2018.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728523/HDT_Measurement_Rule_Book.pdf

⁵⁰ NPPF, 2018. Paragraph 73.

Report, existing housing commitments, and settlement-specific documents such as the Chard Regeneration Framework as well as on-going regeneration plans for Chard and Wincanton and relevant Neighborhood Plans. In simple terms the overall strategy distributes housing growth for South Somerset between 2016 and 2036, as set out below:

Figure 5.3: Distribution of housing growth by settlement category as compared to the adopted Local Plan

Settlement Type	Number of Settlements of that Type	Overall Percentage of Growth in adopted Local Plan (%)	Overall Percentage of Growth in Local Plan Review Preferred Options (%)	Percentage of growth per settlement in Local Plan Review Preferred Options (%)
Principal Town	1	47%	33%	33.00%
Primary Market Towns	4	25%	30%	7.50%
Local Market Towns	3	7%	11%	3.67%
Rural Centres	5	7%	8%	1.60%
Villages	12	N/A	8%	0.67%
Rural Settlements (that qualify as at October 2018)	23	14%	11%	0.48%

5.42 The overall scale of growth and the wider policy framework requires an emphasis upon maintaining the established settlement hierarchy and ensuring sustainable levels of growth for all settlements.

Housing Allocations

5.43 Allocations for housing development have been made in Yeovil, the Market Towns and in Rural Centres and are shown in each of the relevant settlement sections of this document.

5.44 These allocations will make a significant contribution towards delivering the overall requirement for new homes in the most sustainable locations in accordance with the strategic approach set out in this Local Plan Review.

Housing Requirements for Neighbourhood Plans

5.45 There are seven designated neighborhood areas within South Somerset. At the time of writing, three Neighborhood Plans have been 'made'⁵¹ and others are at

⁵¹ This is the term used when a neighbourhood Plan has been through the whole process including a referendum and the Council has made the decision that it is part of the development plan.

various stages of development. Figure 5.4 shows where each Neighborhood Plan is in process of being created.

Figure 5.4 Progress of Neighbourhood Plans in South Somerset

Neighbourhood Plan	Progress
Wincanton	Made
South Petherton	Made
East Coker	Made
Castle Cary and Ansford	Submitted for Examination
Queen Camel	In progress
Martock and Bower Hinton	In progress
Ilminster	In progress

- 5.46 The NPPF says that local plans should set a housing requirement for designated neighborhood areas. Because of their status in the settlement hierarchy most of the designated neighborhood areas are given a specific housing requirement in Policy SS2.
- 5.47 Queen Camel is identified as a Village in the settlement hierarchy and as such its housing requirement falls within the Village's overall target. The emerging neighbourhood plan is seeking to deliver around 2 to 2.5 homes per year, a total of 35-40 dwellings in the period 2018 to 2034. The Local Plan Review is proposing 1,314 new homes in Villages once the number of completions (as at 31st March 2018) and commitments (as at 31st March 2018) are taken away from that total. There remains 722 homes to be delivered. There are twelve Villages in total and when divided equally this equates to 60 dwellings per Village over the Local Plan Review Period of 2016-2036. Therefore on this basis there is a housing requirement of 60 dwellings for Queen Camel over the twenty year period, this would equate to 3 new homes a year.
- 5.48 Given the parishes relationship with the built-up area of Yeovil, the East Coker Neighbourhood Area is more complicated. Policy ECH1 of the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan identifies a housing requirement of 54 new dwellings over the period April 2011 to March 2028, this target excludes the Yeovil South Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) at Keyford, Policy YV2. The Local Plan Review includes a proposed allocation to extend the Keyford SUE to the south to accommodate an additional 200 dwellings. It is proposed that this too should be excluded from the neighbourhood area target.
- 5.49 As East Coker, combined with North Coker, meets the criteria to qualify as a Rural Settlement under Local Plan Review Policy SS4 it is proposed that the housing requirement for the East Coker neighbourhood area is 38 dwellings.
- 5.50 The justification for this is that the proposed overall target for Rural Settlements is 1,686 dwellings once completions (as at 31 March 2018) and commitments (as at 31st March 2018) are taken away from that total, 876 dwellings remain to be delivered. As at October 2018, twenty-three Rural Settlements have the four facilities which qualify them for growth under Local Plan Review Policy SS4.

When divided equally this equates to 38 dwellings per settlement over the period 2016-2036.

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POLICY SS2 - DELIVERING NEW HOUSING GROWTH

- i. The housing requirement for South Somerset is at least 14,510 dwellings in the plan period 2016 to 2036.
- ii. This provision will include: Housing development and redevelopment within development areas, allocations identified within this Local Plan Review, conversions of existing buildings, residential mobile homes, housing approved in accordance with Policy SS4 Development in Rural Settlements and new housing allowed through Permitted Development Rights.
- iii. The distribution of development across the settlement hierarchy will be in line with the numbers set out below:

Settlement	Local Plan Review 2016-2036 Number of new homes required (net)
Principal Town	
Yeovil	5,091
Primary Market Towns	
Chard	1,995
Crewkerne	1,194
Ilminster	839
Wincanton	613
Local Market Towns	
Castle Cary and Ansford	727
Langport and Huish Episcopi	351
Somerton	574
Rural Centres	
Bruton	152
Ilchester	361
Martock and Bower Hinton	330
Milborne Port	245
South Petherton	116
Villages	
Queen Camel Neighbourhood Area	60 (of the 1,314)
Rural Settlements	
East Coker East Coker Neighbourhood Area (excluding the Yeovil South Sustainable Urban Extension – Policy YV1 and Policy YV3)	38 (of the 1,686)
Total	*15,588

*This figures exceeds the 14,510 South Somerset housing requirement at this stage in the process for the reasons set out in paragraph 5.37 of this document.

- 5.51 Figure 5.5 provides more detail on the component parts of the individual housing requirements set out in Policy SS2. It will be updated at the next stage of the Local Plan Review process to take account of planning approvals since 31 March 2018 and any other amendments.

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Figure 5.5 Detail of Housing Requirements

Local Plan Review	Completions 2016-2018 as at 31 st March 2018	Commitments - net commitments as at 31 st March 2018	Completions 2016-2018 as at 31 st March 2018 plus net commitments as at 31 st March 2018	LPR Housing requirement 2016-2036	Residual Requirement (any pending planning applications, planning permissions granted after 31 st March 2018 and new LPR allocations are included within this number)
Yeovil	564	1640	2204	5091	2887
Chard	31	474	505	1995	1490
Crewkerne	9	705	714	1194	480
Ilminster	14	105	119	839	720
Wincanton	62	281	343	613	270
Ansford/ Castle Cary	7	559	566	727	161
Langport/ Huish Episcopi	25	146	171	351	180
Somerton	80	354	434	574	140
Bruton	11	76	87	152	65
Ilchester	4	157	161	361	200
Martock/ Bower Hinton	45	75	120	330	210
Milborne Port	29	76	105	245	140
South Petherton	20	41	61	116	55
Villages	121	471	592	1314	722
Rural Settlements	157	653	810	1686	876
Total	1179	5813	6992	15588	8596

Source: South Somerset District Council Housing Monitoring Database

Scale of Growth for the District and the Main Settlements

Employment

- 5.52 The Local Plan seeks to support the development of a strong, high performing, resilient and adaptable economic by creating a planning framework within which all businesses can invest, adapt and expand in South Somerset. In recognition of the rural nature of the District and to ensure a sustainable approach to growth, an alignment between housing growth and jobs is made at a District-wide level.
- 5.53 To deliver these objectives it is important that the Local Plan sets out a clear vision and strategy that encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to the draft South Somerset Economic Development Strategy and regeneration proposals for Yeovil, Chard and Wincanton.
- 5.54 Currently South Somerset's economy is robust with high economic activity and employment rates. Whilst there has not been substantial growth in new jobs in recent years, with low unemployment and a declining working age population, this has not yet been of concern.
- 5.55 The evidence base used to inform the plan⁵² has assessed a range of data and developed economic scenarios reflecting upon previous rates of growth, current challenges, and future opportunities. Two sets of economic forecasts, coupled with local intelligence were used as the basis for identifying a jobs growth target, and subsequent employment land requirement for this Local Plan. Whilst the forecasts revealed differences in outlook in terms of growth because of the different assumptions they made in their models, both forecasters were in agreement that the level of employment growth over the Local Plan Review period would be lower than the figure identified in the adopted Local Plan. The evidence identifies that South Somerset should see a minimum of 9,360 new jobs delivered between 2016 and 2036⁵³. The Local Plan will support this jobs growth through site allocations and criteria based policies.
- 5.56 The lack of job growth is largely explained by the sectoral make-up of the local economy, with an over-representation in sectors such as manufacturing and its associated supply chain, that have experienced employment decline in recent years. Micro-businesses also dominate and the growth in these businesses, like in jobs, has been slower in recent times than in other areas. The high representation in

⁵² South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: Long Term Economic Forecasting and Implications for Employment Sites and Premises (July 2017) https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/890009/long_term_-_final_report_v2.0.pdf, Addendum to South Somerset Employment Land Evidence: Long Term Economic Forecasting and Implications for Employment Sites and Premises (November 2018) https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/930363/long_term_-_final_report_addendum_1_v4.0.pdf

⁵³ Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil (January 2011) & Examination Core Document 167: Employment Policy SS3: Proposed Main Modifications Background and Further Evidence Base (November 2013)

manufacturing is countered by an under-representation in “office-based” activities, such as financial, professional and business services. That said, the South Somerset Economic Development Strategy notes that key growth sectors, including aerospace, advanced engineering and manufacturing, healthcare, tourism and food and drink offer opportunities for growth and diversification and a high proportion of small businesses and entrepreneurs provide further opportunities for growth and innovation.

- 5.57 A lower job creation target, coupled with a national drive to improve the productivity of existing businesses and a reliance on contracting sectors such as manufacturing has implications for the District’s future land and floorspace requirements. For planning purposes it is important to note that whilst the evidence shows that the additional jobs will be spread across a wide range of sectors and require land to be identified where possible to support that growth, a substantial number of jobs will be created in town centres, health, education and leisure activities (not traditional B Use Class activities) and nearly a third of new jobs will not require any land as they will be homeworkers or people who require no fixed place of employment, such as construction workers.
- 5.58 That said, in these uncertain economic and political times, the key will be flexibility and the criteria based policies in this Local Plan Review (see Economic Prosperity, Chapter 10) are flexible enough to accommodate needs not yet anticipated such as additional jobs that may arise from for example the food and drink industry, a key growth sector recognised in the Council’s Economic Development Strategy, which links to agriculture and may experience growth as a result of Brexit.
- 5.59 South Somerset is an agricultural District and supporting agri-businesses a range of rural diversification projects will be important to realise the Council’s economic ambitions. Policies EP4 (Delivering Employment Land), EP5 (Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside) and EP6 (Farm Diversification) are relevant for such development.
- 5.60 The tourism sector in South Somerset is also long established and supporting further growth and value in this sector of the economy will be supported through Local Plan Policy EP8 (Tourism).
- 5.61 The Local Plan’s approach supporting economic growth and delivering employment land seeks to focus growth in the main settlements to ensure more sustainable and self-contained communities that are better placed to offer a range of opportunities to all of their residents. This approach will support the retention of strong, vibrant and healthy communities. In addition to this focused approach, in recognition of the rural nature of the District, growth will be supported along the main transport corridors, maximising the potential of the A303 to the economy.
- 5.62 Past economic success has been used to inform the distribution of these jobs across the District. The presumption is that the focus for economic growth will be Yeovil, followed by the Market Towns and Rural Centres. Additional employment land required to support the jobs likely to come forward in the Villages and Rural

Settlements will be small-scale and will be expected to accord with Local Plan Policies SS4, EP4 and EP5.

- 5.63 The Local Plan Review removes the jobs target by settlement that appeared in the adopted Local Plan because of the difficulties in monitoring annual jobs growth at a settlement level.
- 5.64 The Employment Land Review is the evidence based document that identifies and justifies the amount of employment land required by settlement. This section of the Local Plan Review will be informed by that document once it is completed.
- 5.65 The allocation and distribution of employment land across the District will be set out in Figure 5.6 below. This will be supported by a combination of quantitative and qualitative need justifications for each settlement.
- 5.66 The Local Plan Review carries forward a number of employment land sites from the adopted Local Plan. These sites continue to form part of the strategy set out in Policy SS3 and Policy EP1 for employment land delivery through to 2036. They are:
- 5.67 The jobs figure cited in Policy SS3 is expressed as a minimum and the Council will monitor performance against this district-wide target. The implications in terms of the balance of the economy, the number of jobs created and the land requirements for these sectors of the economy will require careful monitoring so as to be flexible and responsive to business needs, whilst also achieving sustainable patterns of development

Figure 5.6: Employment Land Justifications

Settlement	Employment land required to support B Use jobs growth	Existing employment land commitments	Qualitative and quantitative justification for employment land	Local Plan new employment land requirement
Yeovil				
Chard				
Crewkerne				
Ilminster				
Wincanton				
Castle Cary and Ansford				
Langport and Huish Episcopi				
Somerton				
Bruton				
Ilchester				
Martock and Bower Hinton				
Milborne Port				
South Petherton				

Villages				
Rural Settlements				
Total				

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POLICY SS3 - DELIVERING NEW EMPLOYMENT LAND

- i. The local plan will assist the delivery of 9,360 jobs by identifying 91 hectares of land for the development of employment uses (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) between April 2016 and March 2036 and supporting other forms of economic development through the criteria based policies in this plan (ref policies here).
- ii. The distribution of development across the settlement hierarchy will be in line with the numbers below:

Settlement	Local Plan Review 2016-2036 Amount of Employment Land required (net)
Yeovil	X
Chard	X
Crewkerne	X
Ilminster	X
Wincanton	X
Castle Cary and Ansford	X
Langport and Huish Episcopi	X
Somerton	X
Bruton	X
Ilchester	X
Martock and Bower Hinton	X
Milborne Port	X
South Petherton	X
Villages	X
Rural Settlements	X
Total	91 hectares

Villages

- 5.68 The introduction of a Villages category of settlement seeks to direct growth away from the smaller Rural Settlements. This approach seeks to reduce the demand for growth in less sustainable places and encourages growth where there is a greater concentration of services and facilities. It is thought that this approach is results in a more balanced settlement hierarchy.
- 5.69 The Local Plan Review does not allocate sites for development in Villages nor does it define Development Areas in these locations. However, Policies SS2 attributes an overall scale of growth to Villages, derived from a consideration of the size and function.
- 5.70 New development at Villages will be expected to adjoin the existing main built settlement and respect the character and setting of the settlement in accordance with the other policies in this Local Plan Review.

Development in Rural Settlements

- 5.71 Policy SS4 seeks to ensure the development needs of Rural Settlements can be met, whilst restricting the scale of such growth. This policy is consistent with the spatial strategy of focusing development at Yeovil, the Market Towns, and the Rural Centres.
- 5.72 The Rural Settlements tier of the settlement hierarchy covers a range of settlements that vary in size, role, function, local priorities, and constraints. Therefore, the interpretation of Policy SS4 will depend on applying these factors in considering proposals at each individual settlement. Development should meet the needs of the settlement itself.
- 5.73 As Policy SS4 is starting from the premise of no development unless certain conditions are met, the evidence provided in support of applications is critical. Applications for new development in Rural Settlements will need to include necessary supporting evidence to justify that the criteria of Policy SS4 have been met. Such proposals should be based upon meeting the needs of the Rural Settlement in question, and developers are encouraged to carry out meaningful and robust engagement with the local communities at an early stage. This would include the town or parish council and other local stakeholders. Clearly the more types of development a proposal contains, the more broad based a case can be made for sustainable development. Opportunities for infill and use of previously developed land should be considered as well as development on greenfield sites.
- 5.74 Policy SS4 can be used as a starting point for rural communities who wish to identify land for development in Neighbourhood Plans. Community-led plans such as Parish Plans and Village Design Statements, which have been endorsed by the Council, are not development plan documents like adopted local plans and

'made' Neighbourhood Plans⁵⁴. However they can be used as evidence to inform the design and layout of planning applications for development in Rural Settlements.

- 5.75 Whilst the NPPF recognises that there may be occasions when nearby smaller settlements effectively provide and support local services for each other⁵⁵, 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.
- 5.76 It is important to ensure that the occupiers of new homes in Rural Settlements are able to live as sustainably as possible by having easy access to essential facilities that provide for their day to day needs. Therefore, development through Policy SS4 should only be located in those Rural Settlements that have at least four out of the six services listed below, if they do then for the purposes of Policy SS4 they will be regarded as a qualifying Rural Settlements.
1. Local convenience store / post office
 2. Primary School
 3. Health Centre
 4. Pub
 5. Village hall, community centre or faith facility with community meeting space
 6. Children's play area
- 5.77 In simple terms it is not realistic to expect a small hamlet with few services to be made a more sustainable location through new development.
- 5.78 The following sub-headings provide further explanation on meeting the types of development that will be appropriate in Rural Settlements i.e. employment, local services and housing.

Employment Opportunities

- 5.79 The NPPF⁵⁶ states that policies should support sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas. Economic growth in rural areas has many beneficial economic impacts. It will help overcome the unfulfilled economic potential in rural communities, tackle an over-reliance on traditional low paid employment as well as under-employment, and help limit skilled workers having to move elsewhere for work. The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership has identified rural enterprise as a key workstream and are working to take forward the recommendations in the South West Rural Productivity Commission Report⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ In South Somerset the adopted Local Plan, post referendum and 'Made' Neighbourhood Plans are development plan documents.

⁵⁵ NPPF, July 2018. Paragraph 78.

⁵⁶ NPPF, July 2018. Paragraphs 83 and 84.

⁵⁷ South West rural Productivity Commission Report, October 2017.

- 5.80 Some examples of employment opportunities that are likely to be acceptable in Rural Settlements include starter units to support individuals or small companies, workshops, and businesses that require a rural location e.g. farm diversification and tourism.
- 5.81 The scale of employment development that is acceptable in Rural Settlements will vary depending on the size and nature of each settlement. Policies EP4 and EP5 provide further detail on how applications for economic development in the countryside will be assessed.

Local Services and Facilities

- 5.82 Accessible local services that meet community needs and support well-being are vital to creating strong, vibrant and healthy communities.
- 5.83 Policy SS4 therefore generally supports proposals to create or enhance community facilities and services in Rural Settlements – this could include local shops; community halls; pubs; health and social care facilities; cultural, sports, recreation, faith and education facilities. It should be noted that there is a clear link between the provision of housing and employment and securing current and future facilities and services. The inter-relationship should be clearly explained in any application for development in Rural Settlements.
- 5.84 Evidence must be provided to demonstrate that this service/facility is required, that it would be viable in the longer term and that there is a suitable mechanism to deliver the facility or service.

Housing

- 5.85 The NPPF states that policies should take into account the need to provide housing in rural areas. Although the focus should be on existing towns and identified service centres, some new housing should be provided to meet identified local need in other rural areas⁵⁸, in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability.
- 5.86 Housing proposals should, where possible, demonstrate how they would support existing facilities. The NPPF states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.
- 5.87 The NPPF gives flexibility for local councils to set their own approach to delivering housing in rural areas. This includes considering whether allowing some market housing would enable the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs⁵⁹. Policy SS4 allows for both affordable and market housing.

⁵⁸ NPPF, July 2018. Paragraphs 77 and 78.

⁵⁹ NPPF, July 2018. Paragraph 77.

- 5.88 Housing proposals in Rural Settlements will need to fully explain how they contribute towards meeting local need within the settlement itself. This could be through delivering affordable housing or a different form or type of market housing which is in limited supply for locals, for example small bungalows for elderly local households to move to and remain in the village, or two bedroom accommodation for young households.
- 5.89 Evidence must be provided which demonstrates how the local need is being met, for example through a Neighbourhood Plan, a Local Housing Needs Survey no more than two years old, or other recent survey.
- 5.90 It will be expected that affordable housing is included as part of housing schemes proposed at Rural Settlements where the threshold in Policy HG2 is triggered. Where the threshold for the provision of affordable housing has not been triggered applicants should give careful consideration to the mix of housing proposed. The aim will be to achieve a better overall variety of housing in the settlement and result in a more balanced community with better prospects for local people being able to obtain affordable housing and/or access a wider range of market housing and have regard to Policies HG3 and HG4.
- 5.91 Policy SS4 does not preclude proposals for rural exception schemes which provide 100% affordable housing. In fact these will be supported and particularly encouraged in Rural Settlements.
- 5.92 In settlements that do not meet the criteria set out in part i. of Policy SS4, proposals for 100% affordable housing will be supported where there is an identified local need demonstrated through a Local Housing Needs Survey. The Council can provide support to those parishes wishing to carry out or commission such an assessment.
- 5.93 Policy SS2 sets out the scale of housing development that could be delivered in the Rural Settlements tier of the settlement hierarchy. The measures set out in Policy SS4 are designed to maintain the balance of that hierarchy and are in recognition of how development in Rural Settlements should be strictly controlled. In Rural Settlements that have four out of the six facilities listed in paragraph i.a. (qualifying Rural Settlements) development should not take place on sites over one hectare in size.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ This aligns with paragraph 68 a) of the NPPF, July 2018

POLICY SS4: DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL SETTLEMENTS

- i. Development in Rural Settlements will be supported where all the following criteria are met:
- a. The Rural Settlement must contain at least four of the following six types of service:
- Local convenience store / post office;
 - primary school;
 - health centre;
 - pub;
 - Village hall and/or community centre or faith facility with a community meeting space;
 - children's play area;
- b. Development must be located within or adjacent to the existing built settlement, be commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, and provide for two or more of the types of development listed below:
1. Affordable housing to meet an identified local need in that settlement.
 2. Market housing to meet an identified local need in that settlement.
 3. Employment opportunities appropriate to the scale of the settlement.
 4. Enhanced or new community facilities and services of an appropriate scale to serve the settlement, where a local need has been identified.
- c. Housing development in Rural Settlements should be accommodated on sites no larger than one hectare in size. In addition, the cumulative impact of development in any one Rural Settlement should not result in development of an overall scale that is inconsistent with the settlement strategy set out in Policy SS1.
- d. Proposals should be consistent with relevant Neighbourhood Plans, have regard to relevant community-led plans and should generally follow robust community engagement and consultation.
- ii. In settlements (not small groups of dwellings in the countryside) that do not meet the criteria a) to d), proposals for 100% affordable housing will be supported where there is an identified local need demonstrated through a Local Housing Needs Survey.

Infrastructure Delivery

- 5.94 The growth planned in the Local Plan Review needs to be supported by infrastructure, community facilities, and services to ensure the development of sustainable places. If the infrastructure required to meet the needs of the community is not provided alongside growth, there will be unacceptable impacts on local areas as well as residents and the quality of the environment will be adversely affected. The local authority is committed to ensuring that this does not happen and has successfully sought and used planning obligations to obtain the necessary resources to assist in the delivery of this vital infrastructure.
- 5.95 Planning Obligations in South Somerset are currently delivered through Section 106 Agreements and a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which was introduced in April 2017⁶¹.
- 5.96 Section 106 Agreements are legally binding agreements between local authorities and applicants/landowners which can form part of planning applications. Through these agreements, proper provision can be made to ensure that new development meets, or contributes to meeting, the necessary infrastructure for the development to go ahead.
- 5.97 In order to be requested as part of a planning application the requirements of a planning obligation must meet the following tests:
- Be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
 - Be directly related to the development.
 - Be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.⁶²
- 5.98 The Council will use its Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and regular monitoring of infrastructure capacity to understand the required infrastructure to ensure sustainable development. The report assesses the existing status of infrastructure in individual settlements. This assessment includes the settlement's capacity for growth, the nature of additional infrastructure found to be necessary to accommodate additional growth proposed, the likely costs of providing such infrastructure and any funding sources where known.
- 5.99 The Council is committed to working with other infrastructure providers to ensure timely delivery of services and to ensure that the IDP is kept up to date. It is a living document, and as changes to infrastructure requirements and funding arises, the Council will work with the relevant stakeholders to regularly review requirements.
- 5.100 The IDP has informed and will continue to inform any revisions of the Councils list of strategic infrastructure, (as currently identified by the Council under Regulation

⁶¹ CIL Information and Forms can be found on the Council web site: [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-permission/community-infrastructure-levy-\(cil\)/](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-permission/community-infrastructure-levy-(cil)/)

⁶² Set out in Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 and listed in paragraph 56 of the NPPF, 2018.

123⁶³). The Council is only able to spend the money collected through CIL on the items listed on the “123 list”.

- 5.101 Town and parish council's receive a proportion of the CIL collected in relation to qualifying development that has taken place in their parish. That proportion is 15%, limited to £100 per existing Council Tax dwelling per year. However, where there is a neighbourhood plan in place which has been successful at referendum and 'made' by the Council, the proportion rises to 25% and there is no annual limit. Town and parish councils are able to spend this money on local priorities.
- 5.102 For infrastructure projects which are not to be funded through CIL and which are required as part of a planning application to mitigate site specific issues, planning obligations under Section 106 will continue to be required.
- 5.103 In exceptional circumstances where the viability of a proposal is in question an 'open book' approach to viability will be undertaken and planning obligations will be reviewed in line with adopted Council procedure.⁶⁴
- 5.104 Affordable housing is not a type of infrastructure and is not part of CIL and will be negotiated as part of a Section 106 agreement. Policy HG2 sets out the threshold and target for the provision of affordable housing.
- 5.105 Where a site forms part of a wider development proposal on which planning obligations will be sought, the Council will seek to apportion the necessary planning obligations to ensure that the cumulative impact of such proposals are properly mitigated and to avoid piecemeal development.
- 5.106 Currently the CIL regulations⁶⁵ prevent Councils from pooling together more than five S.106 planning contributions to fund a single item of infrastructure. However, following a consultation on supporting housing delivery through developer contributions⁶⁶ the Government has stated its intention to lift the pooling restriction. Further legislation is required to make this change and the Government has consulted on revised regulations.⁶⁷

⁶³ S.I. 2010/948 Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, Regulation 123 requires the Council to publish a list of those types or individual infrastructure projects that will be funded or part funded by through CIL

⁶⁴ The current Council procedure is set out in the 'Development Control Protocol for identifying and prioritising planning Contributions, adopted 15 June 2006.

⁶⁵ Regulation 123

⁶⁶ This took place between March and May 2018.

⁶⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developer-contributions-reform-technical-consultation>

POLICY SS5 - INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

- i. The Council will secure the provision of (or financial contributions towards) social, physical and environmental infrastructure and community benefits which the council considers necessary to enable the development to proceed. Proposals that form part of potentially wider sites will be assessed in terms of the capacity of the site as a whole and such requirements sought on a pro-rata basis.
- ii. Planning Obligations (through Section 106 legal agreements) will be used to cover those matters which would otherwise result in planning permission being refused for an individual development and may be negotiated on a site by site basis.
- iii. The Council, in line with current practice within this and other Councils, will obtain payment from developers for legal and monitoring fees in association with Section 106 Agreements.
- iv. Infrastructure required as a result of a site specific planning obligation will normally be expected to be provided for onsite where appropriate and delivered in a timely manner. This will be undertaken alongside growth but may exceptionally, be provided nearby or through financial contribution.
- v. The types of infrastructure required will be considered on a site by site basis and may include the following, where appropriate and not otherwise funded in full or part through CIL (not exhaustive):
 - a. Renewable and low carbon energy.
 - b. Provision and enhancement of open space, sports facilities and play areas.
 - c. Providing for and improving accessibility by a variety of modes of sustainable transport.
 - d. Improvements to biodiversity assets and green infrastructure.
 - e. Road and highway improvement.
 - f. Community facilities, including Early Years, Primary, and Secondary educational provision.
- vi. The level of developer contribution will be proportionate to the nature, scale and viability of the project having regard to the:
 - a. Scale and form of development.
 - b. Capacity of existing infrastructure.
 - c. Potential impact of the development upon the surrounding area and its facilities.
- vii. In exceptional circumstances, where the viability of a scheme is contested the Council will adopt an 'open book' approach to negotiations in line with adopted Council procedures.
- viii. A Community Infrastructure Levy will be charged throughout the District in accordance with the adopted Charging Schedule for the provision of infrastructure in the area.
- ix. The Council will work in partnership with other authorities and infrastructure providers to ensure coordination of infrastructure delivery to support growth.

6. Yeovil

Spatial Portrait



- 6.1 Yeovil is by far the largest settlement in South Somerset and is the focus for employment, retail, services and housing in the District. It is located on the south eastern boundary of Somerset, adjacent to the Dorset border and is surrounded by a rural area of smaller market towns and villages.
- 6.2 Yeovil is closely linked to the A303 trunk road which runs east-west through the District. The A30 and A37 run through the town. There are two mainline railway stations, Yeovil Pen Mill on the Weymouth-Bristol line and Yeovil Junction on the Exeter-London Waterloo line. Neither station is ideally located, Pen Mill is on the eastern edge of the settlement and Yeovil Junction is located two miles to the south. However, there is a regular bus service from the stations to the town centre and Pen Mill has good pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre via an off road path.
- 6.3 Rapid housing development over the last 50 years has now taken Yeovil's population to around 47,780 people⁶⁸. This residential growth has primarily spread north and west of the town centre, absorbing the small hamlets of Preston Plucknett and Alvington, and now extending to the edge of Lufton hamlet to the west and Brimsmore to the north. Development to the southeast has been limited due to a combination of the River Yeo's flood plain, steep hills, and historic homes and estates.

⁶⁸ Office for National Statistics: 2016 Mid-Year LSOA Estimates

- 6.4 Yeovil plays a significant economic role in the County and is the prime economic driver for South Somerset. The town is the heart of aerospace research, design and manufacture in Somerset, with a long history of aircraft manufacture dating back over 100 years. For context, it has 21 times the concentration of employment in aerospace than the national average and consequently there are a high proportion of manufacturing jobs in the town. There are also many jobs in health and social work and retail in the town but the town is under-represented in private sector services such as banking and finance. The town has high levels of self-containment and also high levels of in-commuting.
- 6.5 Yeovil has a range of food and non-food shops, with numerous national multiple operators. Some of the key services and cultural activities in the town include Yeovil District Hospital, Yeovil College, the Octagon Theatre, Yeovil Town Football Club, and the refurbished Westland Leisure Complex.
- 6.6 Some of the core town centre functions of Yeovil are currently located elsewhere in the town. For example many offices including the Yeovil Innovation Centre and South Somerset District Council's main office are now located outside of the town centre.
- 6.7 The car currently dominates travel with over 40%⁶⁹ of people travelling to work by car or van. So whilst lots of people who live in Yeovil also work in Yeovil, they do not walk, cycle, or use public transport to commute. Although there are some dedicated cycle routes around parts of Yeovil, much of this network is discontinuous meaning that it is difficult to cycle to key destinations across the town, particularly from northern parts of Yeovil. Therefore, key traffic routes across the town suffer from congestion at peak times. Road traffic is the prime cause of poor air quality in parts of Yeovil, which has led to the whole town being designated as an Air Quality Management Area.
- 6.8 Yeovil is located in an attractive rural setting, within a sensitive landscape defined by escarpments to both the north and south. There is a rich historic environment in close proximity to the town, including registered Historic Parks and Gardens, village Conservation Areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Much of the town is surrounded by best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. There are several local wildlife sites and European protected species. The River Yeo flood plain runs along the eastern edge of the town. The Nine Springs Country Park just to the south of the town centre is a key asset and like much of the historic and natural environment provides tourism opportunities.

Local Aspirations - the 'Yeovil Town Centre Refresh'

- 6.9 The Town Centre Development Strategy for Yeovil has been undertaken by consultants on behalf of South Somerset District Council and the refresh of Yeovil Town Centre is one of the Council's Priority Projects for 2019 to 2020. More detail on this can be found in Section 11 – Town Centre Regeneration and Retail.

⁶⁹ Census, 2011

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Housing

- 6.10 The spatial strategy proposes about 5,091 new homes at Yeovil. This level of housing provision helps to maintain a balance with the town's potential job growth and will serve to maintain Yeovil as the focus for growth in the South Somerset economy. Additional housing will also help to support a vibrant retail, leisure and service base for the town and wider area.
- 6.11 The development capacity in Yeovil within the Local Plan Review period as at 31st March 2018 has been identified as:
- Completions: 564 dwellings
 - Commitments: 1640 dwellings
 - Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs): 1565 dwellings
 - Yeovil Town Centre: 500 dwellings
 - Other allocations: 822 dwellings

Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions

- 6.12 Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) at Yeovil including 1,565 dwellings and 5 ha of employment land are still required to deliver the proposed level of growth for the town. This would equate to around 3,400 people living in the urban extensions when completed. The scale of growth being proposed is similar at each SUE, with approximately 800 dwellings in the south area and 765 dwellings in the north east. Sufficient land for economic development is provided to allow for one job per household, and a range of community facilities are included to ensure a mix of uses and more sustainable communities. These capacity issues will be resolved in due course, with contributions being sought through Section 106 obligations and possibly CIL⁷⁰.
- 6.13 At the time of writing, planning applications for each of the SUEs remain to be determined⁷¹. In order for the outline applications and any subsequent reserved matters applications to be approved, they will need to have complied with the highest sustainability objectives and 'Garden City' design principles as previously established by Policy YV2 of the 2006-2028 Local Plan; and as set out in Policy YV1 of this Local Plan Review⁷².
- 6.14 In particular the following standards are to be pursued for these strategic locations for Yeovil:
- 40% greenspace – an aspiration in keeping with the Yeovil Vision and the high quality urban edge landscape of Yeovil;

⁷⁰ The current CIL Regulation 123 List, 2016 does not include education provision and this is currently addressed through S.106 obligations.

⁷¹ Primrose Lane, Upper Mudford – 14/02554/OUT; and Keyford – 15/01000/OUT

⁷² https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/707200/south_somerset_local_plan_2006-2028_adoption_version_march_2015.pdf

- A minimum of 30% affordable housing to achieve the garden town aspirations of the Council for the Urban Extensions – the Council’s target is 35%;
 - More options for non-car travel (30% of trips should be non-car) – the high usage levels of traffic on Yeovil’s roads throughout the network point to retention of this standard to enable maximum development and development benefits at minimum adverse traffic impact;
 - 1 job per household provided on site – this enables a new sustainable community less controlled by the need to use the car;
 - Homes accessible to public transport – the need to promote viable public transport in Yeovil is clear.
- 6.15 The Masterplanning of the planning application proposals has included the involvement and scrutiny of the local Parish Councils and communities.
- 6.16 The East Coker Neighbourhood Plan has now been made, having been agreed by an independent Examiner and the subject of a favourable referendum⁷³. The neighbourhood area includes the whole of the parish of East Coker which extends into the southern edge of Yeovil, where the Yeovil South Area SUE is located.
- 6.17 The Neighbourhood Plan provides for at least 54 additional dwellings within the Parish over the period 2011-2028 this figure excludes to Yeovil South Area SUE. Policy SS2 of this Local Plan Review sets a requirement for 38 new dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area excluding the South Area Sustainable Urban Extension and the site allocated under Policy YV3 of the Local Plan Review.

⁷³ The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended. [South Somerset District Council - East Coker Parish Neighbourhood Area Designation](#)

POLICY YV1 – YEOVIL SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSIONS

- i. The Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions are located in two areas to the south and north-east of the town and should provide the following:
 - a) The south area:
 - Approximately 2.58 hectares of land for economic development;
 - Approximately 800 dwellings; including 28% affordable housing
 - One Primary school;
 - A health centre; and
 - A neighbourhood centre.
 - b) The north east area:
 - Approximately 2.58 hectares of land for economic development;
 - Approximately 765 dwellings; including 28% affordable housing
 - One Primary school;
 - A health centre;
 - A neighbourhood centre; and
 - Landscape mitigation to address:
 - Potential massing effects across the site's northward face; and
 - Potential visual dominance at the site's edge and skyline.
- ii. The Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions will be developed to the highest sustainability objectives and Garden City principles.
- iii. Development within the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions will be permitted where features supporting bat movement are not severed and that access between feeding areas and roosts is maintained unless it can be proven that there would be no significant effect by the proposal on such features.

Yeovil Summerhouse Village

- 6.18 Current Local Plan Policy YV3 identifies land in the Yeovil town centre for a mixed use scheme including housing, employment, retail and leisure uses. This proposal has now been superseded by the Yeovil Refresh proposals which are discussed in Section 11 of this Local Plan Review and consequently Policy YV3 has been deleted.

North West of Brimsmore key Site

- 6.19 The site is adjacent to Brimsmore Key Site, to the north west of the main built-up area of the town. Whilst the settlement of Thorne Coffin lies to the east the scheme would sit in a natural low lying valley between two ridgelines. Significant landscaping would be required on the western and northern edges of the site. To the east the scheme would link with the existing Brimsmore Key Site development.

POLICY YV2 – YEOVIL HOUSING GROWTH NORTH WEST OF BRIMSMORE KEY SITE

The site north-west of Brimsmore Key Site is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 200 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children’s formal and informal play space
- Public open space
- Significant landscaping buffer on the western and northern edges

South of Keyford

- 6.20 This site will form a southern extension to the south Sustainable Urban Extension. Listed buildings at Key Farm are located to the south east of the site. The site of a Roman Villa – a Scheduled Ancient Monument – is also located nearby to the north-west corner. There are Rights of Way across the site which will need to be retained or re-routed following a successful application for a Diversion Order. In order to protect the setting of the site of the Roman Villa to the east; and to provide the opportunity to enhance biodiversity and provide additional public amenity land, the field to the west of Pavyotts Lane should remain undeveloped and planted with strong landscaping.

Policy YV3 – Yeovil Housing Growth south of Keyford

The site south of Keyford) is allocated for residential development, to provide the following: About 265 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;

- Children’s formal and informal play space
- Public open space
- Retention of existing Rights of Way
- A landscaping buffer in the western part of the site (west of Pavyotts Lane).

Land at Brimsmore Gardens

- 6.21 This site on the northern edge of Yeovil, adjacent to Brimsmore Gardens, extends to nearly 11ha. The topography in the NE corner slopes more steeply down to ponds and wooded area, so this part of the site should be provided as public open space, an area of biodiversity and sustainable drainage. Access should be off Tintinhull Road and not via the A37.

POLICY YV4 – YEOVIL HOUSING GROWTH AT BRIMSMORE GARDENS

The site at Brimsmore is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 200 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children’s formal and informal play space
- Public open space
- Retention of existing Rights of Way

Mudford Road

- 6.22 This site is on the north eastern side of Yeovil and proposes frontage development extending from the existing residential properties on the north side of Mudford Road extending around to the small group of houses on the A359 as you leave Yeovil in the direction of Mudford.
- 6.23 Frontage development only is proposed to reflect the character of the existing properties along Mudford Road.

POLICY YV5 – YEOVIL HOUSING GROWTH AT MUDFORD ROAD

The site at Mudford is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 25 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children’s formal and informal play space
- Public open space

Yeovil Former Bus Depot, Reckleford

- 6.24 This is a brownfield site just to the north of the designated Yeovil Town Centre. It is capable of accommodating a high density residential scheme in a highly sustainable location.

POLICY YV6 – YEOVIL HOUSING GROWTH AT THE FORMER BUS DEPOT, RECKLEFORD

The former Bus Depot is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 100 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Public open space

Junction of St Michaels Road and Victoria Road

- 6.25 This brownfield site is located in a predominantly residential area and its residential re-use should provide for reduced noise, hours of operation, traffic load and disruption. The site has the potential to link directly with adjacent play area.

POLICY YV7 – YEOVIL HOUSING GROWTH NORTH OF JUNCTION OF ST MICHAELS ROAD AND VICTORIA ROAD

The site north of the Road junction of St Michael's Road and Victoria Road is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 20 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Public open space

Eastville Road

- 6.26 This is another brownfield site in a predominantly residential part of the built-up area of Yeovil; and a relatively high density scheme may be acceptable, subject to the impact on adjoining properties.

POLICY YV8– YEOVIL HOUSING GROWTH AT EASTVILLE ROAD

The site at Eastfield Road is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 12 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Public open space

Employment



- 6.27 The Local Plan supports Yeovil's role as the prime economic driver in South Somerset as well as parts of surrounding districts. Policy SS3 (Delivering New Employment Growth) sets a target of ** ha of employment land, plus a further 5.16 ha in the Sustainable Urban Extensions.
- 6.28 Yeovil has delivered the most employment land in gross terms (11.84 hectares) of all the settlements in the District but once losses have been taken into account (8.86 hectares) this figure falls to just under 3 hectares (2.98ha)⁷⁴. Policy SS3 of the Local Plan is focused on net, new employment land delivery, and so the 2.98 hectares is somewhat 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.
- 6.29 Given that Yeovil is the largest urban area in the District, it is expected that there will be a degree of replacement, churn and loss as older buildings and premises become obsolete and new land/buildings are developed. To some extent, this represents the natural cycle of stock upgrades and replacement seen within all urban areas. The majority of losses have been to residential use.
- 6.30 Three employment allocations were carried forward from the old Local Plan (1991-2006) into the adopted Plan. These are ME/YEOV/4 Land south of Yeovil Airfield, ME/WECO/1 Land off Bunford Lane and the employment element of the

⁷⁴ SSDC Employment Monitoring Data – B1, B2 and B8 uses 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2018

Lufton Key Site, KS/BRYM/1, known as Lufton 2000. They all have planning permissions in place for employment development.

- 6.31 Figure 6.1 summarises the delivery of land for economic development in Yeovil as at 31 March 2018. This is all land for economic development, as opposed to just B Uses.

Figure 6.1: Yeovil Economic Development as at 31 March 2018

Status	Land (Hectares) (Net)	Floorspace (m ²) (Net)
Complete	3.98	25,579
Under Construction	5.62	-745
Not Yet Started	24.76	65,159
Total	34.36	89,993

Source: SSDC Authority Monitoring Report 2018

- 6.32 There does not appear to be any particular appetite for large scale office-building in Yeovil, although the Motivo Building appears successful and the Yeovil Innovation Centre has also recently been extended. Planning permission has also been granted for the iAero specialist aerospace serviced accommodation on Bunford Lane, adjacent to the airfield, with construction expected to start soon at the time of writing.

Retail

- 6.33 Yeovil is the largest town centre in South Somerset. Food shopping (known as convenience goods) is spread throughout the town both within what is known as the defined Town Centre (identified in the Local Plan Proposals Map) and outside, in other parts of the town. A total of £174.63 million in convenience goods expenditure was attracted to Yeovil in 2017, 48% of the total convenience goods spending attracted to the District. Of this spending, 31% was in the Town Centre and 69% in the rest of Yeovil⁷⁵. This isn't surprising as the majority of supermarkets are located outside of the Town Centre and there continues to be pressure for this as the development industry believes there are no suitable, available and viable town centre sites to accommodate further growth in food shopping.
- 6.34 Comparison goods refer to durable goods such as clothing or footwear, in other words, non-food. The comparison goods expenditure attracted to Yeovil in 2017 totalled £392.35m, equivalent to 86% of the total comparison goods spending in



⁷⁵ Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study; Lichfields, 2017

the District as a whole. Food and beverage expenditure attracted to Yeovil is £90.86 million; 57% of the total attracted to the District⁷⁶.

- 6.35 By way of comparison with other town and city centres, Yeovil is ranked 160th by Venuescore (2016)⁷⁷, Taunton 90th, Bristol 13th, Bath 19th, and Exeter 22nd.
- 6.36 The household shopper survey carried out as part of the Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study indicates that Yeovil is the main destination for 35% of South Somerset shoppers for food shopping and 77% for non-food. When asked what would make respondents shop in Yeovil more often 51.5% stated 'nothing'. A better choice of shops in general is the improvement most would like to see. The following summarises the suggested improvements:

Figure 6.2: What would make you shop more in Yeovil?



Source: NEMS Market Research

- 6.37 Looking to the future, the retail floorspace capacity at Yeovil is as follows:

Figure 6.3: Projected Retail Floorspace Capacity in Yeovil (sq. m gross)

Type	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	14	555	1,078
Comparison	5,755	13,561	21,508
Food and Beverage	502	1,489	2,452

Source: South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, 2017

⁷⁶ South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, Lichfields 2017 (Appendix 5)

⁷⁷ 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).

- 6.38 The vacant units in Yeovil town centre could accommodate some of this growth depending on the size and nature of available units and market demand.
- 6.39 The Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study does not recommend any change to the existing retail hierarchy. Yeovil is seen as having the best prospects for attracting investment from developers and multiple operators and should be the location for large-scale development serving a wider area. Infrastructure
- 6.40 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Update 2015/16⁷⁸ identifies a number of infrastructure requirements for Yeovil, these are summarised below. This document also analyses issues which have emerged through a consultation with infrastructure providers, since the update was published.

Figure 6.4: Infrastructure Requirements for Yeovil

Infrastructure Type	Project
Yeovil Refresh	<p>As part of the Yeovil Refresh initiative, there is a requirement for an overarching access strategy to provide the basis for transport in Infrastructure investments.</p> <p>A Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan is to be produced to provide the basis for future investment in cycling and walking infrastructure.</p> <p>A car parking action plan is to be produced and improved fixed plate directional signage is to be installed.</p> <p>Improved lighting is to be installed in West Hendford car park and a Public Realm Design Guide is to be produced.</p>
Highways	<p>The Yeovil Eastern Corridor project⁷⁹ proposed several improvements through the town centre and eastwards, and a significant amount of the work has now been completed using funding from developers and public finance (<i>Priority 1</i>).</p> <p>The Yeovil Western Corridor aims to increase the capacity of key junctions to the west of the town, as well as enhancing walking and cycling links (<i>Priority 1</i>). This is an £11 million scheme, fully funded through contributions from local development and the Heart of the South West Local Transport Board. At the time of writing, it is expected to be complete in the Spring of 2019.</p> <p>A number of other highway improvement works are planned as part of the delivery of the Key Sites and the two SUEs. Under the terms of the Section 106 Agreement signed for the Lyde Road Key Site, the following highway works are proposed and will be funded by developers:</p>

⁷⁸ South Somerset Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update 2015/16, Part One – Spatial Summary, January 2016: https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/814403/idp_2015_16_part_1_issue.pdf

⁷⁹ Somerset County Council project for road improvements

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lyde Road / Sherborne Road – conversion of existing junction to a traffic light signal controlled junction (<i>Priority 1 - completed</i>); • Upgrade existing Lyde Road / Mudford Road junction to a traffic light signal controlled junction (<i>Priority 1</i>); and • Creation of a roundabout at the Combe Street Lane / Mudford Road junction (<i>Priority 1</i>). <p>Significant road improvement schemes will be required in order to provide adequate access for the two SUEs. For the North-East SUE, a new roundabout is needed on Primrose Lane to allow access in to the west of the site (<i>Priority 1</i>). For the Southern SUE, a new fifth arm for the Keyford roundabout is required, and improvements to Little Tarratt Lane / A37 junction are also required (<i>Priority 1</i>).</p> <p>There remain concerns over specific congestion hot-spots and poor traffic-flow along key routes (<i>Priority 1</i>), these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A30 (Reckleford) and its relationship with access roads into and out of the town centre, such as Wyndham Street and Market Street; and • Access to key regeneration sites in the town centre, such as: the Cattle Market, Stars Lane/Box Factory, Glovers Walk, and the Quedam Extension.
Rail	<p>There is currently no southern rail link between Yeovil Junction and the southbound line (i.e. the so-called 'south chord' towards Dorchester). This limits both the potential to enhance services, and network resilience to extreme weather events. Options are being considered to address these issues, although some, such as more regular train frequencies on the Heart of Wessex line and a 'south chord', are not being considered until the long term.</p> <p>Yeovil Junction and Yeovil Pen Mill stations require modest infrastructure enhancements to enable a better service to cater for growing communities.</p>
Bus	<p>The network suffers from a lack of connectivity in places. Sustainable travel schemes are being considered in order to promote connectivity with the SUEs. Improvements are also planned as part of the Yeovil Refresh.</p>
Flood Risk and Drainage	<p>The majority of flood risk and drainage problems relate to surface water and sewer flooding, with around 1,100 residential properties at risk of surface water flooding in the town. There are no Environment Agency (EA) maintained raised defences in Yeovil itself, but EA defences are in place nearby upstream at Barwick and Stoford. A Surface Water Management Plan for Yeovil to inform future development and drainage works is programmed to be prepared in 2019-20.</p>
Utilities	<p>In the short term, the Brimsmore key site needs to upgrade existing sewers, provide a new off-site mains sewer, and new booster station. Lufton key site needs to provide a new off-site sewer.</p>

	<p>The development of Bunford Park will provide an upgrade to the electricity grid and improvements to the strategic water main network. The north SUE will provide off-site foul sewerage enhancements, water supply and electricity grid improvements.</p> <p>In the medium term, the South Yeovil SUE should provide a new off-site sewer and new off-site mains (<i>Priority 1</i>). In addition, Pen Mill Sewage Treatment Works requires a detailed Strategic Enhancement Plan in order to inform future investment needs, with a treatment works scheme required in 2020-25 subject to growth and water quality objectives.</p> <p>The upgrading of the water supply grid will ensure sufficient capacity in Yeovil (<i>Priority 1</i>). This will be funded directly by Wessex Water and delivered in the short term (2018 – 2020).</p> <p>Off-site electrical and gas reinforcement works will be required for the South SUE, and these have been factored in by the developer in their planning application (<i>Priority 1</i>).</p> <p>New off-site sewers will also be required for the South SUE.</p> <p>It is understood from Wessex Water that developments by it in Yeovil are part of a wider initiative to rationalise the number of facilities. SCC are currently seeking clarification on which Sewerage Treatment Works will continue to operate.</p>
Education	<p>In order to accommodate Local Plan growth, two new primary schools are required in the short term: one associated with the Lufton Key Site, and another associated with the North East SUE / Wyndham Park site (<i>Priority 1</i>). Two further new primary schools are required in the medium term: one at Brimsmore Key Site (<i>Priority 1</i>), and one associated with the South SUE (<i>Priority 2</i>).</p>
Health Care	<p>The Local Plan creates the opportunity for a new health centre in each of the two SUEs, estimated to be delivered in the medium to long term (<i>Priority 2</i>), reflected in the outline planning applications for the SUEs.</p> <p>Opportunities to provide integrated health care are being considered including Yeovil District Hospital's 'Symphony' project.</p> <p>NHS England and Somerset CCG are producing a high level Local Estates Strategy. This will fully assess existing health care capacity across South Somerset and will be used to inform any future needs. Initial indications suggest that provision in Yeovil will be highlighted as a priority.</p> <p>It is understood that the current Yeovil Health Centre has outgrown the space available. Symphony Healthcare Services (SHS) will seek a suitable area of land to be allocation for healthcare purposes. The</p>

	<p>site should be suitably located and sized to accommodate a primary healthcare building with the required external space for landscaping, vehicle parking etc.</p> <p>There are six general practice surgeries in Yeovil, dispersed across the town. Within the sustainable urban extensions at Brimsmore and Wyndham Park, provision has been made for the inclusion of medical services to meet the needs of the residents within each SUE. However, there are a number of factors that would affect the delivery of the new primary healthcare facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial pressures • Changes to the NHS model of care • Somerset CCG STP • Shortage of suitable General Practitioners <p>However, none of the allocations have a critical mass large enough to support a primary care centre, so financial contributions or CIL should therefore be sought.</p> <p>It is understood that planned works at Yeovil District Hospital include ward refurbishment, a New Ambulatory Breast Care Unit, Daycase Unit, Emergency department expansion and a Primary Care Development.</p>
Other infrastructure	<p>New housing generates a need for additional open space and outdoor play space, sports, community and cultural facilities; although the timing of this has not been identified as fundamental to the delivery of planned development (<i>Priority 2 and Priority 3</i>).</p> <p>Some infrastructure has been identified as part of the overall 'offer' within strategic development sites, for example, a new community hall at Wyndham Park, a bike park at Birchfield Park (<i>both Priority 2</i>) and one new sports ground in the town (<i>Priority 3</i>).</p> <p>In addition, there is an aspiration for 40% green space at the SUEs in order to create a high quality urban edge landscape. A specialist strategic sports and recreation facility (Sports Zone) is sought in Yeovil to meet the needs of the whole District, as set out in Local Plan Policy HW2 (<i>Priority 3</i>).</p> <p>A variety of town centre public realm enhancements (identified in the Yeovil Urban Development Framework) are desirable (<i>Priority 3</i>). These are now part of the Yeovil refresh town centre regeneration proposals (see Section 11).</p> <p>The future of Yeovil police station remains uncertain.</p> <p>The long-term future of the Yeovil fire station at Reckleford is subject to discussion given financial pressures experienced by the organisation (<i>Priority 3</i>).</p> <p>The South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust has identified that a new ambulance station is required to replace the current one, although this has seen significant delays from the original target completion date of 2012 (<i>Priority 3</i>).</p>

	<p>There is a project to increase and build a new 160 seater chapel at Yeovil Crematorium, to be operational by Sept 2019 along with other improvements at the facility. In conjunction with this, a new car park at the site for a further 60 no. spaces has now been completed.</p>
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Yeovil Airfield Flight Safety Zone

- 6.41 The aerospace company Leonardo is one of the main employers in Yeovil and is of key strategic importance to the economy of the town. In order to protect it from causing disturbance to sensitive uses such as new residential properties, a Flight Safety Zone (see Appendix Two) will be enforced and Noise Contours (see Appendix Four) used to guide sensitive new development away from the areas where such nuisance could potentially occur.

POLICY YV9 - YEOVIL FLIGHT SAFETY ZONE AND NOISE CONTOURS

Development in the Yeovil Airfield Flight Safety Zone will be strictly controlled and limited to that which can be justified as causing no hazard to the operational needs of Leonardo's Aerodrome.

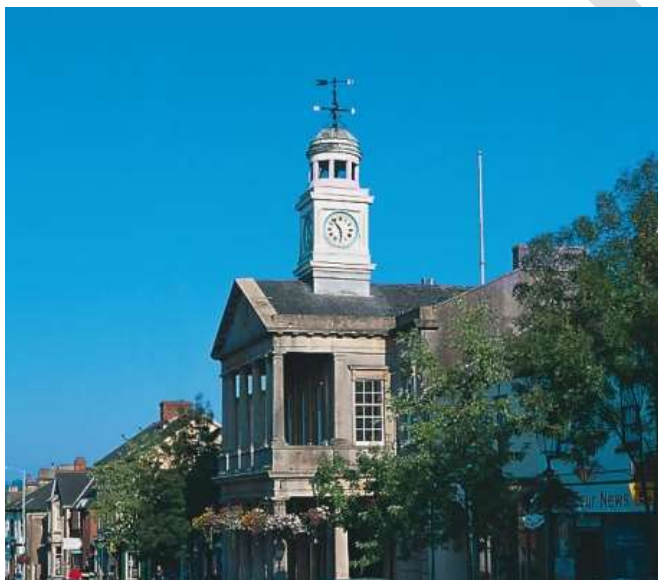
7. Market Towns

Overview

- 7.1 There are seven Market Towns in South Somerset; they are identified in current Local Plan Review Policy SS1. The Market Towns accommodate the bulk of the planned growth outside of Yeovil.
- 7.2 The seven settlements identified as Market Towns are Ansford and Castle Cary, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Langport and Huish Episcopi, Somerton, and Wincanton. Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, and Wincanton are identified as Primary Market Towns; the remaining three are Local Market Towns in recognition of their smaller role and function.

Primary Market Towns – Chard

Spatial Portrait



7.3 Chard is located in the west of South Somerset, close to the Devon and Dorset borders and only 12 miles from the English Channel. The town is surrounded by attractive countryside and in particular the Blackdown Hills AONB to the west and north which sets an important backdrop to the town. It is South Somerset's second largest town with a population of 13,684⁸⁰. The town is closely linked to the regional trunk road network; the A303, and the A30 and A358.

- 7.4 Chard has a long history of innovation and manufacturing; particularly engineering. Significantly, over 43% of jobs in the town are within this sector (District average of 20%)⁸¹. Employers include Brecknell Willis (rail transport systems), CME Ltd (manufacturing equipment) and Oscar Mayer (food). The proportion of people living and working in the town is high (64% compared with a District average of 43%), demonstrating a high level of self-containment⁸².
- 7.5 However, the office market is weak, primarily supplying small office suites of converted accommodation occupied by local firms⁸³. The proportion of people with

⁸⁰ ONS Mid-Year estimates 2016

⁸¹ Business Register and Employment Survey NOMIS 2015

⁸² ONS MSOA Level Travel to Place of Work Data

⁸³ Chard Regeneration Plan (2009)

the highest qualification levels are also significantly lower than across the County as a whole⁸⁴.

- 7.6 Traffic issues have been a long-standing concern, with certain elements of the town's highway network at or near capacity, particularly the Convent traffic signals and Church Street. In order to accommodate further growth the creation of an alternative route between the A358 Furnham Road and the A358 Tatworth Road is required⁸⁵.
- 7.7 The town has a good range of visitor attractions in the surrounding area including, but not limited to, Cricket St Thomas Hotel, Ferne Animal Sanctuary, Forde Abbey and Chard Reservoir Nature Reserve.
- 7.8 Chard Junction railway station no longer operates but main line train connections are available at nearby Axminster and Crewkerne.
- 7.9 Some of the key environmental issues at Chard include areas of high flood risk to the north east (around Chard Reservoir) and to the south east with delineated groundwater protection zones to the south. There is a high quality historic environment within the Conservation Area and European Protected Species are present.⁸⁶

Local Aspirations

- 7.10 The strategic approach to development in Chard is underpinned by the Chard Framework, including the Chard Regeneration Plan (2010); which includes regeneration of brownfield town centre sites and this is referred to in more detail in Section 11 – 'Town Centre Regeneration and Retail.

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 7.11 Chard has an employment function, an identified retail and community role for the town and surrounding area and has self-containment and sustainable travel opportunities. Chard is designated a Primary Market Town in this Local Plan Review and such designation will enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role.
- 7.12 Attention is drawn to the different scale of growth proposed for Chard, compared with the other Primary Market Towns, which is justified due to its size, economic self-containment and the work undertaken by LDA Consultants for the District Council in establishing the Regeneration Framework for the town.

⁸⁴ ONS Census statistics 2011

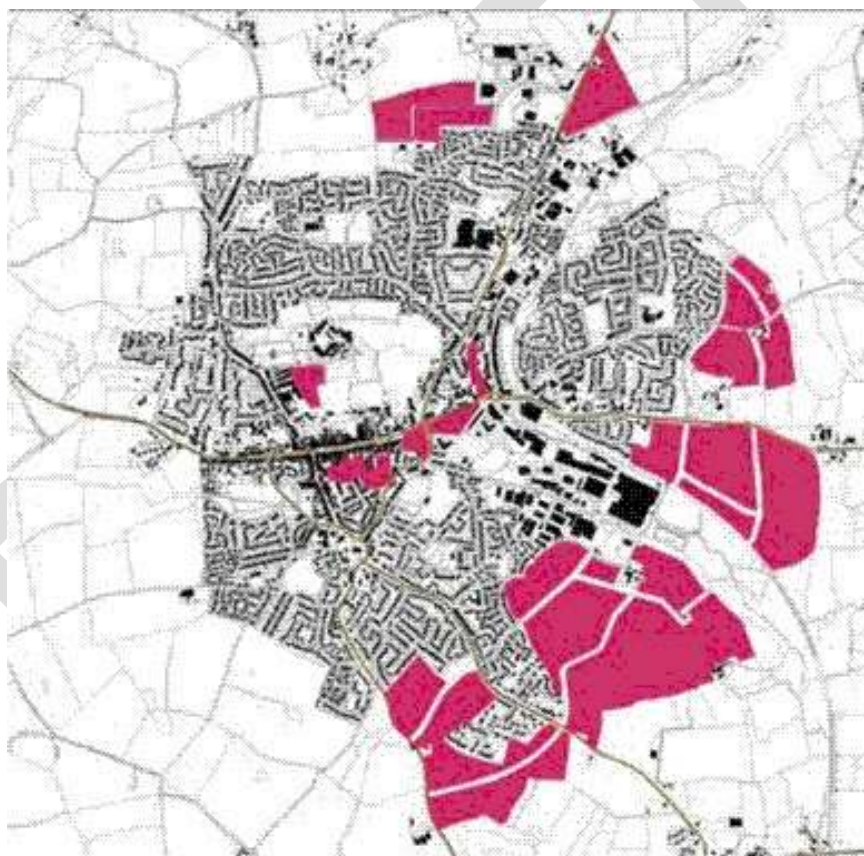
⁸⁵ Chard Regeneration Plan (2009)

⁸⁶ The Distribution of European Protected Species in South Somerset, Guidance for Spatial Planning, November 2009

Chard Eastern Development Area

- 7.13 The Chard Regeneration Plan⁸⁷ presented four options for the future growth of Chard. Option 3 was chosen as the most appropriate location for the strategic growth. This option presents the benefits of large scale growth, associated community and highway infrastructure and regeneration without the emerging dis-benefits of undue traffic congestion and pollution. The strategic growth area provides a scale of growth that will enable Chard to achieve and maximise its need for employment, housing, retail and associated amenities as well as improved highway infrastructure. The Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA), including town centre regeneration sites is shown in Figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1: Chard Eastern Development Area



- 7.14 In summary the growth proposals include:

- A total of about 1342 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- 13 hectares of employment land;
- 1 new primary schools (within and beyond the plan period);
- Neighbourhood centres

⁸⁷ Chard Regeneration Plan, October 2009, LDA Design

- Highway infrastructure and improvements; and
- Sports and open space provision.

7.15 The growth will also deliver:

- An improved range and quality of housing in the town centre including affordable housing;
- Improved permeability and connectivity of movements within the town centre;
- More employment opportunities resulting in additional land and jobs;
- Improved leisure provision with new open spaces and facilities ; including the re-location of Chard Town Football Club;
- Improved legibility and public transport provision including walking and cycling infrastructure;
- New education facilities; and
- A significant increase in the critical mass of the town to attract some larger employers and retailers.

7.16 The European Protected Species Assessment (2009) assessed the development options around Chard for any likely impact on species protected by European law. It identifies the presence of dormice and potential significant impacts on the local bat population in some areas of land identified as part of the strategic growth area. This will need to be taken into account and mitigation measures put in place, compensatory off site habitat creation may be required.

POLICY CH1 – CHARD EASTERN DEVELOPMENT AREA

- i. Land at Chard is allocated for strategic growth to provide the following during the period 2016 to 2036:
 - About 1,342 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
 - Approximately 13 hectares of employment land;
 - One new primary school;
 - Two neighbourhood centres (Millfields and Holbear);
 - Highway infrastructure and improvements; and
 - Sports and open space provision.
- ii. In order to ensure the timely delivery of the necessary infrastructure to support the growth, phasing sequences should be justified and it should be demonstrated that the proposal will not compromise the delivery of the total growth.

Delivery of the Chard Eastern Development Area

- 7.17 The Chard Regeneration Framework⁸⁸ sets out a phased approach for growth. It presents logical stages at which development in the town can conclude or simply pause if necessary before further growth or regeneration takes place⁸⁹. Unlocking the growth and regeneration opportunities highlighted in the report is complex and requires a phased approach to ensure viability and deliverability. In order to ensure timely delivery of infrastructure it is important that any deviation from the phasing sequence set out in the Chard Implementation Plan, 2010 is justified and it is demonstrated that the proposal will not compromise the delivery of the total growth.
- 7.18 The key driver of the phasing sequence is the need to incrementally increase the capacity of the highways infrastructure to accommodate the traffic flows as the town grows. Initial improvements to the Convent Link traffic lights have taken place and this is expected to create some additional capacity for strategic growth. This should be followed by a phased delivery of a continuous route to the east of the town from the A358 Furnham Road to the A358 Tatworth Road and connections into adjacent urban areas in order to achieve the capacity to allow Chard to grow. To achieve the strategic growth, four more steps are required to complete the necessary highway infrastructure:
- A new link from the A30 near Oaklands House to the end of Millfield Avenue a new route to/from the town centre from the east which also delivers access to the growth area. (Millfield Link road).
 - A connection south from Millfield Road to Forton Road, allowing for greater permeability and linkage between the growth area and the town centre.
 - Linkage north from the A30 using Oaklands Avenue but also involving the creation of a new/upgraded route around the north east of the town as far as the A358 Furnham Road.
 - Completion of the link south between Forton Road and the A358 Tatworth Road to provide a continuous linkage around the eastern edge of the town.
- 7.19 The Millfield Link road between the A30 and the Millfield Industrial Estate should come forward in the early phases of development as it will help create capacity for initial growth. The Millfield Link provides access to Chard for people entering the town from the east and if implemented together with other highway improvements creates the capacity for additional homes, employment growth and retail development.
- 7.20 The Council is committed to the delivery of the Chard Eastern Development Area as exemplified by the inclusion of key road infrastructure in the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulation 123 list. It is exploring options to enable the delivery of the allocation, and this may include the use of Compulsory Purchase powers.

⁸⁸ Chard Regeneration Framework, Implementation Plan, October 2010

⁸⁹ Detailed phasing is set out in the Chard Regeneration Framework, Implementation Plan, October 2010

Other Housing Growth in Chard

7.21 Monitoring shows that, so far, delivery of new housing in Chard has been below the annualised housing target. Planning permission has been granted or planning applications are pending for a number of proposals within the CEDA, but none have yet commenced. Figure 7.2 summarises those planning applications. Under the circumstances and in order to ensure a continuing supply of new housing in the short term in Chard, two further sites are allocated which could deliver about 150 dwellings.

Figure 7.2: Planning Applications within CEDA (As at September 2018)

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	Approved
15/02165/REM	Land off Oaklands Avenue, Chard	78 dwellings and associated access and highway infrastructure	Approved
Total	593 dwellings		

Land east of Crimchard

7.22 This site includes the land that was the subject of planning application 13/01535/OUT: Land east of Crimchard. The proposal was for up to 110 dwellings. The application was refused and went to appeal; however the Inspector did not accept the argument that the proposal would preclude further development of Chard by utilising existing infrastructure (traffic). Access should be from Crimchard.

POLICY CH2 - HOUSING GROWTH AT LAND EAST OF CRIMCHARD

The site east of Crimchard is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 110 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space

Land west of Crimchard

- 7.23 This site is on the immediate western edge of Chard. Access is possible from Park Crescent, but this is a very narrow lane with no footways and widening would be necessary and any ownership issues clarified.

POLICY CH3 - HOUSING GROWTH AT LAND WEST OF CRIMCHARD

The site east of Crimchard is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 38 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Public open space

Employment

- 7.24 Chard is the second largest settlement in the District. It has a substantial strategic employment land allocation and through the Chard Regeneration Framework is expected to deliver more jobs than in the past.
- 7.25 Over the plan period it is proposed to deliver 13 additional hectares of employment land within the CEDA.

Retail

- 7.26 The Retail and Main Town Centres Uses Study⁹⁰ identifies Chard as the second largest retail centre in the District. It has a good range of comparison and convenience shops anchored by Sainsbury's and Co-op. It has a higher than average proportion of shops and town centre services but a relatively poor food and drink offer. Tesco, the main food store, is located in an edge-of-centre location; and at the time of writing, a new Lidl store has been granted planning permission on an out-of-centre site and is being built.

⁹⁰ South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study; Lichfields 2017

- 7.27 Whilst Chard retains a high proportion of convenience goods expenditure, the expenditure on comparison goods is much less, with shoppers often preferring to go to Taunton.

Figure 7.3: Projected Retail Floorspace Capacity in Chard (m² gross)

Type	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	152	319	478
Comparison	264	616	974
Food and Beverage	70	197	320

Source: South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, 2017

- 7.28 Vacant units within Chard Town Centre might accommodate some of the growth depending on the size and nature of the demand compared to the existing offer. The Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study identifies three opportunity sites within or on the edge of Chard Town Centre which may satisfy capacity:
- East Street
 - Land between A358 and Silver Street
 - Boden Mill and surrounding area
- 7.29 The Chard Town Centre Regeneration project is dealing as a first priority with the Boden Mill site and will include a community hub, new leisure centre and public open space. See Section 11 for more detail.

Infrastructure

- 7.30 The 'Millfield Link' forms part of the CEDA proposal and is identified as being key to solving the capacity issues at the Convent Link. This alternative 'orbital' road route running north to south between the A358 north, A30 and A358 south (through CEDA) is to be delivered in phases over the short, medium and long term, alongside new development. It is identified in the IDP as being Priority 1 and 2. The Council's commitment to its delivery is demonstrated by its inclusion in the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulation 123 list⁹¹.
- 7.31 The potential to re-open Chard Junction station has been considered in the past, but currently remains a financially unviable option to consider. Any reopening would need to be justified by robust evidence, including a business case.
- 7.32 Although a dedicated town ('bespoke') bus service within Chard is unlikely to be commercially viable, there is the potential to increase the frequency of services to neighbouring towns and improving bus access within Chard by appropriate routing.
- 7.33 Greater permeability for cyclists travelling within and across the town is advocated. The proposal is to link to longer distance routes such as National Cycle Route 33 and the Stop Line Way. Sustrans have proposed to extend the

⁹¹ [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-permission/community-infrastructure-levy-\(cil\)/](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-permission/community-infrastructure-levy-(cil)/)

traffic free section of the Stop Line Way from Chard to Tatworth in the medium term, initially following the old railway line (*Priority 2*). However, at present, there is a lack of identified or secured funding for this scheme.

- 7.34 Policy CH1 makes provision for a new primary school within the Plan period. Although SCC do not currently have plans for a new primary school the implications of any additional housing growth on school capacity and education infrastructure will be monitored and managed to ensure arrangements are in place to meet demand and that additional growth does not create capacity issues.
- 7.35 In terms of water supply and waste water, Wessex Water is upgrading the Chard Spine Main (*Priority 1*) and off-site sewers (*Priority 2*). Wessex Water has also indicated a treatment works scheme may be required in the medium term, subject to growth and water quality objectives (*Priority 2*). A surface water feasibility study for the town is also currently programmed by SCC for 2019/20. Improvements to water mains and off-site sewers to serve allocated sites may need to be provided within agreed timescales.
- 7.36 New housing generates a need for additional open space and outdoor play space, sports, community and cultural facilities; although the achievement of these infrastructure items is not fundamental to delivering planned development (*Priority 2 and Priority 3*). Specific priorities that have been identified through the Chard Regeneration Scheme / Chard Eastern Development Area for two new sports grounds and changing facilities (catering to the football and rugby clubs), youth facilities and equipped play areas (*Priority 2*).
- 7.37 Existing capacity in GP surgeries would need to be increased to meet the population increase.
- 7.38 Based upon current available information, development proposed at Chard in the Local Plan Review is unlikely to result in abnormal or fundamental infrastructure constraints relating to flood risk and drainage, telecommunications, waste and recycling, or emergency services.
- 7.39 Overall, the delivery of these infrastructure items will be dependent on securing contributions from development (where viable), along with obtaining other funding streams.



- 7.40 A long standing issue at Chard has been to find a new location for Chard Town Football Club and this is recognised in the Chard Regeneration Plan.

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Primary Market Towns - Crewkerne

Spatial Portrait

- 7.41 Today Crewkerne is the third largest settlement in South Somerset, with a population of 7,964 people⁹². It is located in the south west of the District, close to the County boundary with Dorset, 9 miles south west of Yeovil and 7 miles east of Chard. The town acts as a strong functional and service centre for the surrounding area, providing some 3000 jobs⁹³, predominantly in manufacturing; including in the high-end technical sector. In retail terms, the centre is vibrant with fewer vacant shops than nationally and includes a variety of national retailers. There are a variety of community services and facilities, including for example a library, doctor's surgery, banks, a range of education facilities and a hospital. The main employment area is the Blacknell Industrial Estate which is east of the town centre, concentrated to the north side of the A356 road to Dorchester.
- 7.42 In addition to a regular bus services, residents in Crewkerne have access to rail services. The railway station, located in the parish of Misterton, 1.8km (just over a mile) from Crewkerne town centre is served by South West Trains on the main south western railway line, and trains operate regularly to Yeovil, London and Exeter, although parking is currently limited. A national cycle route passes through the town. The level of self-containment is satisfactory compared to the District as a whole with 41% of local residents working locally (District average 43%)⁹⁴.
- 7.43 Key environmental issues include Crewkerne's attractive historic environment; the majority of the town centre is covered by Conservation Area status, and includes over 140 listed buildings, yet there is often heavy traffic including HGVs passing through on the A30 and A356. It has a rich natural environment and numerous designated wildlife sites in close proximity to the centre, including Bincombe Hill Local Nature Reserve, on the northern outskirts of the town; and the Millwater Site of Special Scientific Interest by Westover Lane; there are also protected species in the town. There are delineated groundwater source protection zones in Crewkerne and a potential flood risk from the River Parrett and its tributaries, particularly in the Goulds Brook vicinity. Large areas of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land surround the town.

Local Aspirations

- 7.44 The Community Plan for Crewkerne and District (2006), produced by the community partnership 'A Better Crewkerne and District' (ABCD), recognised the economic benefits of developing the saved Local Plan Key Site (known locally as the CLR site). The Plan also highlighted that the movement of traffic through Crewkerne is of major concern to the community, and the ABCD group was working in partnership with Somerset County Council to implement traffic management proposals. The ABCD Group remain very active and are continually

⁹² ONS Mid-Year estimates 2016

⁹³ BRES Employment Data 2016

⁹⁴ ONS MSOA Level Travel to Place of Work Data

working to aid the regeneration and sustainability of the town as a whole. Other community aspirations included a greater range of shops, increased parking and the enhancement of the town centre, which would also improve the visitor experience.

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 7.45 As set out in Policy SS1, Crewkerne is classified as a Primary Market Town due to its strong employment, retail and community role⁹⁵.

Housing

- 7.46 It is important to sustain and enhance Crewkerne's role as a Primary Market Town, with a level of development that is commensurate with the size, character, environmental constraints and accessibility of the town. The Local Plan Review will therefore support the development of about 1,194 dwellings over the Plan period, up to 2036. Of these 1,194 dwellings, 705 are already committed⁹⁶, including those planning permissions that are part of the saved Local Plan allocation on what is known as the CLR Site and which have received planning permission following completion of a Section 106 agreement.
- 7.47 The Inspector's report on the current Local Plan 2006-2028 states that the completion of a Section 106 agreement for the CLR site indicated a commitment to moving the development forward and he was satisfied at that time that the Strategic Site policy KS/CREW/1 was sound. Nevertheless, he stated that monitoring of the situation would be required to ensure that should progress not occur as anticipated, other measures would be considered. The outline planning permission for 525 dwellings expires in February 2023. Outline planning permission has also been granted for 110 dwellings and a 60-bed care home, at the same time reducing the amount of employment land to be provided. Reserved matters approval has been granted for 203 dwellings in the northern part of the site. However the Key Site development has not yet commenced and concerns remain about its viability due to infrastructure costs, particularly those associated with the link road which forms part of the allocation. There are several other sites that can deliver additional dwellings within the lifetime of the new Plan. These sites are set out below

⁹⁵ South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study, 2009

⁹⁶ Council's annual housing monitoring data, as at March 2018

Land east of Lang Road

- 7.48 The topography of the site in parts and potential impacts on ecology may limit the amount of housing that could be built. Traffic modelling will be required, including the impact on Junctions on Cathole Bridge Road.

POLICY CR1 - HOUSING GROWTH EAST OF LANG ROAD

The site east of Lang Road is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- About 100 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Access from the north of the site
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space

Land rear of Penlain

- 7.49 Although something of a 'green lung' for the town, it is in a very sustainable location close to the town centre. Access issues from the north will need to be resolved as it would not be appropriate to use the access to the south through the trading estate for a residential development.

POLICY CR2 - HOUSING GROWTH AT LAND REAR OF PENLAIN

The site rear of Penlain is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- About 100 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Access from the north of the site
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space

Land west of Station Road

- 7.50 A public right of way crosses the site which may need re-routing. The site is in close proximity to the railway station and it could also possibly provide the opportunity to provide more parking at the station. Land immediately to the west could only provide open space only for the development as housing here would not be suitable given its location at the top of an adjacent steep slope. Access to the housing should be from the A356 at the northern end, with any access for the station car parking nearer to the railway station itself. There will be the need to

provide buffers to the railway line to the south and designated Wildlife Site to the west.

POLICY CR3 - HOUSING GROWTH AT LAND WEST OF A356 (STATION ROAD)

The site west of Station Road is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 270 dwellings; including 28% affordable housing;
- Protection or re-routing of existing footpaths and provision of new local bus services/footpaths/cycle paths to link the new development to the existing town;
- A car park serving Crewkerne railway station
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space
- Extensive buffer planting to the south and west of the site

Land east of Charlton Close

- 7.51 This is adjacent to a Conservation Area and Local Wildlife Site. It is also an archaeological site and adjacent to the curtilage of a listed building. Therefore the design and layout of any scheme will be of particular importance. A pedestrian access should be provided to the existing footpath which runs alongside the eastern edge of the site.

POLICY CR4 - HOUSING GROWTH AT LAND EAST OF CHARLTON CLOSE

The site east of Charlton Close is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- About 10 dwellings; including 28% affordable housing
- A pedestrian link to the existing public footpath to the east

Employment

- 7.52 Crewkerne has a broad employment base for a Market Town of its size. There is a strong retail centre which plays host to various business services and an established industrial estate with a number of advanced engineering firms based there. This wider employment 'offer' underpins a more varied local socio-economic demographic. Despite good rail links with Waterloo and Exeter, vehicular congestion in the town is an issue that a new link road to be provided by the development of the CLR site is designed to address. .

- 7.53 The employment element of the CLR site will deliver a sufficient supply of land (3.74ha) in Crewkerne. This is to cater for the identified employment land need, this should not prevent further land coming forward, especially in the short-term if the market requires and this can be delivered through the Development Management process.

Retailing

- 7.54 As set out in Policy TC4, Crewkerne is a Market Town in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be in the defined Town Centre. The mix of Class A Uses is broadly similar to the UK average, but with a proportion of Class A2 services almost double the UK average; and less than half of the average proportion of vacant units. The amount of traffic moving through the centre detracts from the shopping environment. The following table sets out following future capacity to 2034.⁹⁷

Figure 7.4: Projected Retail Floorspace Capacity in Crewkerne (m². gross)

Type	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	504	584	661
Comparison	94	223	354
Food and Beverage	15	44	73

Source: South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, 2017

- 7.55 Crewkerne has a large vacant unit following the closure in early 2017 of the Budgens store (about 1,400m² gross). However, planning permission has recently been granted for an alternative use specialising in cosmetics.
- 7.56 Given the very limited projected growth in floorspace in the centre, projected demand in Crewkerne could be met by small in-fill developments and shop extensions, including the use of upper floors.
- 7.57 Although there is a lower than average provision of higher order comparison units, national retailers and food and drink uses, and a relatively high number of charity shops, the centre appears to be performing relatively well. The low vacancy rate suggests reasonable demand for units.
- 7.58 There is however additional capacity to accommodate a net increase in comparison goods retail floorspace beyond existing provisions and commitments, as there has been a loss of such uses from town centre over the past few years. Given the loss of comparison uses, there is a qualitative deficiency in current provision, which produces capacity for 120m² net (or £0.5m retail expenditure) of additional comparison goods floorspace by 2017, rising to about 570m² net (or £2.7m retail expenditure) by 2028. The retail study also notes that consideration should also be given to the attractiveness of the existing units and whether they

⁹⁷ South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study; Lichfields 2017

are the correct format for retailer requirements. Any additional provision can come forward under the Development Management process.

Infrastructure

- 7.59 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) does not indicate the need for any 'critical' infrastructure⁹⁸ requirements to be provided in Crewkerne as a result of the proposed new development, because it is anticipated that the developer will deliver a new primary school, a link road between the A356 (Station Road) and the A30 (Yeovil Road), a link road between Blacknell Lane and the new A356/A30 link road and a dormouse bridge, through the CLR Section 106 Agreement. The IDP identifies a number of 'necessary' infrastructure⁹⁹ requirements, which generally relate to open space and sports facilities.
- 7.60 The EA advise that the re-direction of part of the Viney Brook should be undertaken.
- 7.61 A waste water treatment works scheme is currently programmed for Crewkerne 2021-2025.
- 7.62 Symphony Healthcare Services advise that primary healthcare practices are operating at or close to capacity; and an options appraisal to meet the needs of an increasing population will be necessary.
- 7.63 SCC advise that there is not sufficient childcare capacity in Crewkerne to accommodate growth. To improve the infrastructure, the options would be to expand existing provisions, recruit more childminders in Crewkerne to provide new places, or to build a new 30 place provision. This would be required as families will occupy the completed housing developments and require this utility.

Primary Market Towns – Ilminster

Spatial Portrait

- 7.64 Ilminster is situated in the west of the District and benefits from its strategic location where the A303 meets the A358. Taunton is 12 miles north-west and Yeovil, 15 miles east. It is the fifth largest settlement in South Somerset with a population of 6,219 people¹⁰⁰. This population has grown considerably in recent years, the amount of people living in the town has increased by almost 40% since 2001.

⁹⁸ Critical infrastructure is defined as infrastructure that is critically needed to be able to deliver the proposed development. Without the infrastructure the development cannot go ahead.

⁹⁹ Necessary infrastructure is defined as infrastructure that is necessary to be able to deliver the proposed development, it does not prevent development coming forward.

¹⁰⁰ ONS Mid Year estimates 2016

- 7.65 Highways England plans to dual the link between the M5 at Taunton and the A303/A358 to the Southfields roundabout at Ilminster. This will significantly enhance road connectivity to the motorway network for Ilminster and is likely to bring about opportunities for growth.
- 7.66 The town is primarily a linear settlement along the through route running east to west (Station Road to Bay Hill). The core of the town is concentrated upon the Market Place and church, which lie between the Shudrick stream and lower slopes of Beacon Hill.

- 7.67 A large employment area exists to the west of the town, and due to its proximity to the A303/A358, additional employment growth has been proposed here in the South Somerset Local Plan since 1991, because of its strategic importance and potential to generate jobs.



- 7.68 The town acts as a strong functional and service centre for the surrounding area, providing some 2,250¹⁰¹ jobs, including in the technical engineering and manufacturing sector. In retail terms, the centre is healthy and includes a range of national retailers, including a large supermarket, but also a number of independent shops and restaurants. There are a range of community services and facilities, including a library, banks and primary education (a first and middle school).
- 7.69 The immediate landscape setting of the town is defined by three hills, Beacon Hill to the north, and Herne Hill to the southwest and Pretwood Hill to the southeast. These hills broadly contain the spread of the town and its immediate rural edge. To the west, the setting is less defined, with the town extending toward the open land of the River Isle valley, and an edge that is reinforced by the A303 corridor.

¹⁰¹ BRES Employment Data 2016

- 7.70 There is a regular, albeit limited bus service in Ilminster to Taunton, Yeovil, Chard and Crewkerne. The South Somerset Cycle Route passes through the town. The level of self-containment is satisfactory, with 40% of residents working locally¹⁰² (District average 43%). In order to help retain and build upon this self-containment it will be important that additional housing growth is balanced with employment growth.
- 7.71 Like other settlements in South Somerset, a key environmental issue is the value of Ilminster's historic environment - the historic layout and rich building styles, which are prominent in the town centre, and dominated by the Minster and its tower, form part of the Conservation Area designated in 1973.
- 7.72 Flooding is also an issue for the town. It is constrained by Flood Zone 3 along the length of the River Isle and to the north and south of the A303.

Neighbourhood Plan

- 7.73 The entire Parish area of Ilminster has been designated as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of the preparation of the Ilminster Neighbourhood Plan. Work is on-going and some local consultation has been carried out but at the time of writing, it is too early to identify any particular emerging issues.

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 7.74 As set out in Policy SS1, Ilminster is classified as a Primary Market Town due to its strong employment, retail and community role¹⁰³.

Housing

- 7.75 It is important to sustain and enhance Ilminster's role as a Primary Market Town, with a level of development that is appropriate to the size, character, environmental constraints and accessibility of the town. The Local Plan will therefore support the development of around 839 dwellings over the plan period, up to 2036. This would include the 400 dwellings which are the subject of a pending outline planning on land south west of Canal Way within the Local Plan Direction of Growth and which this Local Plan Review allocates as Policy IM1.
- 7.76 Somerset County Council have identified that a new seven classroom primary school required as part of this proposal, therefore Policy IM1 includes the requirement to provide a new primary school.

¹⁰² ONS MSOA Level Travel to Place of Work Data

¹⁰³ South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study, 2009

Land south west of Canal Way

POLICY IM1 - HOUSING GROWTH SOUTH WEST OF CANAL WAY

The site south west of Canal Way is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 400 dwellings; including 28% affordable housing
- A new primary school
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space

7.77 There are two other sites that can deliver additional dwellings within the lifetime of the new Plan. These sites are set out below.

Land east of Shudrick Lane

7.78 This site, with a total site area of 14ha, adjoins the town centre to the west and the Ilminster Conservation Area, with a number of listed buildings, to the north. There is a permissive footpath along the Shudrick Stream, which runs westwards through the site. The land rises to the south towards the Pretwood Hill ridgeline. Access from Townsend would be acceptable.

7.79 It is recognised that this site was the subject of close scrutiny at the previous Local Plan Examination and a subsequent planning application (14/02474/OUT) was dismissed at appeal. However, the Local Plan Review provides the opportunity to reconsider the allocation.

7.80 The Ilminster Peripheral Landscape Assessment is still relevant and identifies the relatively level land mostly to the north of the Shudrick Stream as having moderate to high landscape capacity for development. The site is in a sustainable location adjacent to the town centre and in particular a supermarket.

7.81 A sensitively designed scheme could potentially address the issues previously raised.

POLICY IM2 - HOUSING GROWTH AT SHUDRICK LANE

The site at Shudrick Lane (as defined on the Policies Map) is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 220 dwellings; including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space

Land at Station Road

- 7.82 This site lies within Flood Zone 3 and extensive flood risk mitigation works will be necessary. Most of the surrounding land is to remain allocated for economic development, but in order to facilitate the viable delivery of this, it is accepted that some 'enabling' residential development is also probably necessary, as part of a comprehensive mixed use development. The land to the north of Station Road provides better protection from flood risk. The housing should not be occupied until such time as the infrastructure for the employment development has been provided, in order to provide some assurance that this will be provided.

POLICY IM3 - HOUSING GROWTH AT STATION ROAD

The site at Station Road is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 100 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space
- Flood risk mitigation works

Employment

- 7.83 Ilminster displays a strong employment role relative to other settlements, it is host to small cluster of high-tech businesses and key employers include Powrmatic, Daido and the Dillington Estate.
- 7.84 Ilminster's strong locational advantage, being adjacent to A303 and in close proximity to the M5, should support the delivery new economic development in the town, and a challenge will be to increase the number of micro-businesses and adding to the town's existing employment base will be key.
- 7.85 Ilminster has delivered a strong amount of floorspace compared to the other South Somerset Market towns. 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 ('B' uses for planning purposes) and reflecting the manufacturing history of Ilminster.
- 7.86 Employment sites at Station Road close to the Southfields Roundabout have been carried forward from previous Local Plans because of their location on the A303/A358 junction, with good links to the M5, is considered a strong locational advantage which could secure major investment into the District particularly once the A303 and A358 have been upgraded by Highways England.

7.87 Development has occurred on the land west of Horlicks and now only one hectare of the original three remains available. The Highways Agency operates a maintenance depot from here and a motorhome storage and hire business was set up in 2015. It is likely that the remaining hectare will come forward over time.



- 7.88 Significant works are required to achieve highways access to the sites here and developer contributions are required for flood remediation by the Environment Agency and to upgrade the Southfields roundabout from Highways England. The site cannot be developed without this infrastructure. As Policy IM3 states, however, if part of the land were developed for residential purposes, this could assist with the site's viability.
- 7.89 In order to ensure the viable delivery of any commercial development on Station Road (Policy IM4), the infrastructure associated with this element of a comprehensive development, such as roads and flood mitigation works, must be provided prior to the occupation of any of the dwellings on the site.
- 7.90 The employment land identified for the Strategic Employment Sites will deliver a sufficient supply of land in Ilminster to cater for the identified employment land need. However, this should not prevent further land coming forward, especially in the short term if the market requires and this can be delivered through the Development Management process.

POLICY IM4 – EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT AT STATION ROAD, ILMINSTER

Land north and south of Station Road, Ilminster is allocated for xxha of employment land, and to provide the following:

- Flood risk mitigation works

Retail

- 7.91 As set out in Policy TC4, Ilminster is a Market Town in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be in the defined Town Centre.
- 7.92 Ilminster town centre performs a local retail and service role. It is a healthy town centre with vacancy rates significantly below the national average (2.9% compared to 11.2%) and a high level of independent shops¹⁰⁴. The popular Feast vegetarian restaurant has however vacated the town centre to move to Rose Mills, close to the A303. The Tesco Superstore which was built in 2007 has a short pedestrian link to the town centre.
- 7.93 The South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centres Uses Study identifies the following future capacity for retail floorspace.

Figure 7.5: Projected Retail Floorspace Capacity in Ilminster (m² gross)

Type	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	-	-	-
Comparison	112	265	421
Food and Beverage	20	61	101

Source: South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, 2017

- 7.94 The limited projected growth in town centre floorspace could be met by small in-fill developments, shop extensions, including the use of upper floors, and retail opportunities identified in the Study: the former Gooch and Housego building and the Swan Precinct.
- 7.95 There is however additional capacity to accommodate a net increase in comparison goods retail floorspace above existing and committed retail provision. There is capacity for approximately 982m² (£4.8m expenditure capacity) net of additional comparison goods floorspace by 2028, which should assist in the retention of shopping trips from the local population and benefit the health of the town centre. Any additional provision can come forward through the Development Management process.

Infrastructure

- 7.96 The Infrastructure Plan does not indicate the need for any 'critical' infrastructure¹⁰⁵ requirements to be provided in Ilminster as a result of the proposed new development. It does however identify a number of 'necessary' infrastructure¹⁰⁶ requirements, which generally relate to open space and leisure facilities.

¹⁰⁴ South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study; Lichfieds 2017

¹⁰⁵ See Glossary

¹⁰⁶ See Glossary

- 7.97 There has been an identified need for a new replacement first school for Iminster associated with the overall scale of growth identified for the town to which it is appropriate for further growth to contribute.
- 7.98 Symphony Healthcare Services also advise that primary healthcare practices are operating at or close to capacity; and an options appraisal to meet the needs of an increasing population will be necessary.
- 7.99 The Iminster Feasibility Study regarding run-off at Long Close and Heron Way is programmed for 2019/20. The EA advise that the Hort Bridge Flood Alleviation scheme is programmed up to 2024/25. A surface water feasibility study for the town is currently programmed for 2018/19.
- 7.100 A waste water treatment works scheme is currently programmed by Wessex Water for Iminster 2020-2025.

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Primary Market Towns – Wincanton



Spatial Portrait

- 7.101 Wincanton is situated in the east of the District towards the north of the Blackmore Vale overlooking the Cale valley.
- 7.102 The A303 trunk road now defines the south edge of Wincanton and gives the town good road links to London and the south west of England. Nearby towns include Bruton, Castle Cary, Gillingham and Milborne Port within 10 miles, and Yeovil and Sherborne about 15 miles away. Wincanton's population of 5,941¹⁰⁷ makes it the fourth largest settlement in the District in terms of population. An area around the town centre and extending to the north is designated as a Conservation Area. Residential growth has taken place to the east of the town centre and on the Key Site at New Barns Farm to the south west. The main employment areas of the town are located to the south and south west of the town.
- 7.103 Wincanton is located within a rural setting and alongside nearby Castle Cary and Gillingham in North Dorset District and is important in serving the needs of residents in the rural east of South Somerset. In terms of retail, Wincanton has a range of independent stores as well as a couple of national retailers in the town centre and a couple of out-of-centre supermarkets to the south west. Other key

¹⁰⁷ ONS Mid Year estimates 2016

services to be found in the town include a doctor's surgery, a hospital, a leisure centre, a library, banks and primary and secondary schools.

- 7.104 Wincanton has historic connections with logistics and distribution, with over 12% of local jobs in this sector (District average 3%)¹⁰⁸; and it continues to feature large elements of the dairy industry and food production. Wincanton PLC was established in the town and is now the largest British logistics firm. The town enjoys some particular tourism assets with its famous racecourse and association with Terry Pratchett's 'Discworld' novels. Growth in lifestyle business has occurred in the last decade, associated with proximity to the south east and good connectivity. Wincanton Racecourse plays a role in the local economy by bringing people to the town.
- 7.105 Public transport to the larger settlements of Yeovil, Taunton and Gillingham is relatively good with a regular bus service, although links to other parts of the District are less good. Self-containment is reasonably high with nearly 60% of the population living and working in the town¹⁰⁹.
- 7.106 Some of the key environmental issues at Wincanton include areas of high flood risk to the south and to the north east, a high quality historic environment within the Conservation Area and the presence of European Protected Species¹¹⁰.
- 7.107 A Regeneration Action Plan for Wincanton is a key priority for the District Council and this is referred to in more detail in Section 11 – Town Centre Regeneration and Retail.

The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan

- 7.108 The Wincanton neighbourhood area was designated 2014. Since then, the Neighbourhood Plan has been the subject of independent examination and a referendum. More than 50% of those who voted in the Referendum said 'Yes', and the Neighbourhood Plan is now 'made'.
- 7.109 The main objectives within the Neighbourhood Plan are the following:
- Identifying the most sustainable locations for development
 - Housing suitable for Wincanton's population
 - New employment space near the A303
 - Make the town centre more attractive to users
 - Protect open spaces & improve walking & cycling routes

¹⁰⁸ Business Register and Employment Survey NOMIS 2016

¹⁰⁹ ONS MSOA Level Travel to Place of Work Data 2016

¹¹⁰ The Distribution of European Protected Species in South Somerset, Guidance for Spatial Planning, November 2009

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 7.110 As set out in Policy SS1, Wincanton is classified as a Primary Market Town due to its strong employment, retail and community role.

Housing

- 7.111 It is important to sustain and enhance Wincanton's role as a Market Town in the rural east of the District, with a level of development that is relative to the size, accessibility, character and environmental constraints of the town. It is recommended that about 613 dwellings are built in the town over the Local Plan period. Of these, 62 have already been completed and 281 are committed, leaving a residual requirement of about 150. Two sites are allocated to accommodate these; land to the west of Wincanton Business Park and New Barns Farm; and at the Tythings.

Land west of Wincanton Business Park and New Barns Farm

- 7.112 The higher ground to the west of New Barns Farm (the northern part) is identified as being in a visually sensitive area in the Neighbourhood Plan, where development would be visually prominent in the skyline. However, an area of 2.15ha is suitable for housing and could accommodate about 220 dwellings. Access should be via an additional arm off the Morrisons roundabout; and a secondary access provided via the New Barns estate. Access off Lawrence Hill may also be possible.

POLICY WN1 - HOUSING GROWTH WEST OF WINCANTON BUSINESS PARK AND NEW BARNS FARM

The site west of Wincanton Business Park and New Barns Farm is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 220 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space

The Tythings

- 7.113 This is a brownfield site in existing commercial use, within the main urban area and there is therefore potential for a high-density scheme. There is some potential for adverse impact on the listed building on the eastern boundary; and

any development would have to take place within the context of a Conservation Assessment.

POLICY WN2 - HOUSING GROWTH AT THE TYTHINGS

The site at the Tythings is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 50 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Public open space

Employment

7.114 The A303 is a key route to the economic hubs of London and the south east, whereas other parts of the county rely more on the M5 and routes to the Midlands and the North. The existing main employment areas in Wincanton are located at:

- Wincanton Business Park;
- Bennetts Field Trading Estate; and
- The Tythings.

7.115 The proposed dualling of the entire A303 route will further improve Wincanton's connectivity 'offer' to potential inward investors. As well as bringing forward employment land, required to keep self-containment levels high. The type of employment usage also needs to be considered carefully, for example logistics which could be attracted to the location, could bring a sparser number of jobs to the available land supply. A key location for further employment land may be west of Wincanton Business Park, where land could be allocated. The Employment Land Review will conclude the evidence to support any allocation.

Land west of Wincanton Business Park

7.116 An area of land to the west of Wincanton Business Park may be suitable for employment development, with access from a new spur on the Lawrence Hill roundabout.

POLICY WN3 – EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT WEST OF WINCANTON BUSINESS PARK

Land west of Wincanton Business Park is allocated for *** ha of employment land.

Retail

- 7.117 The Retail and Main Town Centres Uses Study¹¹¹ highlights that Wincanton town centre has a limited local catchment area. The main food shopping provision is the out-of-centre Morrisons and Lidl. Whilst there is a range of comparison (non-food) retailers in the Town Centre there is only one national multiple retailer – Boots. The library is located in the Town Centre and there are a variety of service uses including bank, hairdressers, estate agents and restaurants. The Wincanton Health Centre with associated pharmacy moved onto the New Barns Farm development in 2012. The householder shopper survey showed that most respondents do their non-food shopping in Yeovil or Taunton.
- 7.118 The Town Centre is well served by public car parks at Carrington Way, Memorial Hall and Churchfields.
- 7.119 As at April 2018, the town centre had a vacancy rates of about 13%¹¹², higher than the national average of 11.2%, which indicates a lack of balance between supply and demand for premises. Developments outside the town centre cumulatively are reducing footfall and the vacancy rate is potentially a reflection of this.
- 7.120 The quantitative assessment of potential capacity for retail floorspace suggests the following for Wincanton:

Figure 7.6: Projected Retail Floorspace Capacity in Wincanton (m² gross)

Type	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	1,740	1,884	2,022
Comparison	129	304	481
Food and Beverage	76	224	367

Source: South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, 2017

- 7.121 The re-occupation of vacant units could accommodate some of the growth. Improvements to public realm and the pedestrian environment may increase visitors to the area which in turn may reduce vacancy rates. The remaining projected capacity for food shopping will need to be met through the development of further sites. There is a relatively high projected convenience goods floorspace within Wincanton with a capacity to deliver a small supermarket within Wincanton Town.

¹¹¹ South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, Lichfields, 2017

¹¹² SSDC Monitoring Database

7.122 The Retail and Main Town Centres Uses Study suggests a number of opportunities for town centre development. The overall development potential of each site has been assessed in the study and is considered to be as follows:

- Travis Perkins Site – reasonable
- Land Between Church Street and Car Park - reasonable
- Memorial Hall Car Park - poor
- Carrington Way Car Park – poor due to loss of car parking
- Vedler’s Hey – poor for town centre uses
- Memorial Hall Car Park – poor
- The Tythings – poor

7.123 The Travis Perkins site is considered to have “Reasonable” potential for mixed use development with small/medium scale retail at ground floor level with residential or small office space above. The ‘Land between Church Street and car park’ also has “reasonable” potential for development of a small scale retail unit fronting on High Street and Carrington Way. However the availability of the Travis Perkins site is unclear as it is in active use; it is not well related to the Town Centre boundary and would add to further out of centre development, which would potential erode the town centre further. The Land between Church Street and car park is in existing use including the library. This site combined with the vacant shop units could accommodate most of the floorspace projection up until 2029.

Infrastructure

7.124 The Infrastructure Plan¹¹³ (IDP) identifies several items of infrastructure that are considered 'necessary' to provide at Wincanton. These include education, recreation and open space facilities. The previously identified need for additional Primary education space has now been resolved.

7.125 Whilst there are some local concerns regarding the provision of healthcare NHS England and the CCG consider Wincanton to be well served with regards to surgery space.

7.126 There are some flooding issues relating to the River Cale so Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) will be required for development in order that the situation is not made worse.

7.127 There are constraints in the existing potable supply and waste water networks to serve development sites. Further engagement is required with Wessex Water to consider the extent of improvements required.

¹¹³ Infrastructure Plan 2015/2016

Local Market Towns – Ansford and Castle Cary

Spatial Portrait

7.128 The combined settlements of Ansford and Castle Cary lie on the southern edge of the Somerset Levels beside the River Cary. It is an attractive market town with four Conservation Areas and many listed buildings. It has a vibrant and attractive town centre with a number of independent retailers and eateries which serve a wider rural hinterland.



7.129 The combined settlements have a population of 3,332¹¹⁴. The relatively isolated nature of the town and its largely rural hinterland means that it serves a more strategic service role than one may expect for its size.

7.130 The town's working age population of just over half is a lower proportion than the average across the County¹¹⁵. The town's major employers are based on the Torbay Road Industrial estate and include Centaur Services, Royal Canin and Snell 2000 Ltd. Of those people in work, nearly 66% leave the area for employment¹¹⁶ - more than the average across the District. The largest sector in the town is manufacturing, with 22% of all jobs¹¹⁷. There are local concerns about high amounts of HGV traffic in the area. The Cary Moor Environmental Centre and Recycling depot are about 2.0km to the south west at Dimmer.

7.131 Part of the reason a high proportion of people out-commute may be the proximity of rail services. To the north of the town Ansford and Castle Cary has access to its railway station located on the West of England and Heart of Wessex lines. The station parking is currently restricted; and the first service to Bristol isn't until 10.32am, although GWR have now acquired land adjacent to the station to provide additional parking, which may offer the opportunity to extend train services.

¹¹⁴ ONS Mid 2016 estimate

¹¹⁵ ONS 2011 Census

¹¹⁶ ONS MSOA Level Travel to Place of Work Data

¹¹⁷ Business Register and Employment Survey NOMIS 2015

7.132 The town supports a full range of services including a secondary school, doctor's surgery, pharmacy, dentist, library, convenience store, post office and public houses, although the last remaining bank closed in October 2017. The town centre provides quality shopping with many niche and independent traders and a range of supplementary services. It is accessible by bus and has parking provision but there is congestion at peak times on Fore Street. The choice of convenience shopping is limited. The town centre has liable to flooding, but the main areas of Flood Zone are to the north of the railway line. The town centre has an historic character and much of it is designated a Conservation Area.

Neighbourhood Plan

7.133 The Castle Cary and Ansford Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated in June 2015; and the Plan was the subject of Pre-Submission consultation (Regulation 14) in March/April 2018; and Submitted (Regulation 15) in December 2018. The aims of the Plan are the following:

- To ensure that all new development respects the special character of the market town of Castle Cary and the parish of Ansford, in particular that new housing developments are of good quality, are energy efficient and have as low an environmental impact as possible.
- To support the level of new dwellings required by the South Somerset Local Plan, giving priority to the re-development or re-use of brownfield sites within the existing urban area and to affordable and social housing to meet local needs, with a mix of shared ownership/tenancy types.
- To broaden the employment base of the town by supporting an environment in which enterprise can flourish, attracting new employers and creating new jobs for local people of all ages.
- To ensure that the growing community is supported by the necessary infrastructure, with new housing provision, employment growth and provision of roads and additional community facilities progressing in an integrated manner.
- To support increased tourism to the town and the wider area by preserving and promoting the area's heritage and retaining its special character.
- To support, encourage and promote a range of shops and businesses in the town centre, protect the market, and maintain the free parking and public toilets.
- To promote and support safe travel for all, by better management of traffic movements into and through the town centre; seeking improvements to public transport, cycle paths, footpaths and rights of way, parking provision; and improving links to town centre shops, schools and the railway station.
- To foster and promote opportunities for education, training, sporting activities, cultural stimulation and fun – for people of all ages.

- To maintain and enhance the urban green spaces and the natural environment within the countryside surrounding both parishes, for the enjoyment of all.

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 7.134 As set out in Policy SS1 Ansford and Castle Cary is classified as a 'Market Town' due to the settlement having a strong employment, retail and community role¹¹⁸. Given its relatively smaller scale and nature compared to some of the larger Market Towns, Ansford and Castle Cary is identified as a Local Market Town (alongside Somerton and Langport and Huish Episcopi) with a reduced scale of growth to match.

Housing

- 7.135 A total of 559 new dwellings on several different sites in Ansford and Castle Cary currently have planning permission but have not been commenced¹¹⁹. There is also a pending planning application for 81 new dwellings at the BMI site¹²⁰. However, since 2016, there have been only seven new dwellings completed in the settlement. Sites with planning permission within the Local Plan Direction for Growth are shown for information on the map in Appendix Two of this document.
- 7.136 Given the absence of building work in the settlement and the lack of any guarantees that all the homes granted permission will be constructed, it is considered important to maintain an adequate supply of developable sites and for this purpose, two allocations are provided for, which could deliver about 80 additional dwellings. Both are within the designated 'Direction of Growth' in the Local Plan. This level of provision will support the town centre business role and help support community facilities such as the local secondary school and health centre.

Land north west of Ansford

- 7.137 This would provide a natural extension to existing permissions to the north and south and could deliver about 60 dwellings. However, the site is land locked so access will have to be achieved via the developments to the south or north.

¹¹⁸ South Somerset Settlement Role and Function study, 2009

¹¹⁹ As at 31st March 2018

¹²⁰ Ref 18/01602/FUL

POLICY AC1 - HOUSING GROWTH NORTH WEST OF ANSFORD

The site north-west of Ansford is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 60 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's informal play space
- Public open space

Land east of Station Road

- 7.138 This site is of smaller scale and would contribute to a mix of site sizes. It could accommodate about 20 dwellings. It would be preferable if the site could be accessed from the approved development at Well Farm rather than from Station Road.

POLICY AC2 - HOUSING GROWTH EAST OF STATION ROAD, CASTLE CARY

The site east of Station Road is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 20 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;

Employment

- 7.139 Ansford and Castle Cary has delivered the highest amount of land and second highest amount of floorspace in net terms of all the settlements in the District since 2006. 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, the erection of a large workshop and an extension to Centaur Services. A further 2ha of employment land at Torbay Road has planning permission¹²¹.

Retail

- 7.140 The settlement of Ansford and Castle Cary is identified as a District Centre in this Local Plan. The Retail and Main Town Centres Uses Study¹²² identifies that it has a below national average vacancy rate (10.1% compared to 11.2% in 2017). The town centre is located within one of the Conservation Areas and this means the public realm is of a high quality.

¹²¹ Ref 15/02347/OUT

¹²² South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, Lichfields, 2017

7.141 The streets are narrow and there is only limited on street parking but free car parking is available at Millbrook Gardens (85 spaces) and Catherine's Close (36 spaces).

7.142 There is no large supermarket serving the town, with many small scale independent suppliers, although there is a Co-op convenience store located within the town centre. The local community are keen to retain the convenience offer in the town centre location.

7.143 The capacity for the expansion of the retail offer in Ansford and Castle Cary is modest (somewhere between a large convenience store and small supermarket) and would be expected to be focused upon the Town Centre.

7.144 The quantitative assessment of potential capacity for retail floorspace suggests the following for Ansford and Castle Cary:



Figure 7.7: Retail Floorspace Capacity in Ansford and Castle Cary 2017-2034 (m² gross)

Type	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	712	737	761
Comparison	97	228	361
Food and Beverage	25	74	122

Source: South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, 2017

7.145 The town centre is considered vulnerable to potential out of centre retail development by virtue of the fact that it does not possess a supermarket or large convenience store and contains many small size outlets. For this reason it is considered appropriate to have a local retail impact threshold of 250m² above which any retail proposal would be required to provide an impact assessment.

Infrastructure

7.146 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) shows that the development proposed for Ansford and Castle Cary in the Local Plan is unlikely to result in abnormal or fundamental infrastructure constraints relating to flood risk and drainage, utilities, telecommunications, waste and recycling, and emergency services.

- 7.147 Wessex Water advise that a waste water treatment works scheme should be programmed for 2021-2025.
- 7.148 With regards to health, the Millbrook Practice has experienced a significant increase in patient numbers since 2014, giving a higher than usual patient to GP ratio. Some funding has been secured to improve overall space standards.
- 7.149 A new MUGA is required for Ansford and Castle Cary (*Priority 2*).
- 7.150 Ansford and Castle Cary has one primary school and one secondary school, albeit with no sixth form provision. There is capacity within Castle Cary Primary School to meet the initial demand from development, but a site for a new expanded school has been identified as part of planning application 15/02347/OUT to meet demand in the longer term and Policy AC3 safeguards this from alternative use.

POLICY AC3 – EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT AT TORBAY ROAD, CASTLE CARY

Land of about 2ha in area north of Torbay Road is safeguarded for a new primary school.

- 7.151 As stated earlier, additional parking is required at Castle Cary railway station. This would provide capacity that could lead to additional services being run, thereby reducing the reliance on private vehicles. Furthermore, programmed from May 2019, a higher frequency service of new trains is likely to exacerbate existing congestion of spaces.

POLICY AC4 – CAR PARKING AT THE RAILWAY STATION, ANSFORD

Land of about 0.7ha in area at Castle Cary railway station is safeguarded for additional car parking with at least 200 spaces.

Flood Risk

- 7.152 The South Somerset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identifies the town centre as a location liable to flood due to surface water run-off from nearby hills. Planning applications will be expected to avoid contributing to the existing flooding issue by including adequate drainage measures and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). The Environment Agency has noted that there are delineated groundwater source protection zones in the vicinity of Ansford and Castle Cary. This is not considered an issue by virtue of the distance between

the strategic direction for growth and the delineated groundwater source protection zones.

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Local Market Towns – Langport and Huish Episcopi

Spatial Portrait

7.153 Langport and Huish Episcopi is a small town in the north of the District, located on the banks of the River Parrett by the meeting of major roads that link the town with Taunton, Bridgwater and the A303.



7.154 The settlement has a population of 3,055 people¹²³ today, but with fewer people of a working age than the average across Somerset. The main employment area is to the west of the town at Westover Trading Estate. A large part of the town, including the whole town centre is designated as a Conservation Area.

7.155 Langport and Huish Episcopi is located within a sensitive and rural landscape, largely defined by its proximity to the Somerset Levels and Moors; and it has a prominent tourism role. However, much of the town is surrounded by areas of high flood risk due to its

proximity to the River Parrett and its flood plain, much of which forms the Somerset Levels and Moors. The Somerset Levels and Moors are highly valued both in terms of wildlife, with parts being internationally recognised for its wildlife presence as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar, and cultural and recreation opportunities. Tourism is important for the town with many small businesses being linked to providing facilities and attractions for visitors attracted by the opportunities to walk, cycle and ride horses in the Somerset Levels and Moors and particularly along the Parrett trail.¹²⁴

7.156 As the wider area around the town is relatively sparsely populated, Langport and Huish Episcopi functions as an important settlement that serves the surrounding rural area. Some of the key services and community facilities include primary and secondary schools, sports hall, supermarket and library, although the town no longer has a bank. Langport and Huish Episcopi has a small town centre that provides a range of service goods to cater for the day-to-day needs of the residents; convenience retailing in the town is dominated by a

¹²³ ONS mid 2016 population estimate

¹²⁴ Langport 2020

single supermarket, whilst the comparison sector is mainly limited to independent and specialist stores.¹²⁵ There is a regular bus service to Yeovil and Taunton, and a national cycle route passes through the town.

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

7.157 As set out in Policy SS1, Langport and Huish Episcopi is classified as a 'Market Town' due to the settlement having a strong employment, retail and community role¹²⁶. Given its relatively smaller scale and nature compared to some of the larger Market Towns, Langport and Huish Episcopi is identified as a Local Market Town (alongside Somerton and Ansford and Castle Cary) with a reduced scale of growth to match.

Housing

7.158 In order to sustain and enhance Langport and Huish Episcopi's role as a Market Town, with a level of development that is relative to the size, accessibility, character and environmental characteristics of the town, about 351 dwellings should be built in the town in the Local Plan Review period. 146 are committed and 25 completed.¹²⁷ As such, further provision should be made for around 180 dwellings at the town. As the HELAA demonstrates, there are sites available within the existing urban area in Langport and Huish Episcopi.¹²⁸

7.159 There are two sites that can deliver additional dwellings within the lifetime of the new Plan. These sites are set out below.

The Trial Ground

7.160 There has been a previous outline approval for a development of up to 80 dwellings here. There must be a wide screen landscape buffer to the north of the site to protect the setting of the listed Old Kelways building beyond. An existing public Right of Way will need to be re-routed and a Diversion Order sought.

¹²⁵ South Somerset Retail Capacity Study update, 2010

¹²⁶ South Somerset Settlement Role and Function study, 2009

¹²⁷ As at 31st March 2018

¹²⁸ Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, 2018

POLICY LH1 - HOUSING GROWTH AT LAND BETWEEN SOMERTON ROAD AND FIELD ROAD (THE TRIAL GROUND)

The land between Somerton Road and Field is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 80 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's informal play space
- Public open space
- A significant landscape buffer in the northern part of the site

Land between Somerton Road and Wearne Lane

- 7.161 In order to protect the setting of Wearne to the north, there will need to be a substantial buffer of screen planting on the northern part of the site

POLICY LH2 - HOUSING GROWTH AT LAND BETWEEN SOMERTON ROAD AND WEARNE LANE

The land between Somerton Road and Wearne Lane is allocated for residential development, to provide the following:

- About 100 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's formal and informal play space
- A significant landscape buffer in the northern part of the site

Employment

- 7.162 As set out in Policy **SS3, ***ha** of employment land should be delivered in Langport and Huish Episcopi over the Local Plan period. Over 60% of residents travel elsewhere to work, with many travelling to Yeovil and Somerton¹²⁹.
- 7.163 The delivery of employment floorspace has been fairly consistent in the town since 2006. Much of the development has been to change the uses of land; therefore, new net floorspace has been quite modest. Most of the new additional floorspace in the town has been delivered through the Great Bow Yard offices, community space and a café development, and additional classrooms at Huish Academy. Due to Langport's role as a tourist destination, most of the employment growth has been in the service and leisure sector¹³⁰

Retail

¹²⁹ ONS MSOA Level Travel to Place of Work Data

¹³⁰ SSDC Monitoring database

- 7.164 The Retail and Main Town Centres Uses Study¹³¹ highlights the link between town centre businesses and the settlement's role as a tourist destination.
- 7.165 The historic town centre has narrow highways, significantly limiting on-street parking. There are however four well-located car parks and a regular bus service to serve town centre visitors.
- 7.166 The town centre vacancy rate is 3.9%, significantly below the national average of 11.2%. Its good range of comparison units and low vacancy rate therefore suggest that the town centre is healthy.
- 7.167 The Study's projected retail floorspace capacity for Langport and Huish Episcopi is shown in Figure 7.8.

Figure 7.8: Projected Retail Floorspace Capacity in Langport and Huish Episcopi (m² gross)

Type	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	778	827	874
Comparison	25	60	95
Food and Beverage	16	47	77

Source: South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, 2017

- 7.168 This suggests a modest amount of growth in the 'comparison' and 'food and beverage' sectors and a reasonable capacity for additional facilities. In accordance with the Study, it is not considered necessary to allocate any sites to meet the projected capacity.
- 7.169 The ability for new retail development to be delivered in Langport and Huish Episcopi will be limited by its size, natural catchment area, and level of



commercial market interest. There is no significant need for new convenience retailing given the existing large supermarket; and the natural catchment and expenditure capacity of the town will limit the potential for large scale additional convenience goods provision; such proposals would also cause concerns over the impact on existing retail provision in the town. Therefore, for both convenience and comparison retailing, a general strategic approach is

¹³¹South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centres Uses Study; Lichfields 2017

recommended for Langport and Huish Episcopi that acknowledges the need to retain shopping trips within the town and supports proposals that increase this retention Policy TC6 states that a retail impact assessment will be required for retail proposals above 250 m² in Langport and Huish Episcopi, which is considered appropriate for the scale and character of the town.

Infrastructure

- 7.170 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies several infrastructure issues that are considered 'necessary' to support development at Langport and Huish Episcopi, which generally relate to open space and sports facilities. One of the specific infrastructure requirements are improvements to the community hall.
- 7.171 Planning permission has been granted on the Westover Trading Estate for a scheme which includes raising parts of the estate road by up to 0.8m. Additional flood risk infrastructure is required to better manage flood risk. The Environment Agency has already considered an embankment scheme which may provide a comprehensive solution for the future. Wessex Water has completed a capacity scheme at Langport Sewage Treatment Works, but further work may be required.

Local Market Towns – Somerton

Spatial Portrait



7.172 Somerton has a population of 3,693 people.¹³² It is a relatively compact, set above the Cary Valley with the core of the town concentrated upon the market place and church. The town centre and an area to the east of the town is designated as a Conservation Area. Recent residential growth has spread to the west of the town centre, and the main employment area is the Bancombe Road Trading Estate to the north west of the town.

- 7.173 Somerton is located in a rural setting and is important in serving the needs of residents in the rural north of South Somerset. In terms of retail, Somerton has a reasonably healthy, well-kept and attractive town centre with a range of independent stores including a small supermarket and specialist food stores that meet the day to day needs of local residents. Some of the other key services in Somerton are a library, doctor's surgery, banks, and a primary schools.
- 7.174 The proportion of economically inactive people in the town is higher than average in Somerset, but unemployment levels are very low.¹³³ The largest proportion of jobs are in manufacturing, but this lower than average in the District.
- 7.175 Public transport to the larger settlements of Yeovil, Taunton and Street is relatively good with a regular bus service, although links to other parts of the District are poor. A national cycle route passes through the town. However, based upon 2018 Census data, it would indicate that self-containment is relatively low with over 60% of Somerton residents travelling to work elsewhere¹³⁴.
- 7.176 Some of the key environmental issues at Somerton include areas of high flood risk to the north, east and south of the town; a high quality historic environment; and the presence of protected species near the town, including Bats, Large Blue butterflies, dormice and Bewick Swans.

Local Aspirations

- 7.177 A draft Community Plan was prepared in March 2018. An emerging theme is a local desire to reduce density of future developments; ensuring that green spaces

¹³² ONS mid 2016 population estimates

¹³³ ONS 2011 Census

¹³⁴ ONS MSOA Level Travel to Place of Work Data

are included and maintained; ensuring that landscaping within new developments enhances the environment and encouraging wildlife and preserves green spaces where possible.

- 7.178 There is also a local aspiration for a new combined school on a single site and SCC have acquired land for this purpose on land north of the Bancombe Road Trading Estate.

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 7.179 As set out in Policy SS1, Somerton is classified as a 'Market Town' due to the settlement having a strong employment, retail and community role.¹³⁵ Given its relatively smaller scale and nature compared to some of the larger Market Towns, Somerton is identified as a Local Market Town.

Housing

- 7.180 It is important to sustain and enhance Somerton's role as a Market Town in the rural north of the District, with a level of development that is relative to the size, accessibility, character and environmental constraints of the town. Therefore, at least around 660 dwellings should be built in the town over the Local Plan Review period. 354 dwellings have already been committed, with 80 completions in the first years of the Local Plan period. Based upon the commitments there is a residual housing requirement of about 230 dwellings.
- 7.181 There is one site that can deliver additional dwellings within the lifetime of the new Plan.

Land west of St Cleer's Orchard

- 7.182 A right of way runs through the site, and the railway line runs along its southern boundary. The amenity impacts of the railway line need to be considered and a substantial planted buffer provided. Access to the site should be via a widened Ricksey Lane.

POLICY SM1 – HOUSING PROVISION ON LAND WEST OF ST CLEER'S ORCHARD

Land to the west of Cleers Orchard is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- Up to 140 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space

¹³⁵ South Somerset Settlement Role and Function study, 2009

Employment

- 7.183 The main employment area in Somerton is the Bancombe Road trading estate. A total of ** ha of employment land should be delivered in Somerton over the Local Plan period. There is potential to increase the Bancombe Road trading estate beyond the 3.0ha that has been granted outline planning permission and the 0.4ha that is the subject of a further outline application. This will be considered and recommended through the Employment Land Review.

POLICY SM2 – EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AT BANCOMBE ROAD

Land at Bancombe Road is allocated for economic development, providing for the * ha of employment land.

Retail

- 7.184 The Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study¹³⁶ identifies that Somerton has a high vacancy rate. The settlement is fairly self-contained and the results of the household survey indicate that it retains 75% of convenience shopping and 60% of comparison shopping.
- 7.185 The Study highlights that the town centre is a high quality public realm with an expenditure surplus that could support future provision improvements, which should be met primarily through the reoccupation of vacant units.

Figure 7.9: Projected Retail Floorspace Capacity in Somerton (m² gross)

Type	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	278	305	331
Comparison	62	146	232
Food and Beverage	45	136	225

Source: South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, 2017

- 7.186 The town centre has a good balance of shops, including a small supermarket, and is therefore considered vulnerable to potential out of centre retail development. It is considered appropriate to require a local retail impact assessment for retail proposals greater than a threshold of 250m² for Somerton given the scale and nature of the town (Policy TC6).

Infrastructure

- 7.187 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies several infrastructure issues that are considered 'necessary' to provide as a result of new development at Somerton, which generally relate to open space and sports facilities.

¹³⁶ South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centres Uses Study

- 7.188 As previously stated, there is a local aspiration to combine the existing two primary school settings onto a single new site. Such a site has been purchased by Somerset County Council, the access to which will need to be via the development site to the north of Bancombe Road, which is located immediately to the south across Bradley Hill Lane. This lane would not be suitable for access to a school.
- 7.189 Capacity appraisals have been completed for existing planning permission north of Cleer's Orchard site¹³⁷ which indicate improvements are required to the downstream sewer network. Further assessment of options in respect of foul/ water supply networks will be necessary.

DRAFT

¹³⁷ Ref 13/03272/OUT

8. Rural Centres

Overview

- 8.1 The Spatial Strategy identifies five Rural Centres based on the findings of the South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study and other evidence. These are the settlements that act as focal points for the surrounding area for retail and community service provision, and in some cases have an employment role. To promote greater self-containment and stronger local communities, the strategy requires these places to accommodate some housing and employment growth. Community facilities and services, which better meet the needs of the settlement and its surrounding area, will be encouraged.
- 8.2 The five identified Rural Centres are: Bruton, Ilchester, Martock and Bower Hinton, Milborne Port and South Petherton. The key issues, challenges and indication of what the Local Plan Review will deliver for each settlement are covered below.

Bruton

Spatial Portrait

- 8.3 Bruton is situated in the east of the District, in the Brue Valley a few miles north of the A303, about 4 miles from Castle Cary and 7 miles from Shepton Mallet. The A359 Frome to Yeovil road passes through the settlement.
- 8.4 Today Bruton is one of the larger settlements in the District with a population of 3,045 residents¹³⁸. The topography and hence settlement has been heavily influenced by the River Brue. The majority of the settlement is built on the higher ground on the north side of the river and in recent years residential development has occurred to the north east of the town.
- 8.5 Nearly 45% of the settlement's economically active residents do not travel out of the area to work making the level of self-containment a little higher than across the District (District Average; 43%)¹³⁹. The major employment sector is education, with four schools in the settlement (and nearly all of local jobs are in this sector). There is also the Wyke



¹³⁸ ONS Mid Year estimates 2016

¹³⁹ ONS MSOA Level Travel to Place of Work Data

Farms Cheese business, the Hauser and Wirth gallery and the popular 'At The Chapel' restaurant. The challenge for Bruton is resisting any further loss of employment land and providing a range of opportunities to both live and work locally. In retail terms, whilst there is no large supermarket, there are a number of independent shops providing a range of convenience goods. There are a variety of community services including a doctor's surgery, library, and post office.

- 8.6 In addition to a regular bus service, residents in Bruton have access to rail services. The railway station, which is located on Station Road, is on the Heart of Wessex Line running from Bristol to Weymouth. A national cycle route runs through the settlement.
- 8.7 One of the key environmental issues in Bruton is the risk of flooding along the course of the River Brue and its tributary Combe Brook. As a result of a severe flood in 1982 a retention dam was built about one and half miles east of the town, the dam acts as a flow regulator to control the total amount of water in the river at Church Bridge without any human intervention.

Local Aspirations

- 8.8 A Town Plan Resident Survey was undertaken by the Town Council in the Autumn of 2016, and a Town Plan was published in 2017, which District Council Members have since endorsed. The Town Plan states that any major residential development should be on sites that the community supports; and that the historic centre of the town and green spaces should be protected.

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 8.9 As set out in Policy SS1, Bruton is classified as a Rural Centre due to its retail, community service and to a lesser extent employment role. Identification of Bruton as a Rural Centre will enable the settlement to grow and expand its identified role by allowing for additional growth to encourage greater self-containment and broaden the employment base.

Housing

- 8.10 It is important to sustain and enhance Bruton's role as a Rural Centre, with a level of development that is commensurate with the size, accessibility, character and environmental constraints of the town. The Local Plan Review will therefore support the development of about 152 dwellings over the Plan period, up to 2036. 76 dwellings are already committed (of which 11 are already completed). Two preferred sites to emerge from the resident survey were at Brewham Road and a small site at Frome Road.

Brewham Road

- 8.11 This site is at the eastern edge of the settlement. Although it would be possible to provide an access on to Brewham Road, it would be preferable to use existing

access points within the residential development to the west to avoid loss of a mature hedge.

POLICY BT1 – HOUSING PROVISION AT BREWHAM ROAD

Land to the north of Brewham Road is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- About 60 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children’s informal play space
- Public open space
- Access from the area around Brew Avenue to the west

Land west of Frome Road

- 8.12 Located to the north east of the town centre, the number of dwellings that could be provided here is limited by steep gradients across the site. For this reason only a small frontage development is allocated.

POLICY BT2 – HOUSING PROVISION AT FROME ROAD

Land to the north west of Frome Road is allocated for residential development, providing for about 5 dwellings.

Employment

- 8.13 Bruton is very much a local centre with a high dependence on its strong, prestigious educational establishments. The supply of employment land is modest and in keeping with the settlement’s scale and function.
- 8.14 As set out in Policy SS3, a minimum of ** hectares of employment land will be supported up to 2036, which will assist new jobs growth and improve levels of self-containment within the settlement.

Retail

- 8.15 As set out in Policy TC4, Bruton is a Local Centre in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be within the defined Town Centre. The Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study 2017 states that the centre has a good range of comparison units, slightly above the national average. The comparison offer is made up of independent and specialist stores, no national multiples. In terms of convenience units, there is a Spar Shop (34m² net) and a Premier (102m² net), supplemented by an organic food shop and a wine shop. The provision of service uses in the centre is below the national average, and includes a number of hairdressers, an estate agent and a post office. There are a number of

restaurants and public houses, and one takeaway. The vacancy rate at 12.1% is slightly above the national average of 11.2%.

- 8.16 Proposals for retail development in excess of 250m² will be required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment (Policy TC6).

Infrastructure

- 8.17 The Infrastructure Plan does not indicate the need for any 'critical' infrastructure¹⁴⁰ requirements to be provided in Bruton as a result of the proposed new development. It does however identify a number of 'necessary' infrastructure¹⁴¹ requirements, which generally relate to open space and sports facilities. There are also capacity issues in medical facilities around Bruton and it is a priority area to review but, at the time of writing, it is understood that no solution has yet been identified. The risk of flooding locally means that the Environment Agency will be preparing a surface water management scheme. Flood defences at Bruton may need to be raised in the future to provide an increased standard of protection, funded through development.

Ilchester

Spatial Portrait

¹⁴⁰ See Glossary

¹⁴¹ See Glossary



8.18 Ilchester is situated five miles north of Yeovil, on the eastern fringe of the Somerset Levels and Moors, concentrated at the point at which the River Yeo crosses the Fosse Way. It has a historic legacy and has many Scheduled Ancient Monuments, archaeological sites, and historic buildings that are present in the settlement, and which include the 13th Century St Mary Major and the Church of St Andrews, both Grade II* Listed buildings. There is also a Conservation Area

8.19 In 1940 the Royal Naval Air Station was commissioned at Yeovilton, and since then it has grown to become one of the busiest military airfields in the UK, with helicopters operating out of the Station. Ilchester, being in close proximity to RNAS Yeovilton has accommodated development over

recent years to provide housing for many service personnel and their families stationed at the air base.

- 8.20 As a result of its natural and historic constraints, the settlement is formed around two distinct points of growth. At the southern end the main commercial area is formed around the historic core and, to the north, Northover is a recent growth area. Both are linked by linear development along the Fosse Way. The Historic Core is virtually completely surrounded by land within Flood Zone 3, the functional floodplain of the River Yeo, with certain parts of the built up area itself, including the linear development along Fosse Way also being within Flood Zone 3. The northern growth area has developed over the past 50 years or so, on gently rising ground, is not subject to flooding or known archaeological constraints. This area includes the infant and junior schools (split site), a factory, a shop and residential development, including housing for service personnel and their families stationed at nearby RNAS Yeovilton.



8.21 Today Ilchester has a population of 1,246 people¹⁴² however the presence of RNAS Yeovilton, which has over 4,000 personnel on the base swells this number considerably. Given the presence of RNAS Yeovilton, Ilchester is a strong location for employment. As a result

of the number of personnel living in Ilchester, the level of self-containment is good with approximately 56% of people living and working in the same area¹⁴³.

- 8.22 The settlement also provides a retail and community service role - there are a few convenience stores, a post office, infant and junior schools and a doctor's surgery which has recently merged with the one at Somerton. There are regular bus services to Yeovil, Taunton and Street.
- 8.23 Key environmental issues affecting potential new development as described above include flooding and the presence of archaeological remains. Much of the southern half of the town is an Area of High Archaeological Potential and noise constraints from the airbase.

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 8.24 As set out in Policy SS1, whilst Ilchester has a strong employment role due to its proximity to RNAS Yeovilton, it is classified as a Rural Centre.

Housing

- 8.25 It is important to sustain and enhance Ilchester's role as a Rural Centre, with a level of development that is commensurate with the size, accessibility, character and environmental constraints of the town. The local plan will therefore support the development of about 361 dwellings over the Plan period, up to 2036.
- 8.26 Bureau Veritas were commissioned by South Somerset District Council in 2010 to prepare noise contours to represent current typical aircraft activity at RNAS Yeovilton¹⁴⁴. Noise contours have been identified (see Appendix Four) and these will be a material consideration used to guide planning decisions (see Policy EQ8 - Pollution Control). These contours were reviewed a number of years ago and

¹⁴² ONS Mid Year estimates 2016

¹⁴³ ONS MSOA Level Travel to Place of Work Data

¹⁴⁴ Aircraft Noise Contours for RNAS Yeovilton, SSDC and Bureau Veritas (July 2010)

the District Council's Environmental Protection Unit is satisfied that they remain unchanged. The contours seek to minimise the adverse impact of noise, without placing unreasonable restrictions on development or adding unduly to the costs and administrative burdens of business.

- 8.27 The MOD can give no guarantee as to the type, number and frequency of aircraft movements now or in the future, and therefore this will be subject to an ongoing review through the Council's monitoring processes. It is imperative that any further dwellings, be constructed to the highest levels of noise protection so as not to constrain the bases' future operational flexibility and provide an appropriate living environment for new residents.

Land north of Troubridge Park

- 8.28 This site to the north of the settlement would be suitable for about 200 new dwellings. Access will need to be off B3151.

POLICY IL1 – HOUSING PROVISION NORTH OF TROUBRIDGE PARK

Land north of Troubridge Park is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- About 200 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space
- Access via the B3151

Employment

- 8.29 Proximity to the A303 and good connections to the South and North, means that Ilchester will always enjoy the advantages brought by good road communications. There is likely to be a small local demand for employment sites, this should be supported to increase Ilchester's level of self-containment and offer an alternative to Yeovil.
- 8.30 As set out in Policy SS3, a minimum of *** hectares of employment land will be supported up to 2036. The Employment Land Review will consider sites put forward through the Issues and Option consultation and conclude on their inclusion or not in the Local Plan review.

Retail

- 8.31 There are only a small number of commercial units within the defined Ilchester town centre. This comprises a former post office, hairdresser, restaurant, two public houses and a Chinese takeaway. There is no convenience or comparison shops in the centre although the Texaco Garage does incorporate an important ancillary retail use (Central Off License) and there is a convenience store to the north located on Taranto Hill. The nearest large-scale supermarkets are located in Yeovil.

- 8.32 As set out in Policy TC4, Ilchester is a Local Centre in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be within the defined Town Centre. Proposals for retail development in excess of 250m² will be required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment (Policy TC6).

Infrastructure

- 8.33 Fluvial flooding from the River Yeo is a key risk at Ilchester, with surface water flooding also being an issue at Ilchester Meads. There has been flooding on the highway on the A37 and nearby on the A303. Flood risk infrastructure includes embankments and raised channel banks on the River Yeo and flood walls. The embankment that runs alongside the River Yeo may need to be increased in height to help protect the settlement in the future.
- 8.34 New housing will generate a need for additional open space and outdoor play space, sports, community and cultural facilities; although the timing of this is not fundamental to delivering development. Equipped play areas have also been identified a particular priority.
- 8.35 The issue relating to GP capacity has now been resolved by combining with the Somerton practice.

Martock and Bower Hinton

Spatial Portrait



8.36 Martock is a small attractive town in central South Somerset, on the southern edge of the Somerset Levels and Moors and just off the busy A303. Mill Brook and Hurst Brook flow between Martock and Bower Hinton to the south, before joining the River Parrett to the west. The town is surrounded by gradual undulating hills that are regarded as having high landscape value. It is well connected to Yeovil, which is situated seven miles to the southeast.

- 8.37 Martock and Bower Hinton have a joint Conservation Area incorporating various listed buildings along the main road between the two settlements. Listed buildings are concentrated at the historic centres of Martock, Hurst and Bower Hinton. Areas of flood risk run through the centre from east to west between Martock and Bower Hinton. The land either side of the streams has been identified as part of the functional flood plain.

- 8.38 The population of Martock parish is 4188¹⁴⁵. The town has a good variety of services, however self-containment is an issue. The travel to work data shows that about 80% of the population out commute with many going to Yeovil, but also the Ilchester area¹⁴⁶. The town is home to many small businesses that are clustered principally at Martock Industrial Park and the out of town Parrett Works. Redevelopment of sites, such as Paulls Court, has resulted in a loss of employment land. Providing more employment opportunities in Martock/Bower Hinton could potentially reduce the currently high level of out commuting.

Neighbourhood Plan

- 8.39 The Parish of Martock was designated a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of a Neighbourhood Plan in April 2016 and a Resident Survey was completed in 2017. The importance of health facilities and shops seems to be greater priorities for the local community than, for example, play areas and sports facilities. Many people are unhappy with traffic and parking in the area, with congestion in North Street being frequently mentioned, HGVs in the centre and vehicle speeds.

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 8.40 Martock/Bower Hinton as a Rural Centre and this will enable the settlement to grow and expand its identified role, by allowing for additional employment growth, the provision of additional retail premises and modest housing growth all of which will encourage greater self-containment.

Housing

- 8.41 To enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role about 330 dwellings are proposed over the Local Plan Review period. 75 are already committed (of which 45 are already completed)¹⁴⁷, leaving a residual requirement for 210 new dwellings.
- 8.42 The western edge of Martock seems to be the most sustainable and unconstrained location for growth, although a degree of separation to Coat further to the west again should be retained. Several sites are available where planning permission has not already been granted.
- 8.43 There are three sites that can deliver additional dwellings within the lifetime of the new Plan. They could probably jointly deliver around 210 dwellings. These sites are set out below.

Land to the north of Coat Road

¹⁴⁵ 2016 ONS Mid Year Estimate

¹⁴⁶ ONS MSOA Level Travel to Place of Work Data

¹⁴⁷ As at 31st March 2018

- 8.44 There is direct access onto Coat Road but it has no edgings or footways and it is likely that this would need to be widened. There would be little visual harm in this respect. Appropriate highways works would therefore be necessary for the development to proceed. The separation to Coat would be retained with a substantial field and long gardens remaining undeveloped.

POLICY MB1 – HOUSING PROVISION NORTH OF COAT ROAD

Land north of Coat Road is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- About 55 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children’s formal and informal play space
- Public open space

Land to the south of Coat Road

- 8.45 Planning permission has previously been granted for the development of the site, but this lapsed in May 2018. It is understood that the site is still available and deliverable.

POLICY MB2 – HOUSING PROVISION SOUTH OF COAT ROAD

Land south of Coat Road is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- About 95 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children’s formal and informal play space
- Public open space

Land south of Hills Lane

- 8.46 This site, suitable for about 60 dwellings is also on the western edge of the settlement. Access could only be via the Coat Road immediately to the north. Opportunities should be taken to enhance the accessibility by pedestrians to the primary school adjoining to the south.

POLICY MB3 – HOUSING PROVISION SOUTH OF HILLS LANE

Land south of Hills Lane is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- About 60 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's informal play space
- Public open space

Employment

- 8.47 There has been no net increase of employment land in the town since 2006/07 and a net reduction of floorspace. There are expected to be further net losses through unimplemented planning permissions¹⁴⁸. Additional employment and retail opportunities should be exploited to strengthen the service function of the settlement, and additional employment land is required to be developed to 2036 in order to broaden the range of opportunities and to provide greater self-containment.

Retail

- 8.48 As set out in Policy TC4, Martock and Bower Hinton is a Local Centre in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be within the defined Town Centre. There are a very limited range of comparison units and their proportion of the town centre is about half of the UK average. There is, however, a relatively good convenience offer, with two small supermarkets, a newsagent and a bakery. There is a single vacancy¹⁴⁹. Figure 8.1 sets out the future retail requirements for Martock and Bower Hinton.

Figure 8.1 Future retail requirements in Martock to 2034 (m² gross)

Type	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	262	278	294
Comparison	63	150	238
Food and Beverage	11	33	54

Source: South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, 2017

- 8.49 Proposals for retail development in excess of 250m² will be required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment (Policy TC6).

¹⁴⁸ SSDC Monitoring Database

¹⁴⁹ South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study; Lichfields July 2017

Infrastructure

- 8.50 There are flooding issues in Martock, where the River Parrett travels through the settlement. There are localised problems, exacerbated by small culverted watercourses which are prone to blockage or are undersized. The culverted watercourses that run through the settlement are described by Somerset County Council as being at capacity. There have been property flooding incidents at Foldhill Lane and Long Load Road, and flooding on the highway at various locations but particularly at Stoke Road. The flood alleviation scheme at Martock includes a 300m flood embankment, throttle structures, widened channel, and walls. If development is proposed on the eastern edge of Martock then existing culverts should be upgraded, funded through developer contributions. Flood defences may need to be raised in the future, depending on the location and floor levels of future development. A minor scheme to improve the inlet to the Foldhill Lane culvert has been carried out by SCC.
- 8.51 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identified the requirement for a fluvial flood risk defences and also a community hall, new open space, sports facilities, play area and expansion of youth facilities for the settlement. An equipped play area at Martock is a particular priority. Delivery of this infrastructure will also be dependent on securing contributions from development (where viable), along with obtaining other funding streams.
- 8.52 Symphony Healthcare Services advise that the existing primary healthcare practices in Martock are operating in excess of operational capacity in accordance with national standards. An options appraisal for what type of healthcare development is required and could be delivered in Martock to accommodate the primary healthcare needs of the increasing population will be necessary.

Milborne Port

Spatial Portrait

- 8.53 Milborne Port is located in the south-east of the District near the Dorset border and the edge of the Blackmore Vale. The River Gascoigne flows south through the village, and the A30 runs west to east through the centre, providing a direct road connection to the larger towns of Sherborne 3 miles away and Yeovil (8 miles), both to the west. There is access to railway stations at Yeovil and Sherborne.



8.54 Milborne Port is noted for its 'New Town' Conservation Area in the west of the village with a second Conservation Area encompassing the village centre. Much of the countryside surrounding the village is Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, also considered to be of high landscape value, including a Historic Garden at Ven House (itself a Grade 1 listed building) to the south east. Areas of flood risk run through the centre from the north to the south and there are also groundwater protection zones in the vicinity of Milborne Port.

- 8.55 The population is 2,954¹⁵⁰. Self-containment is an issue; a lack of jobs in Milborne Port has resulted in high levels (71%) of out commuting. More employment opportunities in the settlement could potentially reduce this level of out-commuting.

Local Aspirations

- 8.56 The Milborne Port Community Plan¹⁵¹ was produced in 2010 and is now the subject of a review. A public 'planning for real' exercise has been undertaken; a residents' survey carried out and a housing needs assessment is also underway; but it is probably too early at the time of writing to identify any particular emerging themes.

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 8.57 Milborne Port is defined as a Rural Centre and this will enable the settlement to grow and expand its identified role by allowing for additional employment growth. The provision of additional retail premises and modest housing growth all of which will encourage greater self-containment.

Housing

- 8.58 In Milborne Port about 245 dwellings are identified over the Local Plan Review period. 76 dwellings are already committed (with a further 29 dwellings already completed)¹⁵², leaving a further 140 new dwellings, which could be accommodated on the two sites identified below.

¹⁵⁰ ONS 2016 Mid Year estimates

¹⁵¹ Endorsed by South Somerset District Council, August 2010

¹⁵² AS at 31st March 2018

Land to the north of Wheathill Lane

- 8.59 A planning application is pending at the time of writing for 65 dwellings on land to the west of the site¹⁵³. The allocation would be suitable for a further 45, making a total of 110. Access should be via the site to the west the subject of the planning application. There is limited visibility at the junction of Wheathill Lane with Station Road and it will be necessary to form a new junction here. This will be subject to the acceptability of removing trees which are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order along the northern edge of Wheathill Lane.

POLICY MP1 – HOUSING PROVISION NORTH OF WHEATHILL LANE

Land north of Wheathill Lane is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- About 110 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space
- Improved junction arrangement for Wheathill Lane with Station Road

Land south of Court Lane

- 8.60 This site could accommodate about 30 dwellings. Access should be from the north off of Court lane. Adequate visibility at the junction with Wick Road would need to be demonstrated.

POLICY MP2 – HOUSING PROVISION SOUTH OF COURT LANE

Land south of Court Lane is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- About 30 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's formal and informal play space
- Public open space

Employment

- 8.61 Additional employment and retail opportunities should be exploited to strengthen the service function of the settlement and additional employment land is required to be developed to 2036 in order to broaden the range of opportunities and to provide greater self-containment. Much employment land has been lost in the recent past with the changes of use to residential of the Tannery Site, Clark

¹⁵³ Ref 17/03985/OUT

House and Wheathill Nurseries. There is also virtually no existing supply of employment land in Milborne Port.

Retail

- 8.62 Milborne Port is a designated Local Centre in the retail hierarchy (Policy TC4) it has a small but vital number of commercial units as well as a library. At the time of writing there is one vacant unit which is the Queens Head Public House. The town centre lacks a bank and convenience store, although there is a Co-op store located at Coldharbour, north of the centre.
- 8.63 Milborne Port's town centre is very small, with just six commercial units interspersed with domestic properties and the library. The buildings in the town centre are largely traditional in appearance with a number listed. The town centre is located within one of the settlement's two Conservation Areas.
- 8.64 There is a small car park in the centre providing 10 spaces. The main A30 runs through the centre, this makes it difficult for pedestrians.
- 8.65 Proposals for retail development in excess of 250m² will be required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment (Policy TC6).

Infrastructure

- 8.66 The infrastructure Delivery Plan does not indicate the need for any 'critical' infrastructure¹⁵⁴ requirements to be provided in Milborne Port as a result of the proposed new development. It does however identify a number of 'necessary' infrastructure¹⁵⁵ requirements, which generally relate to open space and sport facilities.
- 8.67 Wessex Water have advised that there may be limited sewerage capacity in the area and further assessment work will be required if new development is to take place. Areas of Milborne Port suffer sewer flooding from groundwater inundation during periods of prolonged wet weather. Wessex Water also recommends considering development subject to a revised SFRA.

South Petherton

Spatial Portrait

- 8.68 South Petherton is a large attractive hamstone village in central South Somerset. It lies immediately to the north of the busy A303 road corridor amongst the shallow folds of low limestone hills, some 7 miles west of Yeovil. The settlement is surrounded by gradual undulating hills that are regarded as having high landscape value, especially to the west, north and east; and the settlement is surrounded by BMV agricultural land. A small stream flows north through the centre of South Petherton before it feeds into the wider River Parrett further along

¹⁵⁴ See Glossary

¹⁵⁵ See Glossary



its course. The land either side of the stream has been identified as part of the functional flood plain.

8.69 There are a large number of listed buildings concentrated in the historic core and are incorporated within the Conservation Area.

8.70 The population of the settlement is 3,616¹⁵⁶ with a higher than average percentage of people over 65 years (28%). The village has a variety of services, however self-containment is an issue. Only just over half of the population is of working age¹⁵⁷, but of those who do work, the travel to work data shows that over 80% out commute to a variety of other locations¹⁵⁸.

Neighbourhood Plan

8.71 The South Petherton Neighbourhood Area designation was approved by the District Council in April 2015. Since then, the Neighbourhood Plan for the area was prepared. The Plan was then the subject of independent examination and following a referendum where the vote was in favour the Neighbourhood Plan went on to be 'made' in September 2018.

8.72 The Neighbourhood Plan has the following aims:

- Protect and enhance our countryside and natural environment
- Focus future development on small, incremental expansion of the village
- Control future development
- Retain the distinctive character of the village
- Set appropriate design and space standards for new development
- Establish a more accessible (pedestrian-and cyclist friendly) environment
- Ensure new housing meets local needs and increases choice
- Strengthen retail/commercial function of village centre
- Support the growth of local business / enterprise
- Reduce substantially the impact of the motor vehicle
- Improve parking provision
- Provide for a wide range of community facilities and services and improve leisure and recreation opportunities
- Increase sport and recreation facilities and opportunities at the Recreation Ground.

¹⁵⁶ 2016 ONS Mid Year Estimates

¹⁵⁷ ONS 2011 Census data

¹⁵⁸ ONS MSOA Level Travel to Place of Work Data

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 8.73 South Petherton is defined as a Rural Centre. This will enable the settlement to grow and expand its identified role by allowing for additional employment growth, the provision of additional retail premises and modest housing growth, all of which will encourage greater self-containment.

Housing

- 8.74 To enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role about 116 dwellings are proposed over the Local Plan Review period. 41 dwellings are already committed (of which 20 dwellings are already completed)¹⁵⁹, leaving a residual requirement for about 55 new dwellings.
- 8.75 There are two suitable parcels of land that are allocated for development in South Petherton. One is to the south of the hospital site and the other is at the rear of Littlehays.

Land south of Hospital Lane

- 8.76 This site at the eastern end of the settlement is suitable for about 45 dwellings. However, Hospital Lane is narrow with no footways so access should be provided from St Michael's Gardens and/or Lime Kiln Avenue. There is an opportunity to include an increased amount of parking for the Hospital – a local aspiration. Public Rights of Way run along the south eastern edge of the site and across it and these will need to be retained, albeit possibly re-routed following the approval of a Diversion Order.

POLICY SP1 – HOUSING PROVISION SOUTH OF HOSPITAL LANE

Land south of Hospital Lane is allocated for residential development, providing for the following:

- About 45 dwellings, including 28% affordable housing;
- Children's informal play space
- Public open space

Land rear of Littlehays

- 8.77 This site on the eastern edge of the settlement is suitable for about 10 dwellings. There are Grade II* listed buildings to the south, the setting of which would need to be protected.

¹⁵⁹ As at 31st March 2018

POLICY SP2 – HOUSING PROVISION AT REAR OF LITTLEHAYS

Land at the rear of Littlehays is allocated for residential development, providing for about 10 dwellings; including 28% affordable housing

Employment

- 8.78 Additional employment and retail opportunities should be exploited to strengthen the service function of the settlement and additional employment land is required to be developed to 2036 in order to broaden the range of opportunities and to provide greater self-containment.
- 8.79 In previous local plans, efforts were made to find a site to potentially meet the needs of local employment users in this part of the district. No acceptable alternatives at that time were found to the Lopen Head Nursery site (1.8 hectares). As such, historically it has been considered as part of the employment provision for South Petherton and other settlements.
- 8.80 A total additional employment provision for South Petherton of ** ha is required to deliver jobs growth in South Petherton.

Retail

- 8.81 As set out in Policy TC4, South Petherton is a Local Centre in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be within the defined Town Centre.
- 8.82 The centre has a higher than average provision of comparison units, when compared with the national average. Notwithstanding this, the range is limited and includes a number of charity shops, electrical and hardware shops. In terms of convenience offer, there are a number of butchers, delicatessens and a Co-op. The provision of service uses is below the national average and includes hairdressers, estate agents, a post office and a bank. In terms of food and drink uses, there is a café, a restaurant, a public house and a takeaway¹⁶⁰.
- 8.83 The centre is within a Conservation Area, comprising a number of high quality, attractive historic buildings and public realm. The commercial units are historic and in the most part have traditional shopfronts. The vacancy rate is very low, suggesting that the centre is healthy.



- 8.84 The Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study does not see the need for any retail site allocations or changes in retail policy for the settlement.

¹⁶⁰ Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study; Lichfields 2017

- 8.85 Proposals for retail development in excess of 250m² will be required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment (Policy TC6).

Infrastructure

- 8.86 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan indicates that new housing will generate a need for additional open space and outdoor play space, sports, community and cultural facilities; although the timing of this is not fundamental to delivering development.
- 8.87 Improvements to Blake Hall are identified as a priority. There is also localised flooding, exacerbated by small, culverted, watercourses that are often undersized and prone to blockage. There is an EA maintained raised embankment and culvert downstream of Hele Lane ford. Flood defences may need to be raised in the future to provide an increased standard of protection for the settlement.
- 8.88 Short term issues associated with a lack of electricity capacity have been identified and there may be water treatment works necessary. Both matters are resolvable with local enhancements, paid for by developers.
- 8.89 Wessex Water advise that an assessment has been completed to test capacity within their networks for development of the site to the south of Hospital Lane and that It indicated at the time that sufficient capacity existed to serve approximately 65 dwellings.

9. Housing

Overview

- 9.1 One of the government's main objectives is to significantly boost the supply of homes across the country. The overall number of homes to be provided in South Somerset over the Plan period is addressed in section 5 of this document. This section of the Local Plan Review discusses existing large scale strategic housing sites and sets out the policies for the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community; including the provision of affordable housing.
- 9.2 The NPPF expects policies to identify the type, size and tenure of market and affordable housing needed within the District in order to ensure that the needs of the different groups within the community can be met. This includes but is not limited to; families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, those who wish to rent their homes and people who wish to commission or build their own homes¹⁶¹.
- 9.3 Key evidence for the policies and approach to housing in this section of the Local Plan Review comes from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)¹⁶². Updated versions of the document will be used to inform the application of core policies over the Plan period. The SHMA provides guidance on:
- The likely overall proportions of households requiring market and affordable housing;
 - The likely profile of household types requiring market housing and;
 - The size, type and tenure of affordable housing required.

Carried Forward Strategic Housing Sites

- 9.4 There are a number of strategic housing sites identified in the current Local Plan and these are discussed below.

Yeovil – North of Thorne Lane (Brimsmore)

- 9.5 The Brimsmore site benefits from outline planning permission granted in August 2007. Various reserved matters approvals have been granted subsequently and 842 dwellings remain to be completed¹⁶³. Development of this site will provide additional housing, recreation and community facilities within the north of Yeovil with a new link road provided from Western Avenue to Brimsmore. A new 'village' centre will provide community facilities for daily needs and provide access to a new primary school. The existing bus service in Larkhill Road can be extended to serve the site.

¹⁶¹ NPPF, July 2018. Paragraph 61.

¹⁶² Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Taunton Deane Strategic Housing Market Assessment, October 2016 (SHMA)

¹⁶³ As at March 2018.

Yeovil – Lufton

- 9.6 The site lies close to existing employment opportunities on the west of Yeovil and also to the Bunford and Lufton strategic employment sites. A local centre will provide for residents' daily needs. Kingfisher Primary School opened in September 2018. The site is anticipated to be completed around 2023 and will have delivered 700 dwellings.

Yeovil – Lyde Road

- 9.7 The Lyde Road site was one of the strategic Key Sites in the adopted Local Plan¹⁶⁴ and housing on this site is still under construction and around 100 dwellings remain to be completed¹⁶⁵. Work is anticipated to be finished in 2019. The scheme provides an extension to the existing country park along the flood plain, and remains important for delivering a mixture of housing types and tenure in Yeovil.

Crewkerne

- 9.8 Development of Crewkerne Key Site (Saved local plan Allocation KS/CREW/1) is part of the comprehensive regeneration of the town and the site will provide a wide package of land uses. This site has convenient links to town centre and will provide a link between the A30 (Yeovil Road) and A356 (Station Road). This site is also saved as a strategic employment site.
- 9.9 There is an outline planning permission for 525 dwellings on the northern part of site which expires in February 2023, with reserved matters approval for 203. Additionally there is outline approval for 110 homes and a 60 bed care home to the south which reduces the amount of employment land to be developed. So far work has not commenced. This is discussed further in the Crewkerne section of this Local Plan Review.

POLICY HG1: STRATEGIC HOUSING SITE

The following housing allocation is strategically significant and will be safeguarded as a residential Key Site:

- CLR Site, Crewkerne (saved allocation: KS/CREW/1).

Previously Developed Land

¹⁶⁴ South Somerset Local Plan, 1991 – 2011

¹⁶⁵ As at 31st March 2018.

- 9.10 Previously developed land (PDL), often referred to as “brownfield land”, is the land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure and is defined in the NPPF.¹⁶⁶
- 9.11 The NPPF expects planning policies to give substantial weight to the value of using brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs¹⁶⁷. The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 require local authorities to prepare and maintain registers of brownfield land that is suitable for residential development. Registers are set out in two parts and sites entered on Part 2 of the register are granted permission in principle¹⁶⁸.
- 9.12 The Council’s brownfield register can be seen on the web site:
www.southsomerset.gov.uk
- 9.13 The introduction of Brownfield Registers and the new permission in principle negate the requirement to set a local target for the development of previously developed land; but opportunities to bring vacant sites back into use, particularly for housing within existing settlements should be supported and encouraged. Especially in Yeovil, Chard and Wincanton where Town Centre regeneration is a priority. See section 11.
- 9.14 The Council will consider a range of incentives or interventions that could help to ensure that previously developed land is re-used, including addressing obstacles to the development of vacant and derelict sites and buildings and encouraging innovative housing schemes that make effective use of public sector previously-developed land.

Affordable Housing

- 9.15 The definition of affordable housing can be found in the NPPF¹⁶⁹. The definition includes affordable housing for rent, starter homes, discounted market sales housing and other affordable routes to home ownership including; shared ownership, relevant equity loans, low cost homes for sale at a price equivalent to at least 20% below market value and rent to buy.
- 9.16 The Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Taunton Deane Strategic Housing Market Assessment, October 2016 (SHMA) provides key evidence for developing the approach to affordable housing policy in the Local Plan Review. The SHMA estimates that there is a net annual affordable housing need in South Somerset of 206 homes and particularly for 1 and 2 bedroom properties.

¹⁶⁶ See Glossary for full definition

¹⁶⁷ NPPF, 2018. Paragraph 118

¹⁶⁸ Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017

¹⁶⁹ NPPF July 2018, Annex 2: Glossary

- 9.17 Meeting the housing needs of the district is a key priority for the District. The Council's Rural Housing Plan, 2018 includes an action plan to support the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas.

Affordable Housing Policy Target

- 9.18 The estimated need for 206 affordable homes each year equates to 28% of the overall annual housing target of at least 726 dwellings each year¹⁷⁰.
- 9.19 Whilst this target is lower than the 35% in the current Local Plan, the current Local Plan target is subject to viability and more often than not the affordable housing contribution within developments is reduced following an 'open book' viability testing process.
- 9.20 Monitoring shows that in 2017/18 affordable housing equated to only 14% of all new dwellings across the District¹⁷¹. Moving forward, in accordance with national guidance¹⁷² once adopted, the Local Plan Review target would be expected to be met on major developments. Viability assessments would only be expected to be carried out in exceptional circumstances where the applicant is able to justify the need for one at the planning application stage. The 28% target will be tested as part of the Plan-wide Viability Assessment which will be undertaken prior to the Local Plan Review being submitted.
- 9.21 The SHMA shows that wherever possible 80% of affordable housing should be provided as affordable housing for rent (Social Rent or Affordable Rent), normally this is through a Registered Provider (RP) unless it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme where the landlord need not be an RP.
- 9.22 The remaining 20% should be other forms of affordable housing such as starter homes – these still have to be defined by secondary legislation; discounted market sales housing or other routes to affordable home ownership. This is in line with national policy which requires at least 10% of all new homes on major sites to be affordable home ownership products. Exemptions to the 10% requirement include where the site or proposed development provides solely Build to Rent homes; provides specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose built accommodation for the elderly or students); is a self or custom build.; or is exclusively for affordable housing, an entry-level exception site or a rural exception site.¹⁷³
- 9.23 The involvement of the community and private sectors in providing rented, shared ownership or alternative schemes running along those more traditionally built by RPs are welcomed. They will of course need to comply with the same terms and conditions of management, maintenance and Scheme Development Standards

¹⁷⁰ Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2016

¹⁷¹ Authority Monitoring Report, October 2018. Paragraph 19.5

¹⁷² NPPF, July 2018. Paragraph 57

¹⁷³ NPPF, 2018. Paragraph 64. Exemptions to the 10% requirement include where the site or proposed development

(SDS) as those set out for affordable rented units by the Homes England or any successor organisation.

Affordable Housing Thresholds

- 9.24 In order to maximise the delivery of affordable housing the threshold should be set as low as possible so that as many sites as possible contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing, where it is viable to do so.
- 9.25 The NPPF¹⁷⁴ states that the provision of affordable housing should not be sought for development that is not major development for housing i.e. where the proposal is for 10 or more homes or has a site area of 0.5 hectares or more¹⁷⁵. There is an exception in designated rural areas where a lower threshold may be sought. However, South Somerset has no 'rural areas' defined under section 157 (1) of the Housing Act 1985 therefore this provision does not apply.

Mix of Affordable Housing

- 9.26 Analysis in the SHMA considered, starter homes, affordable rent and social rent. Whilst this does not cover every tenure of affordable housing it provides a sufficient basis for determining the size and mix required.
- 9.27 The SHMA analysis did determine that it would be the case that the income required to buy a starter home is likely to be similar to the income needed for other forms of discounted ownership.
- 9.28 Whilst the definition of affordable housing in the NPPF has been updated since the SHMA was published, it is considered that the evidence is still applicable as the suggested mix and analysis of affordable housing has been split between Social/Affordable Rent and other affordable housing products which fall under the previous definition of intermediate affordable housing.
- 9.29 Figure 9.1 identifies the suggested mix of size and tenure of affordable housing across South Somerset.

Figure 9.1: Mix of affordable housing – size and tenure

Tenure and percentage	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Social/Affordable Rented – 80%	35-40%	35-40%	20%	5%
Starter homes, discounted market sales and other routes to affordable home ownership – 20%	15-20%	50-55%	25-30%	0-5%

Source: SHMA, 2016

¹⁷⁴ NPPF, 2018. Paragraph 63.

¹⁷⁵ Defined in the NPPF, 2018. Annex 2: Glossary.

- 9.30 It is accepted that where there is evidence of a particular local need; for example though a Local Housing Needs Survey or the Housing Register, this can be a consideration in determining the size and mix of affordable homes to be delivered as part of a proposal.

POLICY HG2: PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- i. The Council will seek affordable housing provision on major sites (those providing 10 or more dwellings or having a site area of 0.5 hectares or more). Such developments should contribute 28% of the total number of dwellings to the provision of affordable housing.
- ii. Within any affordable housing provision 80% should be Social Rent or Affordable Rent and 20% should be starter homes, discounted market sales and other routes to affordable home ownership. The affordable housing should be delivered in the following sizes and tenures unless evidence in a Local Housing Needs Assessment, on the Housing Register or other evidence based report shows that an alternative mix is justified. At least 10% of the overall number of units to be provided should be affordable home ownership products*.

Tenure	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Social / Affordable Rented – 80%	35-40%	35-40%	20%	5%
Affordable home ownership products: starter homes, discounted market sales and other routes to affordable home ownership – 20%	15-20%	50-55%	25-30%	0-5%

- iii. All affordable housing contributions shall enable the provision of the number of affordable units without the need for public subsidy.
- iv. Affordable housing will be provided on the application site except where there are good planning grounds that indicate that the provision of affordable housing would not be appropriate on that site. It is preferable in such circumstances that a financial or other contribution should be made towards the provision of affordable housing on another site in the settlement or nearby settlement.

*Except where the site or proposed development provides solely Build to Rent homes; specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose built accommodation for the elderly or students); is a self or custom build or is exclusively for affordable housing, an entry-level exception site or a rural exception site.

Delivery of affordable housing

- 9.31 Affordable housing will be delivered within the framework of this Local Plan Review and the Council's Housing Strategy. Developers and RPs will be expected to deliver the affordable housing requirements through the planning process, with the Council securing appropriate affordable housing through legal agreements.
- 9.32 The type and tenure of affordable housing should accord with Policy HG2 and can be informed by Local Housing Needs Assessments, up to date information from the housing register and taking into account local imbalances. The number of units to be provided should be delivered at nil public subsidy as there is no guarantee that any form of public funding will be available for development projects. Developers and landowners should therefore, in the first instance, calculate the cost of contributions to affordable housing on the basis that public subsidy will not be available¹⁷⁶.
- 9.33 If the exceptional circumstances arise where an applicant has justified the need to undertake a viability assessment factors such as local need, market and site conditions, and site-specific development costs will be taken into account and an 'open-book' approach will be taken to negotiation.
- 9.34 In the exceptional cases where 'open book' valuations do point to a reduced affordable housing provision on site publicly funded options may be used if available and if considered appropriate to restore affordable housing provision on site towards target levels (i.e. 28% of the total number of dwellings).
- 9.35 Government guidance¹⁷⁷ recognises that when seeking affordable housing contributions the provision should be made on the application site. This is in order to ensure that developments provide a reasonable mix and balance of housing types and sizes. However, there may be particular circumstances where the Council and developer agree and where it has been adequately justified, that a commutation scheme may be acceptable, either by way of off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision (this should be broadly of an equivalent value). Off-site provision should be made in accordance with the settlement strategy set out in this document and arrangements must be made to secure the transfer of the site to a RP or other affordable housing provider at a value that ensures the delivery of affordable housing.

Nationally Described Space Standards

- 9.36 Councils have the option of setting additional technical requirements exceeding the minimum standards required by Building Regulations in respect to an optional nationally described space standard¹⁷⁸. They are expected to gather evidence to

¹⁷⁶ The SHLVA assumes nil public subsidy

¹⁷⁷ NPPF, July 2018. Paragraph 62

¹⁷⁸ DCLG, 2015:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524531/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard_Final_Web_version.pdf

determine whether there is a need for additional standards in their area, and justify setting appropriate policies in their Local Plans.

- 9.37 The SHMA concluded that there was a case for adopting the standards for affordable housing, but for the market sector there was not a strong case for doing so. This was due to the way households occupy homes, for example using a small third bedroom as an office. The SHMA also points out that there is a lack of transparency in some developer sales literature regarding whether bedrooms are designed for one or two-person occupancy.
- 9.38 Based upon the evidence currently available in the SHMA the nationally described space standards will be applied to affordable housing. The Council may carry out further research to establish if the application of the space standard to market housing can be justified.

DRAFT

POLICY HG3 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING - INTERNAL SPACE STANDARDS

Newly constructed, change of use or proposals to subdivide existing affordable housing will meet or exceed the following minimum gross internal floor areas and storage requirements:

Number of bedrooms (b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings (m ²)	2 storey dwellings (m ²)	3 storey dwellings (m ²)	Built in storage (m ²)
1b	1p	39 (37)*	-	-	1.0
	2p	50	58	-	1.5
2b	3p	61	70	-	2.0
	4p	70	79	-	
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

Notes

1. Built in storage areas are included within the overall gross internal areas (GIAs) and include an allowance of 0.5m² for fixed services or equipment such as hot water cylinder, boiler or heat exchanger.
2. GIAs for one storey dwellings include enough space for one bathroom and one additional WC (or shower room) in dwellings with 5 or more bedspaces. GIAs for two and three storey dwellings include enough space for one bathroom and one additional WC (or shower room). Additional sanitary facilities may be included without increasing the GIA provided that all aspects of the space standard have been met.
3. Where a 1b 1p has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m² to 37m² as shown bracketed.
4. Furnished layouts are not required to demonstrate compliance.

Market Housing**Achieving Mix of Market Housing**

- 9.39 As well as making provision for affordable housing it is also important that the right mix of market housing is provided based on current and future demographic trends, the needs of the market and the differing groups within the community.

The NPPF promotes a mix of sizes, types and tenure to meet current and future demographic and market trends and the needs of different people.¹⁷⁹

- 9.40 The SHMA identifies that it is expected that the focus of new market housing provision in South Somerset will be on two and three-bed properties. Continued demand for family housing can be expected from newly forming households. There may also be some demand for this size of property from older households downsizing and looking to release equity in existing homes, but still retain flexibility for friends and family to come and stay.
- 9.41 Figure 9.2 identifies the targets for size of market housing in South Somerset. Some targets are presented as a range.¹⁸⁰

Figure 9.2: Targets for Market Housing in South Somerset

Bedrooms	Target
1	5-10%
2	35%
3	45%
4+	10-15%

Source: SHMA, 2016

- 9.42 These targets will be used as monitoring tools to ensure that future delivery is not unbalanced when compared with the likely requirements as driven by demographic change in the area.
- 9.43 The over-arching principle of creating sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities will particularly be applied when negotiating housing mix on major applications (10 or more homes or a site area of 0.5¹⁸¹ha or more). The SHMA or successor documents will be used to inform the mix of housing to be provided as well as more local information relevant to any specific development proposals.
- 9.44 It should be noted that the planning system cannot control who occupies market housing but it can influence the size and number of bedrooms and provide for a sustainable and mixed form of development.

Bungalows

- 9.45 Where developments including bungalows are found, it is clear that these are very popular, particularly with older people downsizing. It should be acknowledged that providing significant numbers of bungalows has cost implications for the developer given the typical plot size compared to floorspace. However, providing an element of bungalows should be given strong consideration on appropriate sites, allowing older households to downsize, therefore freeing up family accommodation for younger households.

¹⁷⁹ NPPF, 2018.

¹⁸⁰ Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Figure 8

¹⁸¹ NPPF, 2018. Annex 2: Glossary

- 9.46 Stakeholder engagement with local agents carried out during the production of the SHMA identified a particular shortage of bungalows in Yeovil and Castle Cary.
- 9.47 Bungalows should be considered not only as part of a mix of market housing but also affordable housing.

Self-Build and Custom Housing Building

- 9.48 In accordance with the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, South Somerset District Council keeps a register of interested parties seeking to acquire land to build a home. The register includes entries from individuals, or an association of individuals.
- 9.49 As at December 2018 there were 102 entries on the South Somerset register requiring a total of 107 serviced plots.
- 9.50 The legislation requires councils to give permission to enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand in their area. The level of demand is established by the number of entries added to the register during a base period the first of which begins on the day the register is established and ends on 30 October 2016. Each subsequent base period runs from 31st October until 30 October each year. At the end of each base period the Council has three years in which to give permission an equivalent number of plots of land which are suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding, as there are entries for that base period¹⁸².
- 9.51 The serviced plots delivered do not have to be linked to those on the register and therefore any single dwelling plot completed counts towards meeting the demand for self and custom build homes.
- 9.52 Monitoring shows that so far SSDC is delivering enough single plots in each base period to meet the demand on the register and is therefore fulfilling its legal obligation.
- 9.53 The SHMA¹⁸³ indicates that demand for self and custom build in South Somerset is highest in the Market Towns and surrounding villages and this reflects the entries and the register. The evidence shows that the house building industry has reservations about incorporating self and custom build into projects. They are concerned that the self-builder may not complete the project in a timely manner exposing their conventional purchasers to prolonged building site conditions. They expressed no interest in constructing a custom design.
- 9.54 The Council is meeting its obligations regarding self-build and custom housebuilding, and is generally supportive of proposals including or exclusively

¹⁸² PPG. Paragraph:023 Reference ID: 57-023-201760728

¹⁸³ Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Taunton Deane Strategic Housing Market Assessment, JG Consulting, October 2016 (SHMA)

for self and custom build homes where they accord with the other policies in this Local Plan Review.

POLICY HG4 - ACHIEVING A MIX OF MARKET HOUSING

- i. A range of market housing types and sizes should be provided across the district on major development sites that can reasonably meet the market housing needs of the residents of South Somerset. The mix should contribute to the provision of sustainable and balanced communities and should be in general accordance with the following targets:

Number of Bedrooms	Target
1	5-10%
2	35%
3	45%
4+	10-15%

- ii. On small sites (not major development), housing types and sizes should be provided that, taken in the context of existing surrounding dwellings and evidence, contribute to the provision of sustainable, balanced communities.

Care Homes and Specialist Accommodation

- 9.55 Planning for the future housing needs of older people so that they are able to live safely, independently and comfortably in their homes for as long as possible, or move to more suitable specialist accommodation if they so wish is becoming increasingly important.
- 9.56 The population of older people in South Somerset is growing. The number of households aged over 65 is projected to increase from 37% of the total number in mid-2016 to 48% in mid-2041¹⁸⁴. This increase is in line with the projected growth across Somerset.
- 9.57 The SHMA¹⁸⁵ shows that by 2039 it is estimated that there will be a very significant increase in the number of people with mobility problems and dementia¹⁸⁶. There are 13,717 households with support needs¹⁸⁷ in South Somerset, 6,697 are older person only households, some 48.8% of all support needs households. In order to help address this need, specialist housing options

¹⁸⁴ 2016-based household projections. Table 414

¹⁸⁵ Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessments Report 2: Analysis of household survey data for South Somerset District Council Final Report February 2009. Older people are defined in the document as persons of pensionable age (60 and over for females and 65 and over for males)

¹⁸⁶ SHMA, 2016. Figure 11.3

¹⁸⁷ Support needs categories are frail elderly, medical condition, physical disability, learning difficulty, mental health problem, severe sensory disability and other.

will be required, this could include care homes, Extra Care housing¹⁸⁸ and Continuing Care Retirement Communities¹⁸⁹. Opportunities to adapt the existing housing stock should be maximised.

- 9.58 Other housing models such as intergenerational housing where young people and older people live together are being trialed in other parts of Europe. The Council will be supportive of these new models in locations which accord with the settlement strategy and other policies in this Local Plan Review.
- 9.59 The market will provide a mix of house types and sizes with the majority of need in South Somerset being for two and three bedroom properties. Homes of this size provide the opportunity for older people to downsize from four bedroom plus properties should they wish to do so. This could then result in larger homes becoming available for growing families.
- 9.60 Housing options that cater for older people will be particularly encouraged in town centre locations and as part of regeneration proposals in Yeovil, Chard and Wincanton. If people are living in the town centres they will have the opportunity to access more services and can contribute to more vibrant and vital town centres.
- 9.61 Design tools such as Building for Life 12 can be used to ensure that homes can meet the needs of occupiers at whatever stage they may be during their life¹⁹⁰.

POLICY HG5 - CARE HOMES AND SPECIALIST ACCOMMODATION

- i. Proposals for care homes or similar specialist accommodation that meets an identified local need will be supported where it is consistent with the Settlement Strategy. In exceptional circumstances, where development is proposed in a countryside location, the Council will require clear justification for its location. This will take into account the nature of specialist care required and demonstration that alternative sites are unsuitable and/or unavailable and the economic benefit of the proposal to the locality.
- ii. Where the District Council seek to negotiate affordable housing in respect of development that already meets a specified housing need, such as sheltered housing or Care Homes, the Council will take into account that such sites may be inappropriate for a mix of affordable housing and general market housing or that such sites have met, by their nature, affordable housing requirements.

¹⁸⁸ See Glossary for definition

¹⁸⁹ See Glossary for definition

¹⁹⁰ https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Building%20for%20Life%202012_0.pdf

Delivery

- 9.62 Care homes and other specialist accommodation that meets an identified local need will be delivered through the Development Management process and will be particularly encouraged in town centres. Where such a development is proposed in a countryside location, applicants will be expected to provide justification for that location in accordance with the Policy HG5.

Park Homes

- 9.63 Park Homes provide housing for around 450 households in South Somerset¹⁹¹. Mainly the residents that occupy them are within the 50 plus age bracket and have chosen to downsize to this low maintenance housing option. They provide a valuable supply of low cost market accommodation and their maintenance, expansion and promotion can be supported where it accords with the overall strategy for the distribution of growth and other policies in this Local Plan Review.

Empty Properties

- 9.64 Bringing empty properties back into use can make a contribution to the housing stock within South Somerset. In partnership with others the Council provides an empty property leasing scheme and empty property loans to bring empty properties back into occupational use, particularly in town centre locations, including flats over shops.
- 9.65 Empty property loans are designed to assist in market town and town centre regeneration by bringing people back to live in properties, which are currently empty. Any (potential) private sector landlord can apply. Loans are available where there is a clear demonstrable need for accommodation. Within town centres bringing such homes back into use can assist in delivering an active night time economy through establishing a residential element within the area. More details can be found on the Council web site.¹⁹²

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 9.66 The accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople should be considered along with the housing needs of the whole community. Government guidance makes it clear that local authorities should consider the needs of the travelling community through the local plan process¹⁹³.
- 9.67 A countywide assessment of the need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation was published in January 2011¹⁹⁴ this identifies need up until 2020. The assessment has been further supplemented by the

¹⁹¹ SSDC research 2011

¹⁹² www.southsomerset.gov.uk

¹⁹³ Planning policy for traveller sites, CLG, March 2012

¹⁹⁴ Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, Final Edit January 2011 (GTAA)

Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment Update (2013)¹⁹⁵ which identifies need in Somerset up until 2032.

- 9.68 It is recognised that the existing assessments are now somewhat dated; because of this the Somerset authorities have agreed to jointly commission a new County-wide GTAA. The new assessment will inform the policy at the next stage of the Local Plan Review. The need for residential pitches in Policy HG6 is informed by the 2013 assessment which identifies requirements up until 2032. There is a continued need for Transit provision in Somerset and Travelling Showpeople plots.
- 9.69 Historically evidence suggests that applicants favour small family owned sites. The Council will be seeking to establish such small pitch sites on any publicly owned sites within the District. There may be instances where it is appropriate to have a mixed residential and employment use, this is particularly the case for Showmen's yards.
- 9.70 Planning policy for traveller sites¹⁹⁶ defines 'gypsies and travellers' and 'travelling showpeople', these definitions or any successor definitions will be applied for planning purposes.

¹⁹⁵ Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment Update (2013)

¹⁹⁶ CLG, March 2012

POLICY HG6 - GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

- i. The accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be met by ensuring that they are accommodated in sustainable locations where essential services are available.
- ii. Site allocations will be made to accommodate at least:
 - 24 Residential pitches
 - 10 Transit pitches; and
 - 6 Travelling Showpeople plots.
- iii. The following criteria will guide the location of sites:
 - a. Significantly contaminated land should be avoided;
 - b. Development should not result in an adverse impact on internationally and nationally recognised designations (for example: Natura 2000 sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty);
 - c. The development should not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area;
 - d. The site is reasonably well related to schools and other community facilities;
 - e. The health and safety of occupants and visitors will not be at risk through unsafe access to sites, noise pollution or unacceptable flood risk;
 - f. There should be adequate space for on-site parking, servicing and turning of vehicles;
 - g. The option of mixed residential and business use on sites will be considered where appropriate.
- iv. The number of pitches provided should be appropriate to the size of the site and availability of infrastructure, services and facilities in accordance with the general principles set out in the settlement hierarchy.

Delivery

- 9.71 Monitoring shows that the Council has consistently managed to deliver residential pitches, but has been less able to facilitate transit sites and sites specifically for travelling showpeople.¹⁹⁷
- 9.72 The Local Plan identifies the need for 23 pitches, and in simple terms the Council is exceeding this target, having realised 40 residential pitches since 2006. However, the GTAA shows that over the period to 2032 the Council will need to deliver a further 24 pitches.
- 9.73 The criteria set out in this policy will guide any planning applications that come forward. Whilst it is recognised that Travelling Showpeople sites require more storage and maintenance space for their equipment, the same criteria will need to be met by all groups regarding accommodation provision.
- 9.74 The findings of the updated GTAA will inform the Councils approach to the provision of Gypsie, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites going forward.

¹⁹⁷ Authority Monitoring Report, 2018

Replacement dwellings and extensions in the countryside

- 9.75 The replacement of small country dwellings with more grandiose houses can radically change the character of a site to one of a more suburban nature and also reduce the supply of the smaller rural dwellings. To help protect the character of South Somerset's countryside, extensions and replacements of dwellings need to be controlled in terms of scale and design. The erection of replacement dwellings and extensions to existing houses can individually, and cumulatively over a period of years, have an adverse impact both on the character of individual properties and the surrounding countryside.
- 9.76 This policy aims to give protection to traditional smaller properties in the countryside, therefore helping to meet the objective of providing appropriate housing for the needs of the population.
- 9.77 In determining what constitutes "disproportionate scale", account will be taken of the extent to which the dwelling has been previously extended, or could be extended under Permitted Development rights¹⁹⁸ and the character of the area. For the purposes of this policy 'original' is defined as the dwelling as it was built or as it existed as of the 1st July 1948.

POLICY HG7 - REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

- i. The replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside will only be permitted where:
 - a. The scale of the replacement would not result in an unacceptably large increase in the height or size of the original dwelling; and
 - b. The development is compatible with and sympathetic in scale, design, materials, layout and siting to the character and setting of adjoining buildings, and to the landscape character of the location; and
 - c. The replacement is on a one for one basis and evidence is provided that the use of the existing dwelling has not been abandoned.
- ii. Extensions to existing dwellings in the countryside will be permitted where the extension does not result in a dwelling that is disproportionate to the scale of the original dwelling and the size and design of the extension are appropriate to the landscape character of the location.

Agricultural, forestry and other occupational dwellings in the countryside

- 9.78 In many instances it will be possible for workers in agricultural and land-based occupations to live in a town or village near to their business location. However, occasionally the nature of agricultural and other rural businesses make it

¹⁹⁸ The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended, makes provision for a certain scale of development without need for planning permission subject to certain criteria.

essential for someone to live on, or in close proximity to the business. National Planning Policy Guidance allows for this¹⁹⁹.

- 9.79 Such dwellings should be commensurate with the needs of the holding and not the person requiring the accommodation. Unusually large dwellings in relation to the needs of the unit, or expensive construction in relation to the income it can sustain, should not be permitted. As such it is considered that an indicative guideline to the floor area of proposed dwellings of approximately 175m² would adequately serve most holdings (the average size of a detached 4 bedroom property built by a national house-builder is 149m²²⁰⁰).
- 9.80 The potential for abuse with the submission of applications for 'replacement dwellings' on agricultural holdings exists, therefore in order to minimise that potential, the history of the holding will be examined to establish the recent pattern of land use and whether any dwellings or buildings suitable for conversion or occupation have been recently sold separately from the farmland.

POLICY HG8 - HOUSING FOR AGRICULTURAL AND RELATED WORKERS

- i. A development proposal in the countryside to meet the accommodation needs of a full-time worker or one primarily employed (not part time) in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, equestrian activities or other business where a rural location is essential should demonstrate that:
 - a. There is a clearly established existing functional need;
 - b. The enterprise is economically viable;
 - c. Provision on-site (or in the immediate vicinity) is necessary for the operation of the business;
 - d. No suitable accommodation exists (or could be made available) in established buildings on the site or in the immediate vicinity;
 - e. It does not involve replacing a dwelling disposed of recently as general market housing;
 - f. The dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the operational needs of the business; and
 - g. The siting and landscaping of the new dwelling minimises the impact upon the local landscape character and visual amenity of the countryside and ensures no adverse impact upon the integrity of nationally and internationally designated sites, such as AONB.
- ii. Where a new dwelling is permitted, this will be the subject of a condition ensuring the occupation will be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working in the locality in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, equestrian activities or other rural business (or a surviving partner of such a person, and any resident dependents).

- 9.81 In order to retain the property for its intended use, a restrictive condition will be included on any such planning approval limiting its occupation to a person solely or mainly, or last working in agriculture, forestry or a rural enterprise. It is

¹⁹⁹ NPPF, July 2018. Paragraph 79.

²⁰⁰ David Wilson Homes, 2018. UK wide figure.

accepted that there will be circumstances where these dwellings are no longer required for the purpose for which they were originally intended. However, to ensure the planning concession for this type of dwelling is not abused, any application to remove a restrictive occupancy condition for any dwelling in the countryside will need to demonstrate that the need for which the dwelling was approved originally, no longer exists.

- 9.82 An applicant would be expected to appropriately market the dwelling for a reasonable period at a realistic market price for an agricultural tied dwelling [normally at a discount of 25-30% against open market price²⁰¹] to establish whether it could meet the existing functional needs of another local farm or rural business. Evidence demonstrating how this requirement has been met will need to be included to support any application to vary or remove a restrictive occupancy condition.

POLICY HG9 - REMOVAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND OTHER OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS

Planning permission for the removal of a restrictive occupancy condition for an agricultural, forestry or other similar worker on a dwelling will only be given where it can be evidentially shown:

- a. That there is no longer a continued need for the property on the holding or for the business;
- b. There is no long term need for a dwelling with restricted occupancy to serve local need in the locality; and
- c. The property has been marketed locally for an appropriate period (minimum 18 months) at an appropriate price and evidence of marketing is demonstrated.

²⁰¹ Savills, 2017 and Symonds & Sampson, Yeovil, 2018

10. Economic Prosperity

Overview

- 10.1 This section of the Local Plan Review deals with employment and tourism. Policies relating to town centres and regeneration are covered separately in Section 11.
- 10.2 The Government is committed to securing sustainable economic growth, which is defined in the NPPF as building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. At the local level the Plan interprets national ambitions by seeking to provide a positive and flexible policy framework which supports jobs, businesses and investment, across a range of economic sectors.
- 10.3 The Local Plan sets out a clear strategy to positively encourage sustainable growth. Policy SS3 ensures there is sufficient land available of the right type in the right location to support business needs across the District, and as set out in the NPPF, the policies below identify strategic sites for investment and set the criteria to match this strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period. The policies are intended to be flexible enough to also accommodate needs, working practices or changes in economic circumstances that are not yet anticipated over the plan period.
- 10.4 The NPPF supports the whole economy, including the needs of the rural economy. Given the rural nature of South Somerset supporting the rural economy is particularly important. The NPPF expects policies and decisions to enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. The development and diversification of agricultural or other land-based rural businesses is also supported.
- 10.5 Sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside are supported and the importance of retaining accessible local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship is also recognised.
- 10.6 Unlike in the past, the NPPF now recognises that sites to meet local business needs and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements and in locations that are not well-served by public transport. That said, economic development needs should be balanced and considered alongside competing social and environmental objectives such as supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities and protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment for future generations.
- 10.7 There is a strong link between the environmental quality of South Somerset and the productivity and success of the local economy. South Somerset's environment is valued and should be considered as a primary driver in future

economic success, therefore a balance is required between conserving that environment and delivering economic growth.

Carried Forward Strategic Employment Sites

- 10.8 There are a number of strategic employment sites identified in the current Local Plan for local and inward investment. The South Somerset Employment Land Review (ELR) (2019) has reviewed these sites in the context of current need and makes recommendations as to which sites continue to be strategically significant and need to be safeguarded in order to ensure that the Local Plan vision for economic growth is realised and the needs of the business community are supported.

Yeovil - Land at Lufton

- 10.9 The Lufton site which is an extension of the wider Lufton 2000 Business Park is a key employment location in Yeovil. The 5 hectare site which is owned by the District Council and Abbey Manor Group benefits from outline planning permission and a small amount (0.9 hectares) has full planning permission for a builder's merchant. The site is strategic significant as it provides general employment land in a prime location in Yeovil, but as the site has planning permission, which is being implemented, it is not identified as an allocation in Policy EP1.

Yeovil - Land off Bunford Lane

- 10.10 This site was allocated for a high quality business park in a previous Local Plan and carried forward in the adopted Local Plan because it is considered to be an important gateway location at the edge of Yeovil with direct access to the Western Avenue Relief Road and wider strategic road network beyond. Outline planning permission was granted for a 20 hectare business park in March 2011, this planning permission does not expire until March 2021. A reserved matters application submitted in 2016 and is still pending consideration.
- 10.11 The site is large and requires significant investment including the upgrading of an electricity sub-station. These abnormal infrastructure costs coupled with a weak employment market have prevented the site coming forward for employment use to date. Planning permission is being sought for a supermarket on site to cross fund the site's infrastructure and bring forward some employment land, this is contrary to the Local Plan policy on town centres and the sequential test. Residential development has been suggested as an alternative cross funding mechanism. The ELR is not yet complete, the evidence within that document will establish whether this site is strategically significant and should be allocated as a Strategic Employment Site in this review of the Local Plan. Until that date, the position is as in the adopted Local Plan.

Yeovil – Sustainable Urban Extensions

- 10.12 Two Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) comprising 2.5 hectares of employment land each were allocated in the adopted Local Plan. The employment land requirement combined with the residential proposals and range of community facilities, seek to ensure the development of a more sustainable community on each SUE.
- 10.13 Planning applications have been submitted for each SUE and are awaiting determination. Both sites remain allocated under Policy YV1: Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions and therefore are not identified in Policy EP1 below.

Chard Key Site

- 10.14 Land at Chard is allocated for various uses in Policy CH1: Chard Strategic Growth Area to support the strategic growth and regeneration of the town up to 2036. The Chard Regeneration Scheme which is underpinned by a phased approach set out in the Chard Regeneration Framework identifies a requirement for up to 13 hectares of employment land which when delivered in conjunction with the housing and other identified social infrastructure, achieve a balanced community. Approximately 10.5 hectares has been identified through the Framework, the remainder being “footloose”.

Phase of Chard Regeneration Framework	Amount of Employment Land	Description of Areas
Phase 1	4.8 hectares	4.1 hectares for employment B1, B2 and B8 uses in Thorndun Park, adjacent Chard Business Park and 0.7 hectares for same “traditional” uses at Boden Mill Site, of which a further 0.7 hectares is for mixed use.
Phase 2	3.25 hectares	Enables eastward extension of Millfield Industrial Estate. 4.5 hectares identified for mixed use, 3.26 hectares of which for traditional employment uses.
Phase 3	1.1 hectares	Extension south of Millfield Industrial Estate. 4.5 hectares identified for mixed use, 1.1 hectares of which for employment uses.
Phase 4	1.4 hectares	Further extension of Millfields industrial estate to the south.

- 10.15 None of the employment land has planning permission. It has been recognised that the employment strategy for Chard is failing, but the Council has made a commitment to delivering the Chard Regeneration Framework and until a decision is made to move away from that approach, 13 hectares of employment land is sought in Chard. The sites remain allocated under Policy CH1 and therefore is not identified in Policy EP1 below.

- 10.16 The Crewkerne Key Site (saved Local Plan Allocation KS/CREW/1) forms part of the comprehensive regeneration of the town and the employment element aids the delivery of a balanced development. Outline planning permission exists across the entire site but viability concerns associated with abnormal infrastructure costs, including a link road, have sought the developer to negotiate down the employment element of the site, from 10 hectares to 3.75 hectares, 0.5 of which is for a care home. The site is identified as a Strategic Employment site below. The housing element of his site is also allocated under Policy HG1: Strategic Housing Site.

Land at Ilminster

- 10.17 Three employment land allocations in Ilminster were saved from the South Somerset Local Plan (1991-2011) and identified as strategic employment sites in the adopted Local Plan, these were Land west of Horlicks Ltd, Hort Bridge (saved Local Plan Allocation ME/ILM/3), Land off Station Road (saved Local Plan Allocation ME/ILM/4) and Land adjacent to Powrmatic, Hort Bridge (saved Local Plan Allocation ME/ILM/5).
- 10.18 Ilminster sits on the axis of the A303 and A358. Highways England are proposing upgrades to the A358 and along the length of the A303. A Development Consent Order application for the dualling of the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester scheme is currently at Examination, due to be determined by the Secretary of State by the end of 2019, whilst it is expected that the Preferred Route for the A358 scheme will be announced in the spring of 2019. These improvements provide the opportunity for Ilminster to maximize the economic potential of its employment sites and expand into areas such as last-mile logistics for example, with faster and safer journey times to the M5 and London.
- 10.19 Land west of Horlicks Ltd, Hort Bridge (saved Local Plan Allocation ME/ILM/3) has nearly been developed out, the site includes a motorhome business and Highways Agency depot. It is not considered necessary to retain this site as a Strategic Employment Site as only 1 hectare remains from the original allocation and this can be sufficiently managed and approved through the Development Management process.
- 10.20 Land adjacent to Powrmatic, Hort Bridge (saved Local Plan Allocation ME/ILM/5) was allocated for the expansion of Powrmatic. In June 2017 permission was granted for an extension to the existing factory and car park but this was achieved on the existing site and did not require any land within the allocated site. The allocation is land-locked and access can only be achieved through the Powrmatic site.
- 10.21 The site is not saved as a Strategic Employment Site in this Local Plan because the site does not seek to deliver employment land for Ilminster but for one employer. The expansion of an existing employment use would be supported through Policy EP5 and this is considered sufficient.
- 10.22 Land at Station Road is identified as a Strategic Employment Site, the saved Local Plan Allocation ME/ILM/4 has had extensive developer interest and

discussions are taking place regarding the potential to cross fund the infrastructure required to bring the site forward with some residential land. The development of this site which is currently an eyesore will deliver in the region of 13 hectares of employment land. This site is also identified for housing under Policy ILM/4.

POLICY EP1: STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT SITES

The following employment allocations are strategically significant and will be safeguarded for local and inward investment:

- Land off Bunford Lane, Yeovil
- Crewkerne Key Site
- Land off Station Road, Ilminster

Delivering New Employment Land in Yeovil, the Market Towns and Rural Centres

10.23 Sites have been allocated for employment uses in Yeovil, some of the Market Towns and Rural Centres and for the expansion two established business parks in countryside locations. In settlements where there is an evidenced need for new employment land and premises²⁰² but no sites have been allocated in this Local Plan because no suitable land was promoted through the call for sites²⁰³ or identified through the Employment Land Review, planning applications for new employment land and premises will be supported where they are in accordance with national guidance in the NPPF and with the other policies in this Local Plan, for example Policy EQ2: General Development.

Protecting Employment Land and Buildings

10.24 Between 1st April 2006 and 31st March 2018, nearly 54 hectares of land was delivered for employment activities falling within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 (B uses), across the District. During that same period, just over 18 hectares of B uses were lost to other uses, and therefore the net gain in employment land was much lower. The data clearly illustrates that the pressure to redevelop existing employment land and buildings, and sites allocated for employment land in the Local Plan, to alternative, higher value uses, especially as alternative uses such as residential and retail are more profitable, is great. This pressure has never been greater than now with the Government drive to deliver 300,000 homes a year. Additionally, at a national level, it is noticeable that changes to the NPPF and the General Permitted Development Order have eroded the policies which enable the protection of employment land.

10.25 From an economic perspective, national guidance attributes significant weight to the need to support economic growth and the requirement to provide employment land to support the economy and local businesses community. It is clear that

²⁰² South Somerset Employment Land Review, 2019

²⁰³ Housing and Land Availability Assessment Call for Sites 2015-16

there is an inherent tension in the planning system between deliver homes and protecting employment land and buildings.

- 10.26 In South Somerset, most of the allocated sites are large and require investment of both time and money to bring them forward. The Council is committed to this approach and is actively engaging with developers to address the barriers that have prevented sites from coming forward to date. Given that these sites will still take time to deliver, their protection of is required to support economic growth and deliver the Local Plan strategy.
- 10.27 In addition to protecting employment allocations, existing land and buildings should also be afforded a level of protection, subject to the developments allowed under the General Permitted Development Rights, if the Local Plan is to deliver on its strategy of support existing businesses.
- 10.28 The importance of maintaining the existing supply and protecting the overall distribution of employment land should not be underestimated, existing sites and buildings, particularly those at the middle to lower end of the market are a valuable resource for small businesses and those who are self-employed. They also maintain a balance between housing and employment.
- 10.29 There is an increasing trend for these buildings to be targeted by alternative uses, such as main town centre uses (defined in the NPPF but including shops and leisure activities for example), as they are more affordable than town centre buildings and often have car parking which is attractive to potential occupiers. Whilst it is logical for a small number of ancillary uses, such as a café or gym to be co-located on a business park, such uses should be of a scale where they serve seek the majority of their custom from employees, reducing the need to travel and not threaten the viability of a nearby town centre (see EP3). It is also logical where there are no suitable and available town centre buildings, for uses such as climbing centres or trampoline parks to be located in surplus employment buildings. Proposals for such developments would need to satisfy the sequential test (Policy TC4) and not create operational problems for surrounding B uses.
- 10.30 There have been instances where non-B uses have resulted in operational problems for B uses, leading them to move and entire areas on business parks, changing use. Changes of use need to be managed to ensure that the primary employment use is not undermined and there are sufficient opportunities for business to occupy premises in South Somerset.
- 10.31 The re-use of employment land and buildings will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there is no identified need for the employment land or where permitted development rights apply. To assist this process, any proposal to redevelop an existing employment site must provide robust and credible evidence of marketing to support the argument that the site is no longer required for those B uses. The marketing exercise must demonstrate that the site and or buildings have been marketed at a realistic price for a minimum of 12 months. Details of the requirements for marketing are outlined in the Council's guidance document 'Commercial Marketing of Property in Relation to Planning and Listed Building Applications'.

POLICY EP2: CHANGE OF USE OF EMPLOYMENT LAND AND BUILDINGS

The change of use of employment land and buildings will be resisted unless:

- Applicants can demonstrate there is no need for the land and/or buildings by submitting a marketing statement with the planning application which demonstrates that the site has been actively marketed for a minimum of 12 months.
- The proposed use is compatible with surrounding uses and does not adversely impact on the operation of existing businesses in the immediate area.
- The sequential test set out in Policy TC4 is passed.
- The proposal would result in significant environmental improvements or enhancements to the character of the area.
- There is adequate access and the proposed development would not cause an unacceptable impact on the operation of the highway network.

Enhancement of Existing Employment Areas

- 10.32 A lot of the employment property in South Somerset is made up of older stock. The majority of evidenced need for additional employment land in the District comes from a requirement to replace that stock. Many older industrial areas were developed before car usage was so high, there is now a shortage of parking on many estates, and on-street parking is making vehicle movements, particularly HGV movements difficult.
- 10.33 Monitoring²⁰⁴ shows that in the current economic climate, to drive down costs, businesses have been seeking ways to use their existing space more efficiently, either through the expansion of existing premises, changes of use within existing buildings or intensification of use within an existing site.
- 10.34 Parking issues, coupled with intensification of use means that further development on established employment locations is currently limited. The Employment Land Review has however identified a small number of opportunity sites on existing business parks and trading estates. Given that these locations benefit from good infrastructure and are accessible to services, it would be prudent to bring these sites forward as they have the potential to be delivered sooner than some of the larger sites and will allow a supply of sites to come forward in the shorter term. Encouraging a greater mix of modern accommodation.
- 10.35 The enhancement of existing employment areas offers an opportunity to make positive improvements. Improvements can include the introduction of a small number of ancillary services and facilities on large employment areas, such as a

²⁰⁴

https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/882701/south_somerset_economic_development_monitoring_report_issue_for_website_100417.pdf

café or gym, which would seek to serve employees and reduce their need to travel at lunch times and before and after work. These uses should be of a scale and nature that they do not compromise a Town Centre but focus on making the overall business park more sustainable.

POLICY EP3: ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT AREAS

New employment land will be supported in existing employment areas provided that full consideration has been given to the parking requirements of the business and there is no unacceptable impact on the operation of the highway network.

Applications for additional car parking in existing employment areas will be supported where it can be demonstrated there is a local need.

Ancillary uses will be strictly controlled and limited in existing employment areas to those which demonstrate that they are of a scale and nature commensurate with the surrounding area and do not compromise the vitality or viability of a nearby Town Centre.

Delivering New Employment Land in Villages, Rural Settlements and the Countryside

- 10.36 The NPPF is supportive of the sustainable growth of all types of businesses in the countryside. Paragraph 84 clearly sets out that to meet local business needs in rural areas, sites may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements and in locations that are not well served by public transport. The use of previously developed land and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.
- 10.37 The Settlement Strategy (Policy SS1) and Policy SS4: Development in Rural Settlements are clear that employment development should be commensurate to the scale of the settlement. The Local Plan strategy seeks to focus the majority of development in Yeovil, followed by the Market Towns, Rural Centres, Villages and the Rural Settlements. The higher order settlements, which are more sustainable, should be the focus for most of the growth.
- 10.38 There have been instances where local business have wanted to develop on sites in more rural locations, not on the site allocated for employment use in the Local Plan. Various reasons have been given for this, for example the allocated sites are too large and require too much investment to bring them forward and they are therefore not viable for the business, or the workforce are more local to a rural area, as opposed to one of the towns. These locations have been resisted in the past as they are not viewed as sustainable. The new NPPF suggests a slight step-change in the approach to supporting the rural economy and therefore in exceptional circumstances, employment development of a larger scale may be

supported in lower order settlements if there is a justified reason for the proposal and if there are no adverse impacts on the surrounding locality.

POLICY EP4: DELIVERING EMPLOYMENT LAND IN VILLAGES, RURAL SETTLEMENTS AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

To meet local business and community needs, new employment proposals in Villages, Rural Settlements and the countryside will be supported where:

- it is either adjacent to, or physically well-related to an existing built settlement;
- it is of a scale commensurate to the locality;
- there are clear economic benefits to the immediate locality and the wider district;
- there is no adverse impact upon wildlife or conservation designations; and
- as far as possible, there are good transport links, including road and public transport and propose enhanced travel planning

Larger scale proposals may be considered in these locations where a clear assessment has been undertaken to demonstrate why currently allocated employment land is not suitable and there is a clear financial business plan supporting the proposal.

Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside

- 10.39 NPPF is supportive of the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses in the countryside.
- 10.40 In South Somerset there are a number of established businesses that are either based on the edges of settlements or within the countryside that provide a valuable source of local employment and play an important role in the local economy. Some of these businesses may have made significant investments in their sites and their local workforce and therefore may have limited relocation options.
- 10.41 The Council's economic priorities for South Somerset are summarised in the draft Economic Development Strategy, where it is clear that one of the focuses for supporting sustainable economic growth in the District is meeting the expansion needs of existing businesses.
- 10.42 Whilst the preference is for development to take place within settlements as set out in the settlement strategy (Policy SS1) which focuses development at Yeovil, followed to a lesser extent by the Market Towns, Rural Centres, Villages and then Rural Settlements, in some instances development of employment generating activities in the countryside should not be restricted only to that for which a countryside location is not essential. Where businesses have 'outgrown' their respective sites and premises and have aspirations to grow, they should not be unduly constrained by their location; there are likely to be instances in which their expansion into open countryside may be appropriate.

- 10.43 Any proposed development must not adversely impact upon the character of the countryside, the surrounding landscape, the form and character of the settlement or biodiversity.

POLICY EP5: EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Proposals for the expansion of all types of existing businesses in the countryside and outside established employment areas will be permitted where:

- The business is a viable business and its re-location would be impractical or not viable;
- The proposed development cannot physically and reasonably be accommodated within the curtilage of the existing site and existing buildings have been re-used where possible;
- There is no adverse impact on the countryside with regard to scale, character and appearance of new buildings and/or changes of use of land;
- There is no adverse impact upon wildlife or conservation designations; and
- There is no unacceptable impact on the operation of the highway network.

Agriculture

- 10.44 Agriculture is an important element of the economy in South Somerset. South Somerset has more farm holdings than any other district in the county (in 2016 there were 1,269 farm holdings in the District compared to 873 in Mendip, the next largest number in Somerset) meaning 75,000 hectares of land was farmed mostly for livestock. Due to the nature of livestock farming, the numbers employed in the sector is not huge, it has steadily employed around 3,000 people for a number of years, ranging from farmers to casual workers, but the associated agri-food sectors and their supply chain employ far more.
- 10.45 Food security, local produce and reducing 'food-miles' remain nationally important, and an increasing onus on a low carbon economy, will provide opportunities for key sectors such as land based industries and renewable energy. It is therefore important to establish policy, which supports a productive countryside and the transition from traditional to new rural enterprises.

Farm Diversification

- 10.46 National Guidance recognises that farm diversification, the diversification from the dependence on production of agricultural commodities into non-agricultural activities, and the diversification of other land-based rural businesses, is vital to the continuing viability of many existing farm enterprises. The District Council is keen to support development that delivers diverse and sustainable farming enterprises, for example, farm shops, Bed and Breakfast and leasing of land or buildings to other non-agricultural businesses. It is important that proposals for diversification bring long-term and genuine benefits to individual farming enterprises and the wider rural area.

- 10.47 In encouraging economic diversity and agricultural diversification, it is important that the countryside is not spoilt by the unfettered development of an inappropriate and unwarranted nature. Therefore diversification proposals should be of a scale and nature appropriate for the location and be capable of satisfactory integration into the rural landscape. Such proposals should have regard to the amenity of neighbours, both residents and other businesses that may be adversely affected by new types of on-farm development.
- 10.48 In some instances when a scheme is successful it can grow to such a scale, which would make it unacceptable and whilst the Local Authority would not wish to limit the growth of a successful business, consideration should be given to the potential impact on the character of the rural location. Also, in more isolated locations, difficulties may arise in terms of access and traffic activity and development may require the need to promote and advertise and therefore signage may also become an issue.
- 10.49 Proposals must be accompanied by a comprehensive farm diversification plan, which indicates how new uses will assist in retaining the viability of the farm and the agricultural enterprise, and how it links with any other short or long term business plans for the farm.
- 10.50 National Guidance supports the development of equine enterprises (see Policy EQ8: Equestrian Development).

POLICY EP6: FARM DIVERSIFICATION

Proposals for development for the purpose of farm diversification within established agricultural holdings will be permitted if they comply with the following criteria:

- The character, scale and type of proposal is compatible with its location and landscape setting;
- A development will not be allowed to proceed unless it can be demonstrated that it will not result in any adverse impacts to the integrity of Natura 2000 sites and other national and international wildlife sites and landscape designations;
- They form part of a comprehensive farm diversification scheme and are operated as part of a viable farm holding and contribute to making the holding viable;
- Appropriately located existing buildings should be re-used where possible; and
- Where new or replacement buildings are required, the proposal is in scale with the surroundings and well related to any existing buildings on the site.

Henstridge Airfield

- 10.51 Henstridge Airfield is a site extending to approximately 142 hectares. It is located in open countryside close to the Somerset/Dorset border. It is remote from any large centres of population, its nearest settlement being the village of Henstridge. It is served by a network of rural roads and lanes.
- 10.52 Henstridge Airfield has a long and complicated planning history, the particular circumstances of the airfield and its history of use has required detailed and

comprehensive consideration resulting in the production of a Masterplan. This was produced in consultation with relevant Councillors and Town and Parish Councils in South Somerset and North Dorset Districts, representatives from Somerset County Council and statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency.

- 10.53 The Masterplan²⁰⁵ identifies areas where the 13 Masterplan spatial and development management criteria apply to general industry under use class B2²⁰⁶;
- areas that should be kept free from built development;
 - where there is a commitment to built development;
 - where there should only be built development in connection with airfield use; and
 - where there should only be built development in connection with recreational/drainage use to the east.
- 10.54 The approved Masterplan informs the interpretation of Policy EP7, in particular the acceptability or unacceptability of proposed development.

POLICY EP7: Henstridge Airfield

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

Tourism

- 10.55 The tourism sector contributes significantly to South Somerset's economy. The range of unique, nationally and internationally recognised attractions and tourist accommodation, coupled with the attractive rural environment and built heritage combine to offer real potential for further growth and value in the visitor economy.
- 10.56 The planning system, by taking a proactive approach to development proposals for tourism development, can facilitate and promote the implementation of good quality, sustainable development, at the same time as protecting the built and natural environment. These twin aims are crucial to support a thriving tourism industry in South Somerset.
- 10.57 Sustainable tourism development is supported in both urban and rural locations. In rural locations, the character of the countryside that draws in the visitor in the first instance will need to be respected.
- 10.58 To improve South Somerset's tourism offer and to extend the tourism season, support will be given to sustainable tourism developments that benefit businesses, communities and visitors, subject to their scale and location. Major

²⁰⁵ Henstridge Airfield Masterplan, 2009 (approved by South Somerset Area East Committee on 8 July 2009)

²⁰⁶ As defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Amendment (England) Order 2005

new tourism proposals should be assessed in terms of overall sustainable development objectives. These objectives include:

- enhancing the overall quality of the tourism offer in the district;
- developing new tourism markets;
- where possible being readily accessible by non-car means;
- helping to extend the tourism season;
- contributing significantly to the district's economy;
- increasing rather than just displacing visitors from other areas and attractions;
- where possible, being located within or near Yeovil or the Market Towns to ensure a local workforce that can access the attraction effectively and sustainably; and
- being well located to the national road route network.

- 10.59 Where proposals would result in the creation of accommodation that is capable of being occupied for residential purposes on a permanent basis, the council will impose conditions on any permission granted specifying its use as holiday accommodation only. Proposals that maintain the financial viability of existing tourist accommodation will be supported in accordance with Policy EP8. Minimising the visual prominence and landscape impact of expanded holiday and caravan sites or chalets will be important.
- 10.60 Statutorily designated natural or cultural heritage assets are recognised as having scope for tourism proposals subject to appropriate control that ensures the features for which they are designated are not compromised (see Policy EQ5: Biodiversity).
- 10.61 It is recognised that some locations are not well served by public transport, but in all circumstances applications will have been expected to have considered sustainable transport opportunities and ensured access by foot, cycle and/or public transport where this is practical and achievable. Multi-use paths and bridleways also provide opportunities in rural locations to partake in tourist activities, and are a sustainable transport option in their own right.

POLICY EP8: NEW AND ENHANCED TOURISM FACILITIES

New and enhanced tourism facilities will be supported within or adjacent to existing built settlements where they are of an appropriate scale to the size and role of that settlement.

Outside settlements, new and enhanced tourism facilities must be in keeping with the character and scale of the location and landscape setting.

In all cases development will need to demonstrate that there are no significant adverse impacts on biodiversity interests (including Natura 2000 and other internationally and nationally designated sites), it does not harm the District's environmental or cultural heritage and it ensures the continued protection of designated conservation features.

Locations that are accessible and have good transport links, including road and public transport will be supported.

New holiday accommodation in the countryside will be supported where existing buildings are reused.

DRAFT

11. Town Centre Regeneration and Retail

The Changing Role of Town Centres

- 11.1 People are spending an increasing amount of time on the internet, on computers, or smartphones; and goods can be purchased and delivered on the same day they are ordered; and often at a cheaper price than from a typical high street shop.
- 11.2 Furthermore, online retailing has also expanded rapidly into services, such as banking, estate agency, travel agency and takeaway food delivery; and with less retail floor space being required in town centres.
- 11.3 Town centres therefore have to diversify to attract consumers, with an improved 'customer experience' through more food and leisure uses. These uses will ultimately attract people to town centres and make them want to spend time and money in these locations.
- 11.4 There is no longer a place for restrictive policies that seek to prohibit any non-A1 retail use from coming forward, other than in the core primary retail areas.

The Need for Regeneration

- 11.5 As historic uses on large sites become redundant, there is a need to find new development opportunities to replace them, with a wide range of uses including residential; more people living in town centres will help to support, for example, retail, leisure and food and drink activities; and provide for an increased level of activity beyond traditional trading hours. Empty shops and lack of investment leads to a deteriorating townscape, whilst there is also a need to protect and enhance heritage assets, which help to provide a quality town centre environment.

The National Planning Policy Context

- 11.6 The national context for the Local Plan policies on town centres and retail is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2018. This states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should include, for example:
- a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters;
 - the definition of the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre;

- retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones; and
- recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites²⁰⁷.

11.7 Further guidance is contained in the Planning Practice Guidance on 'Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres' (2014). This states that a positive vision or strategy for town centres, articulated through the Local Plan, is key to ensuring successful town centres which enable sustainable economic growth and provide a wide range of social and environmental benefits. It should express the vision for the future of each town centre. This should consider what the most appropriate mix of uses would be to enhance overall vitality and viability.

Permitted Development

- 11.8 Under national legislation²⁰⁸, the change of use of premises within Use Class A1 (shops) to Class A2 (Professional and Financial Services); Class A3 (Restaurants and Cafés (subject to Prior Approval)); or two flats (all subject to floor area constraints), can take place without the need to submit an application seeking planning permission. At the time of writing, the Government is also consulting on further changes in an apparent effort to introduce additional flexibility. A number of retail premises in the District's town centres have been lost due to these 'Permitted Development Rights'²⁰⁹.
- 11.9 The measures may lead to a reduction in vacant shop premises, particularly in peripheral shop frontages. However, conversely, it could have an impact on the ability of operators to find space, in areas where demand is higher. The food and beverage, leisure and non-retail service sectors have been successful in occupying space no longer attractive to retail tenants. There have been cyclical trends in vacancy rates reflecting the macro economic trends, but in most cases, town centres recovered during periods of stronger growth²¹⁰.

The South Somerset District Council Priority Projects 2018-19

- 11.10 The Council's Priority Projects includes three town centre regeneration priorities:
- To complete the "Yeovil Refresh" for Yeovil Town Centre and progress implementation;
 - To develop proposals for the regeneration of Chard and progress implementation; and
 - To create a Town Centre Action Plan for Wincanton and progress implementation.

²⁰⁷ NPPF 2018 Para 85

²⁰⁸ Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

²⁰⁹ District Council Monitoring Database.

²¹⁰ South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centres Uses Study; Lichfields; July 2017

- 11.11 In summary, the purpose of the Yeovil Refresh is to ensure that new commercial and public investment is attracted to a number of the town's key regeneration sites, adding value to the local economy and helping fulfil Yeovil's role as the principal economic, service and retail centre for South Somerset.
- 11.12 The Chard Regeneration project aims to reinvigorate and bolster the role of Chard as a market town and economic centre. This will be done by supporting the growth of businesses within the town and strengthening Chard's links with its hinterland and the wider economy. There is a particular focus on the redevelopment of key sites and buildings in Chard Town Centre, together with addressing market failure to stimulate wider commercially led development in the town.
- 11.13 The Wincanton Action Plan will identify to the Council and stakeholders a range of actions which will help to re-position the role of Wincanton town centre as a vibrant environment in which a host of small independent businesses will flourish.

The 'Yeovil 'Town Centre Refresh'

- 11.14 The Town Centre Development Strategy for Yeovil has been undertaken by consultants on behalf of South Somerset District Council. The work has been carried out in collaboration with key stakeholders to develop a deliverable strategy that will bring forward substantial positive change to Yeovil Town Centre. This work does not seek to replicate the earlier 'Yeovil Vision' and other studies, but rather it builds on this work to develop a strategy that is appropriate for today. To aid the process, the Town Centre has been considered under three key themes; these are 'Public Realm'; 'Development; and 'Transport'. The Town Centre has been analysed under these themes in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints. From this, a refreshed 'Vision' has been developed to articulate the primary objectives of the study. The analysis and Vision then informed the identification of a series of potential interventions to bring about significant positive change to the Town Centre and lasting benefits to residents, visitors, and workers.
- 11.15 The Refresh has a Vision to:
- Increase the quantity and density of residential development in the Town Centre;
 - Support the Hospital and College's objectives for innovation;
 - Celebrate the Town's cultural offer;
 - Strengthen and consolidate the Town's retail centre;
 - Improve the number and quality of public and green spaces;
 - Ensure Yeovil is easy to get to and safe, convenient and attractive to move through;
 - Engender an ethos of healthy living;
 - Increase the breadth of the offer of 'Things to Do' to encourage people to spend more time in the centre;
 - Increase the mix of uses to create vitality throughout the day and evening; and
 - Increase the number and diversity of employment opportunities.



11.16 Specific projects include the promotion of the redevelopment of several sites within the town centre to encourage regeneration. A Car Parking Action Plan, an Access Strategy and a Local Walking and Cycling Implementation Plan are also being produced. The development sites are listed below and are the subject of specific allocations in the Local Plan Review.

- The site of the former Box Factory and South Street car park;
- The Bus Station and Glovers Walk;
- The former Cattle Market; and
- Petters Way

POLICY TC1 – YEOVIL TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION SITES

The following sites in Yeovil Town Centre are allocated for redevelopment to provide the specified types of developments:

- a. Former Box Factory Site and South Street Car Park; providing for a residential-led scheme of about 85 dwellings.
- b. The Bus Station and Glovers Walk; providing a mixed-use development extending to about 20,000m² of floorspace over three-four stories, including a residential element of about 100 dwellings.
- c. The former Cattle Market; providing for a range of mixed-use of development with about 5,000m² of floorspace, including a residential element of about 80 dwellings.
- d. Petters Way; providing for a commercial development of about 3,000 m² and with a residential element of about 20 dwellings.

Development in Yeovil Town Centre

11.17 Concerns over the lack of development viability have frequently been cited as presenting challenges in bringing forward the many long-standing regeneration projects and other development opportunities in Yeovil town centre. Given the

importance of rejuvenating the town centre, the framework provided by the Yeovil Vision; and the renewed impetus provided by the 'Yeovil Refresh', it is time to adopt a different policy approach in the town centre than that elsewhere in the District, which goes some way to meeting the particular issues of viability in the centre.

11.18 The priorities in determining planning applications for new development in the designated town centre are:

- (a) A flexible approach to proposed uses given the recognised contraction of the retail sector and the increasingly changing role of centres.
- (b) The need to stimulate more residential development in the centre.
- (c) Very high standards of urban design and use of materials.
- (d) Contributions to a significantly improved public realm.
- (e) Improvements to public transport provision.

11.19 A more relaxed approach to some requirements will also be adopted, including:

- i. Reduced on-site parking standards.
- ii. Increased densities of development.
- iii. Reduced S106 contributions for other general items off site.

POLICY TC2 – DEVELOPMENT IN THE DESIGNATED YEOVIL TOWN CENTRE

- i. The priorities in determining planning applications for new development in the designated town centre are:
 - a. A flexible approach to proposed town centre uses.
 - b. More residential development in the centre.
 - c. Very high standards of urban design and use of materials.
 - d. Contributions to a significantly improved public realm.
 - e. Improvements to public transport provision.
- ii. A more relaxed approach to some requirements will also be adopted, including:
 - Reduced on-site parking standards and the potential for parking-free development.
 - Increased densities of development of at least 100 dwellings per hectare.
 - Reduced S106 contributions for other general items off site.

Chard Regeneration

11.20 The strategic approach to development in Chard is underpinned by the Chard Regeneration Plan, 2009; this forms part of the master planning process²¹¹ to prepare long term plans for the town that address the issues set out in the 'Chard

²¹¹ Prepared by LDA Design, consultants employed by South Somerset District Council

Regeneration Framework²¹². More recently, the 'Chard Refresh' is an ambitious plan to help realise the vision and aims previously agreed. By regenerating key sites in the centre of Chard the objectives supporting the vision and aims will be:

- To provide a compelling reason for residents and visitors to visit and use Chard town centre.
- To bring the key sites and buildings in Chard Town Centre back into economic and community use. This will stimulate physical regeneration and improve the vitality of the town centre.
- To increase the footfall within the town and support existing businesses.
- To improve the leisure and health offer in Chard for both local people and new visitors.
- To reinvigorate and bolster the role of Chard as a Market Town and economic centre. This would be done by supporting the growth of businesses within the town and strengthening Chard's links with its hinterland and the wider economy.
- To address market failure and stimulate wider commercially led development in the town including the allocated housing developments within the 'Chard Eastern Development Area' (CEDA – see Policy CH1).

11.21 The vision for the town centre is to create a mixed use development with a new swimming pool and fitness provision at its heart on the site of the former Boden Mill. This would create a leisure, culture and health focus that is complemented



by a blend of housing and commercial development to create an exciting redevelopment with increased footfall and quality, environmental improvements to the heart of Chard Town Centre. A masterplan is to be prepared along with a Public Realm Design Guide. Public spaces at Boden Mill and Holyrood Lace Mill are to be designed around the new leisure facility and public spaces.

11.22 The 'Cresta' swimming pool closed in the autumn of 2018 and will be replaced by the pool in the new leisure centre.

²¹² An autonomous planning exercise in the form of the Chard Regeneration Framework. The Chard Regeneration Framework is the result of many detailed discussions over a number of years about the challenges that face Chard and the regeneration opportunities that could be available. In January 2007 the District Council agreed the need to lead the development of a Chard Vision project that would allow the challenges to be met and the regeneration opportunities to be taken. Extensive negotiations with the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), Somerset County Council and Chard Town Council were concluded in October 2008. These established the Chard Regeneration Scheme.

POLICY TC3 – CHARD TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION SITE

The Boden Mill site in Chard Town Centre is allocated for redevelopment to provide:

- A mixed use development, including a new leisure centre and swimming pool, alongside a blend of housing and commercial developments.
- The provision of 28% affordable housing.
- A high quality public open space.

Wincanton Town Centre Strategy

- 11.23 A public consultation on the draft version of the Wincanton Town Centre Strategy commenced in January 2019, after the draft strategy was agreed at Area East Committee in December 2018. South Somerset District Council's Wincanton Town Centre Strategy aims to boost footfall and help create a more vibrant town centre, through working with partners, in which Wincanton's businesses can flourish.
- 11.24 The draft strategy also comes with an action plan for achieving a regenerated Wincanton town centre. The draft Strategy aims to provide clear direction for:
- Encouraging quality investment from private and public sector
 - Improve commercial confidence
 - Inform Future decision making
 - Co-ordinate town centre activities/management to achieve complementary improvements
 - Promotion and marketing the town centre
 - Encouraging and developing partnership to collaborate on implementing the strategy
- 11.25 The document includes early thoughts about potential town centre development opportunities, comprising possible residential and mixed use/workspace, about which there will continue to be a need to ensure a balance, preserving flexibility for alternative footfall generators over time. The hope is that these ideas could also highlight opportunities for better connectivity to the High Street with ideas for new pedestrian linkages which could be brought forward through future developments. Public realm improvements.
- 11.26 Another strand of the work has been to consider public realm improvements such as widening footways, introducing different surface dressings, better delineation of on street parking and planting schemes, proposals are tailored to individual locations at:
- Market Place
 - High Street (central area no's 7-15 and the eastern gateway)
 - Carrington Way

Retail Hierarchy

- 11.27 The Lichfields report “Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study” 2017 confirms the retail hierarchy as set out in the adopted Local Plan. Yeovil is the largest centre in South Somerset, followed by the town centres of Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton, then Ansford/Castle Cary, Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton, followed by Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port and South Petherton, effectively a four-tier hierarchy.
- 11.28 Yeovil is the principle centre, and will be the main focus for new retail and leisure investment that requires a high level of accessibility. Major new regional scale shopping facilities will not be supported outside Yeovil in order to retain the retail hierarchy, build on existing infrastructure and focus shops where people have the greatest access to them.
- 11.29 Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton, function as important service centres, providing a range of facilities and services for an extensive rural catchment area, these settlements (identified as Primary Market Towns in the local plan Settlement Hierarchy) perform the role of Market Towns in retail terms.
- 11.30 Ansford/ Castle Cary, Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton, contain groups of shops including a supermarket and a range of non-retail services such as banks and local public facilities (e.g. libraries) and these settlements (identified as Local Market Towns in the local plan Settlement Hierarchy) perform the role of District Centres in retail terms.
- 11.31 Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port and South Petherton (identified as Rural Centres in the local plan Settlement Hierarchy) function as Local Centres in retail terms, having a range of small shops of a local nature serving a small catchment, such as a small supermarket, newsagents, a sub-post office or pharmacy.
- 11.32 The retail hierarchy (Policy TC4) will determine how new net growth will be distributed over the plan period. Yeovil will be the main focus for new retail and leisure investment and the Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres will accommodate development which will maintain their retail and service role and support their position in the retail hierarchy.
- 11.33 The approach seeks to secure Yeovil's market share, thereby securing its prominence in the retail hierarchy, whilst allowing sufficient retail provision in the Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres. Planning permission will not be granted for proposals which are out of scale with the retail hierarchy.

POLICY TC4 – RETAIL HIERARCHY

- i. Yeovil is the Principal Town Centre in South Somerset. Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton are Market Towns in retail terms. Ansford/Castle Cary, Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton are District Centres in retail terms and Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port; and South Petherton are Local Centres in retail terms.
- ii. The development of main town centre uses in Yeovil, the Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres should be of a scale that is commensurate with the settlement role and function, and does not unbalance the town centre hierarchy.

Location of Main Town Centre Uses (the Sequential Approach)

- 11.34 National guidance states that local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan²¹³. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.
- 11.35 When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored²¹⁴.
- 11.36 Town Centre²¹⁵ boundaries and Primary Shopping Areas²¹⁶ have been identified for Yeovil, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Wincanton, Ansford/Castle Cary, Somerton, Langport/Huish, Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port; and South Petherton., where it is expected that new town centre uses will be accommodated. Whilst the retail study broadly confirms these boundaries an early review of them is proposed to ensure they provide sufficient opportunities to support town centre vitality and viability.
- 11.37 The Local Plan does not allocate land for retailing as evidence in the retail study suggests there is sufficient land available in existing town centres to meet short-term needs. The Council may wish to consider identifying sites or extending the

²¹³ NPPF 2018 Paragraph 86

²¹⁴ NPPF 2018 Paragraph 87

²¹⁵ See Glossary for definition

²¹⁶ See Glossary for definition

boundary of Town Centres through the review to accommodate the medium to long term need.

- 11.38 National guidance requires local planning authorities to apply the sequential approach to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up to date local plan. Paragraph 25 of the NPPF²¹⁷ is clear however that the sequential test should not be applied to applications for small-scale rural offices or other small-scale rural development; applicants are urged to partake in pre-application discussions with the Local Authority in relation to such schemes.
- 11.39 The preferred locations for town centre uses are clearly set out in Policy TC5. The retail study clearly states future proposals for out-of-centre retail development should be carefully considered and prevented if it can be demonstrated that it could soak up significant amounts of identified capacity and/or harm opportunities for Town Centre redevelopment/expansion (to be demonstrated through an Impact Assessment - see Policy TC6).
- 11.40 In order to achieve the Government's aspirations for a strong 'High Street', retail proposals will be encouraged within town centres, subject to their being of an appropriate scale for the role of the centre concerned, and their impact on other centres in meeting their communities' needs. Parking provision required in association with retail development should take into account the town centre context and its role for the wider community and be sufficient for the development itself and support additional provision so that the town centre's accessibility and viability is enhanced.
- 11.41 Applications for town centre uses that are not in an existing centre or 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 or there is clear evidence that the proposal would seriously affect the vitality and viability of a nearby Town Centre.

²¹⁷ NPPF 2018 Paragraph 25

POLICY TC5– LOCATION OF MAIN TOWN CENTRE USES (THE SEQUENTIAL APPROACH)

- i. In order to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres, new proposals for town centre uses will be permitted firstly within Yeovil Town Centre Shopping Area and the defined Town Centres of Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres, followed by Edge-of-Centre locations, then Out-of-Centre sites that are, or will be well served by a choice of sustainable modes of transport, and are close to the centre or in relation to bulky goods retailing, are located immediately adjacent to existing retail warehousing.
- ii. Proposals should be of a scale appropriate to the size and function of the town centre and would help to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre.
- iii. Applications for town centre uses which 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, or there is clear evidence that the proposal, either alone or combined with other recent and outstanding planning permissions would seriously affect the vitality and viability of a nearby Town Centre.
- iv. Parking will be considered in the context of wider Town Centre parking.

Retail Hierarchy and Retail Impact Assessments

11.42 National guidance²¹⁸ states that in the case of planning applications for retail and leisure development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, an impact assessment is required if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500m² of gross floorspace). This should include assessment of:

- a) the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and
- b) the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme).

11.43 Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the considerations in paragraph 89, it should be refused.

²¹⁸ NPPR 2018 Paragraph 89

- 11.44 Local research demonstrates that whilst most of the District's town centres are reasonably healthy, some are relatively small and lack Town Centre sites, and therefore could be vulnerable to the impacts of inappropriately scaled proposals. A gross floorspace threshold of 2,500 sq m would not be sufficient to assess the impact of convenience retail proposals on the District's centres as the majority of proposals over the last 10 years have fallen below this threshold.
- 11.45 The rural nature of the District and the size of its smaller centres, justifies a need to also look at the impact of any significant out of centre proposals, as these could also detract from the High Street and have an impact on its vitality and viability.
- 11.46 The thresholds do not imply that anything above them are of an inappropriate scale and should not be awarded planning permission, but simply that anything at or above these would need to demonstrate that there would not be a significant adverse impact.
- 11.47 The requirement to undertake a retail impact assessment should not only be confined to major new developments, in some cases, extensions, redevelopment or variation of conditions can materially alter the effects of a development. The cumulative impact of recent/committed proposals may also be particularly relevant in some cases.
- 11.48 Where there is clear evidence that a proposal is likely to lead to significant adverse impacts, applications should be refused. The health of town centres (including vitality and viability indicators) and town centre or retail strategies should be considered as part of the assessment.
- 11.49 Floorspace thresholds are set out in Policy TC6 below:

POLICY TC6 – FLOORSPACE THRESHOLDS FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- i. In order to ensure that full consideration is given to the scale of development and whether this would have any significant adverse impacts, proposals involving additional retail floorspace, that is in excess of the following thresholds should be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment in accordance with national planning guidance.

Settlement Classification	South Somerset Settlements	Retail Floorspace Threshold (gross)
Principal Centre	Yeovil	500m ²
Market Towns	Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton	500 m ²
District Centres	Langport & Huish Episcopi, Ansford & Castle Cary and Somerton	250 m ²
Local Centres	Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port and South Petherton	250 m ²

- ii. Proposals for retail developments up to and including the above floorspace thresholds will generally be regarded as being of a scale that would not result in significant adverse impacts.
- iii. Where Impact Assessments present evidence of significant adverse impacts on an existing town centre, development will be refused.

Protection of Retail Uses in the Primary Shopping Areas

- 11.50 The NPPF 2018 no longer differentiates between Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages, but does still state that the Local Authority should define the extent of Town Centres and Primary Shopping Areas, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations. The Primary Shopping Area is defined in the NPPF 2018 as “the area where retail development is concentrated” and is used to define an “edge-of-centre” location for the purposes of applying the sequential approach (Policy TC5). Within the identified Primary Shopping Areas, where they contain streets that are dominated by shops and have the greatest pedestrian footfall, planning applications for proposals that would result in the loss of retail premises will be considered against their impact on the core retail role of the Area.

- 11.51 Primary Shopping Areas have been defined on the Proposals Map in Yeovil, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Langport and Huish Episcopi; and Somerton.

POLICY TC7 – PROTECTION OF RETAIL USES IN PRIMARY SHOPPING AREAS

- i. Development proposals resulting in the change of use from retail (class A1 of the use classes order) to non-retail on ground floors within the defined Primary Shopping Areas will be permitted, except where the number or coalescence of such uses would undermine the dominant retail function.
- ii. In order to guide decisions relating to actual numbers and/or coalescence and the impact resulting the following criteria will be taken into account:
 - a. The location and prominence of the premises within the Primary Shopping Area;
 - b. The floorspace and length of frontage of the premises;
 - c. The number, distribution and proximity to other non-A1 use class premises (or with consent for such use) within the Primary Shopping Area in question and throughout the town centre;
 - d. The character and nature of the use proposed, including the level of pedestrian activity associated with it;
 - e. The level of vacancies; and
 - f. Whether the proposed use would give rise to noise, smell or other environmental problem.

Neighbourhood Centres

- 11.52 A Neighbourhood Centre is a small parade of shops of purely neighbourhood significance generally located within large residential estates and designed to give access to day-to-day, top-up items. New Neighbourhood Centres to serve proposed new developments should complement rather than compete with the retail facilities in nearby town centres. This consideration is particularly relevant in relation to the local services and facilities that will be required as part of the planned Sustainable Urban Extensions for Yeovil and the strategic allocation for Chard. The opportunities for serving the wider community in the Yeovil area with new infrastructure and facilities should be fully explored in the Master plan. The opportunities for serving the wider community in the Yeovil area with new infrastructure and facilities should be fully explored in the Master plan.

POLICY TC8 – NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

Development of Neighbourhood Centres shall be of a scale and type to meet the local needs of the area within which they will be located and must not adversely affect the vitality and viability of any town centres identified by the local authority.

Protection and Provision of Local Shops, Community Facilities and Services

- 11.53 Every settlement has buildings or amenities that play a vital role in local life, such as community centres, libraries, village shops, post offices or pubs. Local life would not be the same without them, and if they closed or changed to private use, it would be a real loss to the community.
- 11.54 National guidance requires local planning authorities to take into account the importance of local shops and services to communities when considering planning applications affecting such facilities. The guidance states that planning policies and decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs²¹⁹.
- 11.55 Policy TC9 requires applicants submitting any proposal to redevelop an existing local amenity to an alternative use, which would not be of benefit to the community and would result in a significant or total loss of that service or facility, to either provide alternative provision or demonstrate that there are no suitable, viable alternative community uses. Details of the requirements for establishing viability and marketing are outlined in the Council's guidance document 'Commercial Marketing of Property in Relation to Planning and Listed Building Applications' which will be reviewed and reproduced. Where decisions on viability are finely balanced, a third party will be expected to advise the District Council and this will be at cost to the applicant.
- 11.56 The Localism Act requires local authorities to maintain a list of assets of community value which have been nominated by the local community, and when listed assets come up for sale or change of ownership, the Act gives community groups the time to develop a bid and raise the money to buy the asset when it comes on the local market.
- 11.57 Prior to the establishment of a list, In addition to determining the commercial viability of a local service/facility or shop, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that a social enterprise model (community ownership) for re-use has been explored where a significant loss of a facility is identified. By pooling efforts and finding out what level of commitment the village can support, a community-owned shop/service is one way forward. Community ownership can succeed where a commercial enterprise has failed because.

²¹⁹ NPPF 2018 Paragraph 92

- 11.58 Staff costs can be reduced by volunteer involvement;
- 11.59 The difficulty of finding and affording suitable premises can be overcome by community ownership;
- 11.60 Community-run enterprises have a better chance of survival than independent shops because the community is usually keener to support a venture in which they have an economic and social interest.
- 11.61 The c Communities will be expected to pay a fair price for any site/premises they wish to purchase, so that the landowner is not commercially restricted.
- 11.62 In terms of demonstrating that all reasonable efforts to secure a suitable alternative community re-use has been explored, applicants will firstly be expected to demonstrate that they have consulted the Parish and District Council, and used local evidence, such as the Parish Plan to identify deficiencies and establish the local need for services and facilities. Applicants will then be expected to demonstrate why, if there is an identified need for a certain type of community facility, the site/premises in question has not met that need. Applicants are encouraged to engage with the District Council during the early stages of any marketing exercise or when exploring alternative uses, as guidance and advice can be given on various aspects of economic and community development.
- 11.63 National guidance requires planning applications that promote the retention of existing and development of new local shops, facilities and services to be responded to positively by the local planning authority, Policy TC9 supports this approach.

POLICY TC9 - PROTECTION AND PROVISION OF LOCAL SHOPS, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Provision of new community facilities and services will be supported. Proposals that would result in a significant or total loss of site and/or premises currently or last used for a local shop, post office, public house, community or cultural facility or other service that contributes towards the sustainability of a local settlement will not be permitted except where the applicant demonstrates that:

- (a) alternative provision of equivalent or better quality, that is accessible to that local community is available within the settlement or will be provided and made available prior to commencement of redevelopment; or
- (b) there is no reasonable prospect of retention of the existing use as it is unviable as demonstrated by a viability assessment, and all reasonable efforts to secure suitable alternative business or community re-use or social enterprise have been made for a minimum of 12 months or a period agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to application submission.

DRAFT

12. Transport and Accessibility

Overview

- 12.1 South Somerset is a predominantly rural district with subsequent diverse travel patterns meaning the car will remain an essential mode of travel. However, considerable benefits can be delivered by enabling travel by other means than the car. These include improved health through increased walking and cycling, reductions in carbon emissions, enabling social inclusion and reducing the impact of congestion.
- 12.2 Other measures such as home working, encouraging the use of low emission, alternative fuel, electric vehicles, demand responsive public transport (using alternative fuel/hybrid/electric vehicles) and car share schemes should therefore be considered on a scale and degree appropriate to the site proposed for development.
- 12.3 Whilst new technologies will, in time, play an important part in reducing CO₂, they are unlikely to be sufficient in isolation and will not address health (particularly in tackling obesity) and congestion issues. Consequently substantial investment in measures to promote sustainable travel will be needed.
- 12.4 There is potential to achieve this in Yeovil particularly in the Sustainable Urban Extensions. Achieving District-wide modal shift will be more challenging, although new technologies, improved design, and greater awareness of choice through more robust travel planning will reduce the need to travel and achieve an increase in more sustainable modes where travel is necessary. A reasonable aim for the modal shift policy in Chard and Yeovil, the largest settlements, would therefore be to reduce the number of cars being used for short journeys to local shops and facilities, the town centre and travelling to work and to maintain car use at current levels in our Market Towns, Rural Centres and Rural Settlements. For the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions the aim is to ensure that at least 30% of travel is by sustainable means.
- 12.5 There has been a significant growth in rail travel in recent years, with that for the Heart of Wessex Line in particular exceeding the rate of growth nationally by up to three times²²⁰, notwithstanding this, reducing in recent months. Infrequent and unsuitable timings for commuting on the Bristol to Weymouth and London (Paddington) to Penzance Line, and the actual location of the stations on these and the London (Waterloo) to Exeter line, means that achieving modal shift to rail for short journeys will be challenging to achieve. However, there are opportunities to improve sustainable links to rail stations and also interchangeability at the Yeovil stations.
- 12.6 Modern rail freight can be effective at reducing heavy goods vehicle (HGV) traffic but facilities for rail transfer are needed at or near the point of origin of the goods

²²⁰ Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership Line Plan 2016

and at the destination. Subsequently the locations of stations in South Somerset are not generally conducive to modern freight operation as the likely consequence would be additional heavy traffic on unsuitable roads.

- 12.7 The needs of people with disabilities should be considered for all modes of transport.
- 12.8 In 2017, Highways England consulted on the proposed dualling of the A303 and A358. The District Council supports this in principle as both schemes have the potential to improve connectivity and bring significant economic benefits to the District. A Development Consent Order has been submitted for dualling from Sparkford to Podimore and any local concerns will be addressed at the Public Examination, which began in December 2018 and will continue in 2019.

A Generic District-wide Modal Shift Policy

Low Carbon Travel

- 12.9 These District wide measures are aimed at reducing single car occupancy and the need to travel, or encouraging the use of more sustainable travel, or alternative fuels where travel is necessary.
- 12.10 The Council recognises that for certain schemes, by virtue of their size and scale, it will not be viable or feasible to require all the measures set out below to be delivered. Supporting material accompanying planning applications will need to explain what measures can be accomplished, and the reasons why measures cannot be delivered.
- 12.11 The measures to be applied in all major²²¹ development include:
- a) Providing Good Information**
- Car share schemes - benefits and how to join;
 - Travel Information Packs and a dedicated website detailin
 - Public transport information - timetable and maps of nearest bus routes and interchanges (including interchange with rail) and details connecting local bus, and longer distance travel such as express coach and trains;
 - Maps showing local footpaths and cycle ways, bus stops, and facilities – health, education, shops, employment, churches, recreation & leisure etc;

²²¹ Major development is defined in the Town and Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 as:

(a) developments where the number of dwellinghouses to be provided is 10 or more; or
 (b) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph (c);
 (c) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or
 (d) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more;

- Details of cycle training, cycle/equipment sales & repairs, cycle clubs, health benefits etc;
 - Information on the health benefits of walking; and
 - Benefits and advice on working from home.
 - Somerset County Council offer useful guidance on Smarter Travel Information Packs.²²² The requirement to provide travel information packs should apply to all residential and employment developments.
- b) Encouraging Electric Car Use**
- Encouraging the use of electric cars through the provision of a 16 amp (or greater capacity as deemed appropriate) charging point(s) within the curtilage of the site.
 - The requirement to provide charging points for electric cars should apply to all major residential and employment developments.
- c) Incentivising Sustainable Travel**
- A Green Travel Voucher for use on sustainable transport or other sustainable means of travel to an agreed amount per dwelling, to be given to each set of occupants at the time of first occupation and repeated for a maximum of 3 tenures per unit up to 5 years following the first occupation of that unit. Similarly for employment sites a Green Travel Voucher should be provided for each employee²²³ at commencement of employment. In respect of public transport the vouchers should be non-operator specific and should be available for exchange for passes for one year's travel on local bus routes, including Demand Responsive Routes within a 10 mile radius of site (to encourage interchange).
- d) Cycling and walking**
- The encouragement of cycling and walking by providing cycle and pedestrian routes to link the new development with new/existing routes by utilising lightly trafficked or off-road links for pedestrians and cyclists. These routes should permeate the site to ensure ease of access around the development.
 - Developments should seek to protect and improve existing cycling and pedestrian routes to facilitate site links to the wider network;
 - Providing facilities for cycle parking within the new development commensurate with the levels and standards designated in the County Wide Parking Strategy as set out in Policy TA6.
- e) Home Working**
- Encouragement to work from home applying to all residential development through improved design commensurate with the type of dwelling and by enabling easier access to Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). These should include:

²²² <http://www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk/new-developments/planning-guidance>

²²³ Part-time staff and temporary staff with a contract of employment should receive such a voucher on a pro-rata basis, although provision would not be expected for casual staff

- Designed in specific work area (e.g. space to desk, pc, phone) this does not always mean a dedicated room and the work area could be within a lounge or bedroom; and Broadband connections.
- f) Public Transport**
- Improved public transport connections should be made by developments in Market Towns, Rural Centres and Rural Settlements increasing accessibility through enhancements to either existing conventional bus routes, existing Demand Responsive Transport Schemes or the provision of new services and new bus stops, bus timetables and bus shelters. The developer to provide funding commensurate with the size of the site that enables good on-going connections with the public transport network and where the scale of new residential development or employment sites would have an impact on existing public transport planning obligations will be sought.
- g) Travel Planning**
- Travel planning measures over and above those measures listed above but commensurate with the site and in relation to land use site thresholds referred to in Policy TA4.
- h) Timing of Provision**
- Ensuring that sustainable travel habits are established from the start. This means that sustainable transport measures need to be in place and operational concurrent with first occupancy.

POLICY TA1 – LOW CARBON TRAVEL

- i. Unless specified otherwise, all major new development in South Somerset should:
 - a. Provide Travel Information Packs and a travel website where information can be updated and supplied;
 - b. Provide for the charging of electric vehicles with an external charging point of at least 16 amps within the curtilage of the site in accordance with the following thresholds:
 - 1. Each new dwelling with one or more parking spaces shall provide at least one electric charging point (16 amp minimum).
 - 2. All new non-residential developments providing 50 or more car parking spaces shall be served by electric vehicle charging points (16 amp minimum) for at least two percent of all spaces. Every effort should be made to safeguard the most desirable parking spaces for the charging of electric vehicles.
 - 3. In addition, all new retail or leisure sites providing car parking for 50 or more spaces shall provide at least one rapid charger to service customer vehicles.
 - c. Provide a Green Travel Voucher for each occupier/ employee valid for 6 months for use on sustainable transport;
 - d. Provide cycle and pedestrian routes and facilities for cycle parking within the new development commensurate with the levels and standards designated in the SCC cycle parking strategy;
 - e. Ensure that sustainable transport measures on the site are in place and operational concurrent with first occupancy.
 - f. Developments of all new residential dwellings should enable ease of working from home by providing a designed in specific work area with broadband connections.
- i. Planning obligations commensurate with the scale of development will be sought to:
 - 1. Deliver improved public transport connections, increasing accessibility through enhancements to either existing conventional bus routes or existing Demand Responsive Transport schemes
 - 2. The provision of new services and new bus stops, bus timetables and bus shelters.
 - 3. The developer will be required to enter into a planning obligation in accordance with Policy SS5 to ensure provision of such facilities, which shall be provided prior to first occupation of the new development.

Rail

- 12.12 To further encourage modal shift, the Council should promote and protect land for additional rail facilities. These will include improved car parking such as that proposed at Crewkerne (Policy CR3) and Castle Cary (Policy AC4).

POLICY TA2 – RAIL FACILITIES

The Council shall encourage, promote and protect the development of land for passenger rail facilities and rail freight hubs where there is robust evidence in support of developing infrastructure to widen transport choice.

Travel Plans

- 12.13 SCC has produced 'Travel Planning Guidance'²²⁴ and this has been offered to local planning authorities as a basis for adoption as an optional Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The District Council has not formally adopted the document, but key elements of the guidance have been taken on board in producing the Travel Plans Policy TA3.
- 12.14 To reinforce the measures in Policies TA1 and TA2, dependent on the scale of the development, one of 3 types of Travel Plan (a Measures-only Travel Statement, or a Travel Plan Statement or a Full Travel Plan) should be in place to encourage modal shift, deliver subsequent health benefits from more active travel modes and reduce the impact of congestion.
- 12.15 The differences between these types of Travel Plan are fully explained in SCCs 'Travel Planning Guidance' which indicates the different contents required by each type and the thresholds where respective types will apply. Reference should also be made to SCC's 'Manual for Travel Plans' that offers practical advice on the measures including the implementation and on-going management of Travel Plans.
- 12.16 Policy TA3 advocates the County Council Travel Plan Guidance, although there are three key differences in the interpretation of thresholds and measures. These are:
- The SCC guidance refers to employee numbers and gives an indicative Gross Floor Area (GFA) equivalent²²⁵. Predicting the number of employees for a site is extremely difficult. In respect of employment sites Policy TA3 therefore excludes requirements in relation to the Gross Floor Area (GFA) based on indicative employment densities²²⁶.

²²⁴ SCC Transport Policies Travel Plan Guidance - adopted as formal technical guidance Nov 2011 (Thresholds for Travel Plans in Somerset page 15 and Table 1.2)

²²⁵ SCC Transport Policies Travel Plan Guidance - TVS 6 chapter 3 Tables 3.2 and 3.3 pages 39, 40 & 41

²²⁶ Employment Densities: A Full Guide. Final Report, English Partnerships and the RDAs (2001)

- The SCC guidance refers to a parking management strategy and this includes measures such as charging, Controlled Parking Zones and Traffic Regulation Orders²²⁷. This is too prescriptive as there is a need to ensure flexibility of the respective site and such measures should be determined through negotiation as and when pertinent to that site.
- SCCs Travel Planning guidance promotes safeguarding measures with bonds and ESCROW accounts²²⁸. An ESCROW account is where a deposit, usually in this instance money, or possibly a deed, stock, or written instrument is put into the custody of a third party and is retained until the agreed actions have been delivered. SSDC has concerns regarding the additional cost implications for developers and the consequent impact on the viability of a development. An s106 agreement is in itself legally binding and any safeguarding through bonds or ESCROWS should be negotiated on a case-by-case basis and should only be in respect of financial default by a developer.

- 12.17 SSDC expects concurrence with the interpretation of these thresholds and measures.
- 12.18 Travel Plans for specific sites shouldn't be seen in isolation. There is greater potential for the delivery of the more significant measures through joint working with other Travel Plans, both new and existing. Travel Plan Forums should therefore be set up to include key stakeholders (developers, public transport, occupiers, employers, residents etc. as well as SSDC and SCC).
- 12.19 In respect of speculative developments including outline planning applications a Framework or Umbrella Travel²²⁹ Plan to cover the entire development site in accordance with SCCs 'Travel Planning Guidance' should be provided. This also applies to the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions for which additional specific measures are included in Policy YV1.

²²⁷ SCC Transport Policies Travel Plan Guidance - Table 2.2 page 17 'Measures expected in a travel plan document' a. 'Measures only Travel Statements'

²²⁸ SCC Transport Policies Travel Plan Guidance - Policy TVS 14, page 62

²²⁹ SCC Transport Policies Travel Plan Guidance - Chapter 3 Action Plans for speculative development sites, page 41

POLICY TA3 – TRAVEL PLANS

- i. Travel Plans will be required in accordance with Somerset County Council's Travel Plan Guidance, commensurate with the scale of the development. The three broad types of Travel Plan are:
 - Measures-only Travel Statements;
 - Travel Plan Statements; and
 - Full Travel Plans.
- ii. The Travel plan Guidance will be complied with, with the exception of:
 - a. requirements in relation to the Gross Floor Area (GFA) based on indicative employment densities;
 - b. a parking management strategy, including measures such as charging, Controlled Parking Zones and Traffic Regulation Orders; and
 - c. safeguarding measures with bonds and ESCROW accounts
- iii. All development within the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions will be required to meet the Framework Travel Plan criteria and be commensurate with Policy YV1.
- iv. Any development site with 25 or more car parking spaces or more than 1000sq m of floor area could be required to produce a travel plan as a general principle. This is used as a basic threshold to negotiate and determine a requirement for a travel plan document for land uses not specifically referred to in the Travel Plan Guidance.

Transport Impacts of Development

- 12.20 All new development is required to address its own transport implications. Larger schemes are required to prepare Transport Assessments²³⁰ and, where required, Travel Plans to illustrate how the amount of trips generated will be minimized, how the impacts will be accommodated, and how accessibility to the site by all modes of transport will be achieved.
- 12.21 The Strategic Road Network is formed by Motorways and Trunk Roads, National Primary and County Routes in Somerset. National Primary Routes and County Routes accord with the routes identified in the local Highway Authority's (Somerset County Council) route hierarchy. In order to prevent the unnecessary interruption of traffic flow and to prevent increase of highway hazard, the formation of new direct accesses onto these roads will not be permitted. Exceptions will only be made where the type of development is such that it requires a high order (of route hierarchy) route location, such as roadside service stations or freight transfer facilities.
- 12.22 Access to development proposed that will connect to rural roads carrying relatively high speed traffic should be designed according to the needs of drivers

²³⁰ In compliance with the requirements set out in DCLG and DfT Guidance on Transport Assessment, March 2007

and other users to enter safely into such traffic. The advice and guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges will be appropriate in these environments, mostly rural locations. This is likely to be the case for developments related to farm diversification or for tourist attractions specific to rural locations.

- 12.23 Development proposals will be expected to provide or contribute towards the cost of providing transport infrastructure where this is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms²³¹.
- 12.24 Contributions may also be required to meet the management and maintenance of services and facilities provided. The appropriate range and level of contributions will be assessed in a comprehensive manner, taking into account strategic infrastructure requirements and using standard charges where appropriate.
- 12.25 The nature and scale of any planning obligations sought will be related to the form and scale of development and its potential impact upon the surrounding area. In determining nature and scale, specific site conditions and other material considerations including viability, redevelopment of previously developed land or mitigation of contamination may be taken into account. The timing of provision of infrastructure and facilities will be carefully considered in order to ensure that appropriate provision is married against occupation of the development.

²³¹ In compliance with the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework

POLICY TA4 – TRANSPORT IMPACT OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

All new development shall be required to address its own transport implications and shall be designed to maximise the potential for sustainable transport through:

- a. Safeguarding existing and new transport infrastructure, which is important to an efficient and sustainable transport network from development that would prejudice their transport use;
- b. Securing inclusive, safe and convenient access on foot, cycle, and by public and private transport that addresses the needs of all commensurate with the type and scale of development;
- c. Ensuring that the expected nature and volume of traffic and parked vehicles generated by the development would not have a detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area and would not compromise the safety and/or function of the local or strategic road networks in terms of both volume and type of traffic generated;
- d. Ensuring that proposals, which specifically require a location with direct access to the strategic road network due to the volumes and quality of traffic generated, are well located on these networks. There is a presumption against direct access from the strategic road network. Exemptions will only be made where the type of development is such that it requires a high order (of route hierarchy) route location, such as roadside service stations or freight transfer facilities;
- e. Assessing the transport impact of development and ensuring delivery of the necessary transport infrastructure for the proposal and requiring larger schemes to prepare Transport Assessments in accordance with the opinion of the Transport Authority.
- f. Requiring car parking and service vehicle needs at levels appropriate to the development and its location, in accordance with the approved/adopted standards identified in Policy TA5.

Parking Standards

- 12.26 Owning a car is an essential part of daily life for many people in South Somerset. This is shown by higher than average car ownership levels in South Somerset where just 15% of households do not have access to a car, compared to a national average of 26%²³². The rural nature of South Somerset must be considered in setting appropriate levels of parking provision in new development.
- 12.27 The amount of parking provided in new developments should strike an appropriate balance that considers various issues. Enough car parking needs to be provided to help support the local economy and allow people to make

²³² Source Census 2011 data

necessary trips, particularly for those whose only realistic travel option is the car. Too much car parking can encourage car use and lead to congestion and increased CO₂ emissions, and can waste land and result in poorly designed places; whilst too little parking can lead to parking in inappropriate places, making the streets more cluttered.

- 12.28 Other key issues in setting parking standards include car ownership; the accessibility of the development; the type, mix and use of development; and the overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.²³³
- 12.29 Cycling is supported for many important reasons, including improving health and wellbeing, minimising CO₂ emissions, and reducing traffic congestion. A fundamental part of encouraging people to cycle is by providing high quality, secure and convenient cycle parking in new developments. Somerset County Council's (SCC) Travel Planning Guidance (November 2011) includes further detail on this. The County Council's Future Transport Plan and Cycling Strategy will be taken on board where they accord with policies in this document.
- 12.30 SCC has adopted the Countywide Parking Strategy (March 2012), which includes parking standards for cars, cycles and motorcycles for both residential and non-residential development. It is logical and appropriate to apply the Highway Authority's car parking standards in South Somerset and the District Council has endorsed their use.
- 12.31 The adopted Countywide Parking Strategy will therefore be applied when considering parking provision for new developments in South Somerset. The County Council has clarified that urban extensions (such as Yeovil and Chard) should adopt the parking standards of the adjacent settlement.

POLICY TA5 - PARKING STANDARDS

Parking provision in new development should be design-led and based upon site characteristics, location and accessibility. The parking standards within the Somerset County Council Parking Strategy will be applied in South Somerset.

²³³ NPPF July 2018. Paragraph 110

13. Health and Wellbeing

Overview

- 13.1 Natural green and open space, outdoor playing space and sports, cultural and community facilities can all make a major contribution to ensuring that villages and towns are places in which people will choose to live. They play a key role in enhancing the health and sense of wellbeing of the local community. National guidance states that local planning authorities need to consider the health and wellbeing needs of local communities in their local plans²³⁴.
- 13.2 A main role of the planning system in association with development is to ensure there are sufficient open space and outdoor play space, formal sports, cultural and community facilities and that they are in the right places. But there is also a need to ensure they are of a quality to meet local standards, attractive to users, meet expectations, and are well managed and maintained. By undertaking local assessments of need and audits of provision, it is intended that the following objectives are set for the District:
- Networks of accessible, quality open spaces, sport and recreation facilities, in both urban and rural areas, which meet the needs of residents and visitors, are fit for purpose and are economically and environmentally sustainable;
 - An appropriate balance between new provision and the enhancement of existing provision; and
 - Clarity and reasonable certainty for developers and land owners in relation to the requirements and expectations of local planning authorities in respect of open space and sport and recreation provision.
- 13.3 Under the provisions of the NPPF²³⁵, open space may be designated 'Local Green Space' in local and neighbourhood plans where the green space is:
- a) In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - b) Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - c) Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 13.4 Design of the built environment should encourage physical activity and enable the development of on-site facilities, opportunities for exercise, relaxation and play.
- 13.5 Open Space includes formal and informal recreation open space, parks and gardens, country parks, natural green space, designated Local Green Space, woodlands and allotments. Outdoor Playing Space is defined as pitches, equipped play areas and youth facilities. Greater access to open space, parks,

²³⁴ [Health and wellbeing - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/health-and-wellbeing)

²³⁵ NPPF July 2018. Paragraph 100

allotments, playing fields and provision for children and young people is clearly beneficial to the health and wellbeing of a local community. Networks of green spaces and corridors provide opportunities for recreation, walking and cycling.

- 13.6 In addition to the more obvious formal sports and cultural facilities, community halls also provide opportunities for social and recreation provision. Community halls are multipurpose buildings provided by the community for the community. They provide space and facilities for a range of local activities and increasingly for community services. It is therefore important that community halls are maintained and enhanced and where new communities are being formed or expanded through new development, there is an intention to ensure adequate provision of community hall space.
- 13.7 Symphony Healthcare Services (SHS) is a partnership between Yeovil District Hospital (YDH) and various GP Practices across the District. It is important that healthcare is not compromised by increases in population and investment will be needed at the Hospital and elsewhere to maintain services in the face of growth. This is particularly so given the on-going increases in the proportion of elderly population in the District. Some existing healthcare practices are operating in excess of capacity in accordance with national standards. More information is covered in the place specific infrastructure sections of this Plan, but SHS is actively looking for an area of land in Yeovil for a new additional primary healthcare facility; and improvements and expansion at YDH and elsewhere will be required. The Council will support the seeking of contributions from developers to meet these aims.

Open Space, Sport, Recreation, Cultural and Community Facilities

Local Standards and Planning Obligations

- 13.8 Government guidance²³⁶ requires local authorities to have undertaken detailed assessments of needs and audits of existing facilities, to identify deficiencies in facilities and identify opportunities for new provision.
- 13.9 The quantitative, qualitative, accessibility and catchment standards are set out in South Somerset District Council's published assessments and needs strategies. These documents will be updated in the light of the most recent evidence as required. Further advice on the Council's design standards for open space can be found in the Landscape Design Guide Addendum and the Play Policy produced by the Council.²³⁷

²³⁶ NPPF July 2018 Paragraph 96

²³⁷ See [South Somerset District Council - Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation;](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/411595/landscape_design_guide_-_addendum.pdf)
[https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/35346/totb16304_play_policy_new_sml.pdf;](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/35346/totb16304_play_policy_new_sml.pdf) and
https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/s22598/9%20FINAL_Strategy%20and%20Action%20Plan_South%20Somerset%20PPS_Sept_2017%20v0.7.pdf

- 13.10 In accordance with Policy SS5, these standards are used to assess the level of open space, outdoor playing space and sports, cultural and community facilities that would be needed to meet the reasonable requirements of a development's future occupants, providing that the obligation meets the three statutory tests in paragraph 56 of the NPPF²³⁸.
- 13.11 The provision of 'dual use' open space may be considered but only where open access can be secured and where the District Council is satisfied that long term open access can be achieved.
- 13.12 In calculating the amount of space required, the type of development and make-up of individual housing schemes will need to be taken into account in order to determine likely household size. It is accepted that not all types of development generate the same demand for open space, outdoor playing space, and sport and recreational facilities, such as single bedroom accommodation, rest homes, nursing homes, sheltered accommodation; and special needs housing.

Green Infrastructure

- 13.13 Green Infrastructure is the mosaic of natural landscape features, spaces and corridors that lie within and between developed areas. They are essential elements of the character and appearance of an area and contribute positively to cultural heritage, the health and wellbeing of the local community and the general quality of life. In addition to enriching visual amenity they offer opportunities for informal recreation and provide wildlife habitats and the connectivity between them. They can also contribute to natural drainage and reduce surface water run-off, helping mitigate for the consequences of climate change. Green Infrastructure assets include open spaces such as parks and gardens, allotments, woodlands and natural open space, fields, hedges, lakes, ponds, playing fields, as well as footpaths, cycleways and rivers.
- 13.14 The provision of properly integrated Green Infrastructure can enhance the amenity of an area and promote a sense of place and community identity. Greater access to open space, parks, playing fields and provision for children and young people are clearly beneficial to health and the sense of well-being of the local community. Networks of green spaces and corridors provide opportunities for recreation, walking and cycling and also benefit wildlife by conserving and enhancing habitats, and providing buffers from development to important wildlife sites and watercourses. Green infrastructure can also serve to deflect visitor pressures on nationally and internationally important wildlife sites.
- 13.15 Trees are essential to the value of Green Infrastructure. The retention of trees and woodland; their appropriate management; and provision of new tree planting, can help to combat climate change and flooding. Trees help to alleviate pollution and modify microclimate.

²³⁸ NPPF, July 2018

- 13.16 Attenuation ponds and other sustainable drainage systems, together with larger water bodies, can also provide valuable aspects of Green Infrastructure, with a potential for enhancing ecological and landscape value.
- 13.17 Clear priorities will be established through an overarching Green Infrastructure Strategy. This will incorporate local open space standards and requirements for developments to contribute towards the delivery of a comprehensive network of Green Infrastructure. In particular, the strategy will recognise the need to integrate Green Infrastructure within the Yeovil Sustainable Extensions and to ensure that all communities have access to quality green areas.
- 13.18 Where loss of green infrastructure as a result of development is unavoidable the Council will seek mitigation based on the principles within Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard²³⁹ (ANGSt).

Site Specific Mitigation

- 13.19 Although the District Council has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, the 'Regulation 123 List' does not include the use of monies received for community, health or leisure facilities, other than the following specific items:
- Arts and entertainment facilities and improvement in Yeovil
 - Swimming pool improvements or provision in Yeovil, Primary and Local Market Towns
 - Sports hall improvements or provision in Yeovil, Primary and Local Market Towns
 - 3G Artificial Grass Pitch improvements or provision in Primary and Local Market Towns
 - Community hall improvements or provision
 - New cemetery space to serve Yeovil
 - Off-site open space and public realm
- 13.20 Contributions for site specific mitigations will therefore continue to be sought elsewhere for improvements or provision of open space or public realm, outdoor play space, sports, community and cultural facilities or building related to a specific development site, through a S106 agreement. This will be necessary where it has been proven that the new development increases local needs. The provision of open space, outdoor playing space and sports, cultural and community facilities may be required on-site or may form part of a contribution towards off-site provision of either new or improved facilities. The requirement for an off-site contribution may arise because of the following:
- The size, layout and topography of the development; and
 - There may be other opportunities within the appropriate distance of the site which could better meet the needs of the development.

²³⁹http://www.ukmaburbanforum.co.uk/documents/other/nature_nearby.pdf

- 13.21 Provisions for future maintenance can be sought towards such provision to ensure the continued availability of the open space, equipped play space, youth facilities and playing pitches and changing rooms. Planning Obligations can include maintenance payments towards the provision of facilities that are predominately for the benefit of the users of the associated development.
- 13.22 The provision of on-site (or contribution towards off-site) play and youth facilities, playing pitches and changing facilities, public open space and landscaped areas will require developers to agree the future management of this space with the Council. The Council will need to be satisfied that any management company is suitably financed. The former will require an initial landscape maintenance plan to be implemented prior to adoption, with a commuted sum paid to the local planning authority to cover maintenance for the 10 years following adoption. The latter will require a formal management plan, including timescale for adoption and maintenance schedule, to be agreed as part of a Section 106 planning obligation.
- 13.23 In areas of particular sensitivity, it is recognised that there is a role for open space provision in alleviating pressure on existing natural areas. This is particularly the case at Langport/Huish Episcopi, where more open space provision for activities such as dog walking can alleviate pressures on Somerset Moors and Levels sites, given their close proximity.

POLICY HW1 – PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE, OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE, SPORTS, CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN NEW DEVELOPMENT

- i. Where new housing development generates a need for additional open space, outdoor playing space, local and strategic sports, cultural and community facilities, provision/contributions will be made as appropriate. The need for additional open space may be required due to the proximity to sensitive (internationally-designated) sites and conservation areas, so as to alleviate potential development-related pressure on those sites.
- ii. Housing provision consisting of sheltered housing, rest and nursing homes, special needs housing will be exempt from these standards with exception of informal recreational open space.
- iii. Developments of one bedroom dwellings will not be required to provide equipped play provision and youth facilities but will be required to provide for other open space and outdoor playing space.
- iv. Dependent upon the size and layout of the development, the provision of open space, outdoor playing space, local and strategic sports, cultural and community facilities, may be required on site or may form part of a contribution towards off site provision of either new or improved facilities. In such circumstances off-site provision towards local facilities should be made in a location, which adequately services the new development and a planning obligation may be used to secure this.
- v. Provision should be made for future maintenance to ensure the continued availability of the facilities.
- vi. Green Corridors, Public Rights of Way, Civic Spaces, Cemeteries, Private Open Space, Designated Local Green Space and Community Allotments are other aspects of Green Infrastructure, which need to be given full consideration.

POLICY HW2 – GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- i. The Council will promote the provision of Green Infrastructure throughout the district, based upon the enhancement of existing areas including public open space, accessible woodland, and river corridors, and by ensuring that development provides open spaces and green corridor links between new and existing green spaces.
- ii. Development proposals should provide and/or maintain a network of connected and multifunctional open spaces that, where appropriate, meet the following requirements:
 - a. Create new habitats and connects existing wildlife areas to enrich biodiversity & promote ecological coherence;
 - b. Provide and/or maintain an accessible network of green spaces and improve recreational opportunities, including environmental education, local food production and support physical health and mental wellbeing;
 - c. Ensure that all children and young people have reasonable access to a range of play and leisure opportunities;
 - d. Provide and/or maintain opportunities for enhanced, attractive walking and cycling routes linking urban areas and the wider countryside;
 - e. Enhance and/or maintain the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape;
 - f. Contribute to and/or maintain local identity and sense of place;
 - g. Increase the district's tree cover;
 - h. Help mitigate the consequences of climate change (sustainable drainage systems, shade etc.); and
 - i. Alleviate current and future potential visitor and recreation pressure/disturbance to internationally designated conservation areas.
- iii. Existing Green Infrastructure will be protected against any adverse impact of development proposals. If loss of existing green infrastructure assets is unavoidable in order to accommodate necessary development, appropriate mitigation for the loss will be required. Development should include green infrastructure of an appropriate type, standard and size and be designated based on the principles within Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard or otherwise appropriately contribute to improving access to natural greenspace such that the overall aims are met.

Sports Zone

13.24 The Yeovil Sports Zone is the working title for the South Somerset District Council project aiming to provide residents with first class sport and recreation facilities, which will meet both present and projected future needs as the population grows. It will widen the range of opportunities for people of all ages to participate in leisure, stimulate healthy lifestyles, increase participation in active sport, enable more young people to achieve their potential in sport and create a sub-regional sports venue within the district and focuses on 4 key strategic areas:

- Supporting community sport;
- Developing active communities;

- Enhancing facility provision; and
- Raising the profile of Sport and Active Leisure.

13.25 The South Somerset Leisure Facilities Strategy is expected to be completed by March 2019, depending on the conclusions Policy HW3 may be deleted from the Local Plan Review if there is no longer a need for this type of facility in the District. The Policy is retained for the time being.

POLICY HW3 - SPORTS ZONE

In order to increase the range of opportunities for people of all ages to participate in indoor leisure, promote healthier lifestyles, allow for improved potential in sport and create a sub-regional sports venue, the Council and its partners will seek a suitable location for the provision of a Sports Zone of at least 1.5ha. In identifying a suitable location the following locational factors will be taken into consideration:

- a. Preference will be given to a site within the existing town of Yeovil;
- b. If there is no suitable, available and viable site available within the town which can accommodate the development, the site selection should follow a sequential approach with preference given to the location of the Sports Zone on the edge of Yeovil close to public transport links and other sustainable transport modes.

Existing Outdoor Sports, Play and Youth Provision

13.26 Existing outdoor sports, play and youth provision will be protected from inappropriate future development which would result in the loss of these facilities. This includes:

- LAPs - Local Areas for Play;
- LEAPs - Locally Equipped Areas for Play;
- NEAPs - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play;
- MUGAs - Multi Use Games Areas;
- Destination playgrounds';
- Youth facilities, including skate parks, hard surfaced courts, areas for ball play (including multi use games areas – MUGAs, rebound walls, basketball courts), skate parks, BMX tracks and youth shelters

13.27 There may however be instances, where there is a proven oversupply of equipped play areas and youth facilities, or where they are not appropriately located. In this instance it may be desirable to remove the facilities and not relocate them.

13.28 NPPF para 97²⁴⁰ provides a wider context for Policy HW4 below and includes playing fields and recreational buildings.

POLICY HW4 – PROTECTION OF PLAY SPACES AND YOUTH PROVISION

Development which would result in the loss of equipped play areas and youth facilities will only be permitted where:

- a. There is a partial development of a site and the remaining site will be retained at its current provision and improved;
- b. Alternative provision of equivalent community benefit of a similar nature which is accessible and made available locally within the same catchment;
- c. There is a proven oversupply of equipped play areas and youth facilities, or they are not appropriately located.

²⁴⁰ NPPF July 2018

14. Environmental Quality

Overview

- 14.1 Maintaining and enhancing environmental quality in South Somerset will require the Council to address climate change mitigation and adaptation, design quality of new development, protection and enhancement of the historic environment, landscape and biodiversity, development of green infrastructure and pollution control.

Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset

- 14.2 The release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from human activity is changing the world's climate and national Government policy clearly supports taking action to tackle this issue. This 'action' involves mitigation through reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and adaptation by ensuring development can cope with the predicted impacts of climate change and helping biodiversity to adapt to a changing climate. Taking action to address climate change will be much less costly than not taking action over the medium to long term.²⁴¹
- 14.3 Local planning authorities have a statutory duty²⁴² to ensure that, taken as whole, Plan policy contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.
- 14.4 Figure 14.1 compares Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions for South Somerset, compared to the neighbouring districts in Somerset. South Somerset's have reduced from 7.2 tonnes in 2009; a reduction of over 20%.

Figure 14.1: CO₂ Emissions in Somerset

	CO ₂ Emissions Per Person
South Somerset	5.7
Taunton Deane	5.3
Sedgemoor	7
Mendip	6.7
County Average	6.1

- 14.5 The Climate Change Act 2008 requires an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (upon 1990 levels) - a key element of the Local Plan is to ensure South Somerset makes a full and appropriate response to climate change.
- 14.6 The Local Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives support a low carbon economy, and promote greater self-containment by focussing most new development at the main settlements in the district, with a balance of employment and housing provision, ensuring communities have good access to shops and community

²⁴¹ Stern Review on the economics of climate change, HM Treasury, 2006

²⁴² Section 19 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, as amended by the 2008 Planning Act

services and facilities. This should ensure the need to travel is minimised, especially by car, and therefore limit the growth of CO₂ emissions from travel.

- 14.7 Even if the world were to go 'zero carbon' straight away, there is likely to be 30-40 years of climate change due to greenhouse gas emissions already released.²⁴³ This makes it vitally important to ensure that new development is adapted to cope with the effects of climate change that will happen regardless of measures taken now to reduce emissions of CO₂.
- 14.8 By the 2050s, climate change in South Somerset is likely to mean more extreme weather events including:²⁴⁴
- Summers being 2-3 degrees centigrade hotter, and 20-40% drier;
 - Winters being 2-3 degrees warmer, and 10-20% wetter.
- 14.9 Changes to the summer climate may have some positives in South Somerset from increased tourist numbers, which would benefit the local economy. But hotter, drier summers could damage wildlife in the District and reduce levels of water supply. Wetter winters could cause more flooding and greater risk to property and people.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

- 14.10 This term describes energy supply from 'renewable' sources such as from the wind, water, the sun, and biomass; and 'low carbon energy' that can help to reduce CO₂ emissions e.g. Combined Heat and Power, air/ground source heat pumps and energy-from-waste. In July 2018 the Government published the National Adaptation Programme this set out a wide range of actions to help the country adapt to climate change. The Government's current 'feed in tariff' provides a financial incentive for renewable and low carbon electricity generation, e.g. solar photovoltaic panels, wind turbines.
- 14.11 Policy EQ1 fully supports the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy, consistent with national policy. However, in some cases there may be unacceptable impacts that could preclude renewable and low carbon energy development, such as large wind turbines on bird flight paths in or around the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar, and impact upon protected landscapes such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB),²⁴⁵ or designated heritage assets. The Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Somerset Levels and Moors makes clear that wind farm developments are likely to be unacceptable within 800 metres of the internationally designated sites.
- 14.12 Planning Practice Guidance²⁴⁶ states that applications for wind energy development should only be granted if the site has already been identified as

²⁴³ [Adapting to climate change: UK Climate Projections, Defra, 2009]

²⁴⁴ [Central estimate under medium emissions scenario, UK Climate Projections 2009]

²⁴⁵ [For example, a study has been produced to assess renewable energy potential in the Blackdown Hills AONB: 'Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills AONB (2010)']

²⁴⁶ [Renewable and low carbon energy - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy)

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. In applying these new considerations, suitable areas for wind energy development will need to have been allocated clearly in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan – it is not the intention of this Authority to designate such sites.

- 14.13 In terms of other potential renewable and low carbon energy resources in South Somerset, there is good potential to develop solar photovoltaic panels as the District has relatively high levels of sunshine duration compared to the rest of the UK, with around 1,500 sunshine hours per year.
- 14.14 There are also numerous weirs and mills that generate electricity as part of the South Somerset Hydropower Group - albeit at a relatively small-scale - with further potential sites yet to be developed. Wood chip, wood pellet or logs can be used to generate heat in biomass boilers, stoves and combined heat and power systems, heating individual buildings or to power district heat systems. As wood is a bulky material, it is most viable to use a local supply. Farmers tend to use Grade 3 agricultural land (which covers most of South Somerset) for energy crops such as Miscanthus or Willow, and there are also areas of unmanaged woodland and coppice that could yield wood fuel.

Sustainable Construction and Minimising Carbon Dioxide Emissions in New Development

- 14.15 New development has the potential to increase CO₂ emissions through the construction of buildings and their subsequent use.
- 14.16 The Council will actively support energy efficiency measures in new development. Although energy is a key aspect, these sustainable construction methods cover a range of other issues such as water, waste, health and wellbeing, and ecology. Although 'water stress' (potential lack of water supply) has not been identified as a particular issue for South Somerset, climate change and population growth will require more efficient use of water through measures such as rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling and water efficient appliances. Decentralised local renewable or low-carbon energy sources in new development will also be encouraged.

Flood Risk

- 14.17 As described above, climate change is likely to mean wetter winters and more extreme weather events in South Somerset and therefore potentially more frequent flooding. National planning policy²⁴⁷ states that a sequential, risk-based approach should be applied to avoid development in areas of flood risk, taking account of the current and future impacts of climate change.
- 14.18 South Somerset's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)²⁴⁸ highlights areas at risk of flooding from rivers and identifies flooding incidents that have occurred in the past from rivers, surface water, sewer flooding, and groundwater. Some areas in and around Yeovil are within Flood Zone 3 (high flood risk), as are parts of many of the Market Towns and Rural Centres. Langport/Huish Episcopi, Ilminster and Ilchester are settlements where flood risk is a particular issue. The SFRA was undertaken a number of years ago now and a new assessment is currently being undertaken by Consultants as part of a joint project between South Somerset and Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils.
- 14.19 In early 2014 the Somerset Levels and Moors experienced widespread flooding, particularly within the Parrett and Tone river catchments. It is the largest flood event ever known. The Environment Agency estimated there were 100 million cubic metres of floodwater covering an area of 65 square kilometres. Residents of Northmoor (Moorland, Chadmead and Fordgate) had to leave their homes at the height of the flood and many communities were cut off by floodwater. As a result, there is a specific flood action plan for the area²⁴⁹.
- 14.20 The aim of the Sequential Test set out in the NPPF²⁵⁰ is to steer new development to areas at the lowest probability of flooding i.e. Flood Zone 1.

²⁴⁷ NPPF July 2018

²⁴⁸ South Somerset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1, August 2008

²⁴⁹ [Somerset Levels and Moors: reducing the risk of flooding - GOV.UK](#)

²⁵⁰ NPPF July 2018

Proposals in Flood Zones 2 or 3 will need to consider alternative sites that have a lower risk of flooding and the 'exception test' will also be applied, in which it will be considered whether the development would provide wider benefits to the local community that outweigh flood risk; and whether the development, its users and the wider area will be safe. In the first instance the area to which the 'search' for reasonably available alternative sites will apply will be District-wide, but there will be cases where this area of search will be smaller. Some examples of justifying a reduced 'area of search' include it potentially being impractical to suggest that extensions of existing business premises, such as farm holdings, could be developed elsewhere in the District; and where there is a need for new development that has a defined catchment area such as a school, hospital, or doctor's surgery.

- 14.21 Surface water flooding is also an issue at many of the main settlements in the District, particularly Yeovil. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are encouraged as they mimic natural drainage by reducing the amount and rate of water flow following rainfall, therefore reducing the risk of surface water flooding. SuDS have several other benefits such as removing pollutants from urban run-off at source, ensuring that new developments do not increase flood risk downstream, and combining water management with green space which can increase amenity, recreation and biodiversity value (known as green infrastructure – see Policy HW2). The SFRA states that there is a relatively high potential for SuDS in South Somerset due to the permeable underlying geology.
- 14.22 The Environment Agency produce Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs) to identify strategic flood risk management policies in river catchments over the long term (50-100 years). The River Parrett CFMP covers most of South Somerset, and states that in the future the main problems in Yeovil may be related to higher intensity summer storms that overwhelm the local sewers and smaller streams.

Biodiversity and climate change

- 14.23 The distribution of habitats and species will be affected by the changing climate, so it is important to ensure that this issue is addressed when considering proposals for new development. An example of delivering this is through the creation of new natural habitats around existing habitats, and linking such areas together, wherever possible. Policies EQ5: Biodiversity and HW2: Green Infrastructure contain further detail on the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, including the creation of such wildlife 'corridors'. It is important to note that some measures to combat climate change can potentially have adverse effects on biodiversity.

POLICY EQ1 – ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IN SOUTH SOMERSET

The Council will support proposals for new development where they have demonstrated how climate change mitigation and adaptation will be delivered, through inclusion of the following measures (as appropriate):

- a. New development should ensure that carbon dioxide emissions are minimised through energy efficiency measures, renewable and low carbon energy, and where necessary Allowable Solutions;
- b. Development of renewable and low carbon energy generation will be encouraged and permitted, providing there are no significant adverse impacts upon residential and visual amenity, landscape character, designated heritage assets, and biodiversity;
- c. Development will be directed away from medium and high flood risk areas by using South Somerset's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as the basis for applying the Sequential Test. The area of search to which the Sequential Test will apply will be South Somerset wide, unless adequately justified otherwise in relation to the circumstances of the proposal. Where appropriate, the Exception Test can be applied if this is consistent with wider sustainability objectives;
- d. Development should reduce and manage the impact of flood risk by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems, and through appropriate layout, design, and choice of materials;
- e. Climate change should be considered in the design of new development, incorporating measures such as solar orientation, maximising natural shade and cooling, water efficiency and flood resilience;
- f. Susceptibility to climate change should be taken into account on all proposals to develop sites with biodiversity interest.

Design / General Development

- 14.24 Paragraphs 124 to 132 of the NPPF²⁵¹ set a clear national policy framework for promoting good design as a key element to achieving sustainable development.
- 14.25 It is self-evident that all development in all locations should be designed to the highest standard. This is essential if we are to create functional, attractive places that people want to live in, work in and visit. Well-designed buildings and places can contribute to the quality of life, increase economic vitality, achieve high environmental standards, reduce emissions and deliver a high quality public realm. This principle is carried throughout the Local Plan, which sets the objective to develop new homes, infrastructure and all other land uses to the highest possible design standards.
- 14.26 Policy EQ2 aims to ensure that development contributes to social, economic and environmental sustainability and makes a positive difference to people's lives to help to provide homes, jobs, and better opportunities for everyone. At the same time, it aims to protect and enhance the natural environment, and conserve the countryside and open spaces that are important to everyone.
- 14.27 All development will be expected to achieve high quality architectural and urban design standards, creating places that are attractive, durable and function well. All developments will be expected to achieve high environmental standards and levels of sustainability. All buildings should be designed to be fit for purpose, and adaptable in their use to suit changing occupier needs over time.
- 14.28 Development proposals also need to demonstrate a commitment to designing out crime through the creation of safe environments (both private and public) that benefit from natural surveillance, well overlooked streets and open spaces, appropriate lighting and other security measures.
- 14.29 South Somerset has published a range of Development Management advice guides to give guidance on how design should complement local architectural traditions and how sustainable construction techniques can be incorporated within the context of the existing built heritage. ([South Somerset District Council - Publications and Advice Notes](#)) These and others produced during the Plan period should be taken into account when considering development proposals. The Council also apply specific guidance from Government and Government sponsored organisations. Neighbourhood Plans may provide a more detailed local context for the evaluation and consideration of development proposals and should be taken into account where they have been produced. The Development Management advice will be reviewed and revised during the lifetime of the Development Plan and the most up to date material should be referred to.
- 14.30 To comply with climate change objectives the design of new development will change significantly over the coming years. Sustainable construction principles will affect layout, orientation of buildings, materials, design for minimum waste

²⁵¹ NPPF July 2018

and conservation of water resources as well as fundamental appearance. It will be a challenge for the development industry and the local planning authority to both respect local context and distinctiveness and embrace new design principles. The Council will look to radical design solutions, where appropriate, to compliment and evolve local distinctiveness and recognise that respect for local context does not preclude contrasting modern design that can work with local context to provide a desirable and high quality living environment which can present the evolving historical and architectural story.

- 14.31 All development should ensure the most efficient use of land through the size and arrangement of plots, further determining the position, orientation, proportion, scale, height, massing and density of buildings as well as the treatment of the spaces around and between the buildings themselves. Consideration of the relationship to adjoining buildings and landscape features will be encouraged. Density should be justified as part of the overall design concept of development proposals and will also include appropriate consideration of private amenity spaces. Particular regard should be had for levels of housing demand and need and availability of sites, infrastructure and service availability, efficient use of land, accessibility, local area characteristics and other detailed design considerations (as indicated above) in the determination of the appropriate density on a particular site. Where appropriate proposals should include design codes and/or master plans.

POLICY EQ2 – GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

- i. Development will be designed to achieve a high quality, which promotes South Somerset's local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the District.
- ii. Development proposals, extensions and alterations to existing buildings, structures and places will be considered against:
 - a. Sustainable construction principles;
 - b. Creation of quality places;
 - c. Conserving and enhancing the landscape character of the area;
 - d. Reinforcing local distinctiveness and respect for local context;
 - e. Creating safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety;
 - f. Having regard to South Somerset District Council's published Development Management advice and guidance; and
 - g. Making efficient use of land whilst having regard to:
 - d. Housing demand and need;
 - e. Infrastructure and service availability;
 - f. Accessibility;
 - g. Local area character; and
 - h. Site specific considerations
- iii. Innovative designs delivering low energy usage and/or wastage will be encouraged. Development proposals should protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and new dwellings should provide acceptable residential amenity space in accordance with Policy HW 1.

Historic Environment

- 14.32 The National Planning Policy Framework²⁵² sets out the Government's objective for the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by conserving and enhancing the historic environment and its assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.
- 14.33 The historic environment is a valuable part of South Somerset's cultural heritage and contributes significantly to the local economy and identity of the District, adding to the quality of life and well-being of residents and visitors. Whether in the form of individual buildings, archaeological sites, historic market towns or landscapes, the conservation of this heritage and sustaining it for the benefit of future generations is an important aspect of the role the Council plays on behalf of the community and, as the local planning authority, fulfilling the Government's core planning principles.

²⁵² NPPF July 2018

- 14.34 The richness of South Somerset's historic environment is indicated by its high number of designated assets including 4,600 Listed Building list entries, over 80 Conservation Areas, 14 Historic Parks, a battlefield site of national importance and a high number of scheduled monuments and other archaeological sites.
- 14.35 The District Council is committed to protecting and where appropriate enhancing this irreplaceable heritage. All designated assets including listed buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and archaeological sites together with other heritage assets that contribute positively to the significance of the historic environment will be protected from demolition or inappropriate development that affects the asset or its setting. The Council will seek to work with owners and developers to ensure historic assets are properly managed and cared for and remain in a viable use.
- 14.36 The Council has produced a draft Historic Environment Strategy²⁵³ and all new development should have regard to it. The document provides advice on the General Principles to Managing, Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, the management of Designated Assets; and on for example, Archaeological Sites and other Historic Features of Local or Cultural Interest.

POLICY EQ3 – HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- i. Heritage assets will be conserved and where appropriate enhanced for their historic significance and important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place. Their potential to contribute towards the economy, tourism, education and local identity will be exploited.
- ii. All new development proposals relating to the historic environment will be expected to:
 - a. Safeguard or where appropriate enhance the significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness of heritage assets;
 - b. Make a positive contribution to its character through high standards of design which reflect and complement it and through the use of appropriate materials and techniques;
 - c. Ensure alterations, including those for energy efficiency and renewable energy, are balanced alongside the need to retain the integrity of the historic environment and to respect the character and performance of buildings, adopting principles of minimum intervention and reversibility.
- iii. Any assessment of impact on heritage assets and their settings should be proportionate to an asset's importance and potential impact of the proposal on its significance.

²⁵³ South Somerset Historic Environment Strategy 2016;
https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/855771/h_e_s_draft_issue_for_consultation_october_2016.pdf

Landscape

- 14.37 The NPPF sets out the Government's objectives for the planning system to contribute to sustainable development through the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and its economic value. Particular weight is placed upon conservation of protected and designated landscapes.
- 14.38 The variety of South Somerset's landscapes and the contribution they make to local distinctiveness and sense of place is valued by the Council and is described in the assessment of the District's landscape character, *The Landscape of South Somerset*, 1993. This identifies seven specific landscape character areas and defines the distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that make each landscape and settlement within the district different. More recent *Peripheral Landscape Studies* also explain the main landscape sensitivities around the main urban centres in the District²⁵⁴.
- 14.39 In describing local landscape types and their capacity for change, landscape characterisation is particularly valuable as a tool to both inform and shape development in a manner that actively responds to its wider setting.

POLICY EQ4 – LANDSCAPE

Proposals for development shall take into account the local distinctiveness and the main characteristics of each landscape character area. Development will be permitted provided that;

- a. within AONBs, it favours the conservation of natural beauty;
- b. it conserves and, where possible enhances the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area, including its historical and cultural character; the distinctive setting of and relationship between, settlements and buildings, and the landscape (including important views) and;
- c. there is no significant adverse impact on local landscape character; scenic quality; and distinctive landscape features.
- d. In particular, the site arrangement, and form and scale of development proposals, along with any necessary landscape mitigation, shall have proper regard to their landscape context. Development proposals should avoid built forms whose profiles would be out of keeping when viewed from sensitive public vantage points.
- e. Development must not risk the integrity of internationally, nationally or locally designated landscape sites.

²⁵⁴ [South Somerset District Council - Peripheral Landscape Studies](#)

Biodiversity and New Development

- 14.40 National policy²⁵⁵ promotes sustainable development whilst conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Plan policies should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology by sustaining and where possible improving the quality and extent of natural habitat and the populations of naturally occurring species which they support. This should be based on up to date information²⁵⁶ of resources in the area and should promote opportunities within the design of the proposal for the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity and geological interests.
- 14.41 The District Council recognises the value of our natural assets and has been working with Somerset County Council, the District/Borough Councils, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Natural England, RSPB and other conservation agencies as part of the Somerset Biodiversity Partnership to identify species²⁵⁷ and habitats that are important in Somerset and to draw up plans to assist in their conservation.
- 14.42 'Wild Somerset' is the Strategy that covers the whole area of Somerset and describes how the partnership will work together and involve local communities and other agencies in activities to protect and enhance wildlife. In addition to the habitats and species covered in the Countywide Wild Somerset Strategy. All proposals should consider protection and enhancement of biodiversity from the outset and have regard to Local and Regional Biodiversity Strategies, taking into consideration the findings as identified in 'The Distribution of European Protected Species in South Somerset' and 'European Protected Species in South Somerset'.²⁵⁸ Priority Species are defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act and in Somerset Priority Species List, and are to be protected from the adverse implications of new development. The Brackets Coppice Special Conservation Area near Crewkerne merits particular consideration of its resident bat population and their foraging area in consideration of local biodiversity in that area. The implications for bats of lighting associated with development will need to be borne in mind when determining planning applications.
- 14.43 There are significant consequences for the long-term protection and adaptability of biodiversity and the ability of wildlife and habitats to respond to climate change. There is a need to expand and re-connect the existing areas and restore habitats where they have been destroyed. Development proposals should be accompanied by sufficient information to assess the effects of development on protected sites, species, biodiversity or geology, together with any proposed

²⁵⁵ NPPF July 2018

²⁵⁶ The latest Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites (LGS) will be shown on the Policies Maps; with the exception of the LGSs at 'Yeovil Old Town Walls', 'Ilminster Old Town Walls' and 'Corton Ridge and Beacon' where there is a lack of specific information on their extent – further detail on these sites is available from the Somerset Environment Records Centre.

²⁵⁷ Somerset Priority Species List

²⁵⁸ Produced by Somerset County Council, 2009

prevention, mitigation or compensation measures. They will need to demonstrate that they will not adversely impact nationally and internationally designated sites.

POLICY EQ5 – BIODIVERSITY

- i. All proposals for development, including those which would affect sites of regional and local biodiversity, nationally and internationally protected sites and sites of geological interest, will:
 - a. Protect the biodiversity value of land and buildings and minimise fragmentation of habitats and promote coherent ecological networks;
 - b. Maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats;
 - c. Incorporate beneficial biodiversity conservation features where appropriate;
 - d. Protect and assist recovery of identified priority species; and
 - e. Ensure that Habitat Features, Priority Habitats and Geological Features that are used by bats and other wildlife are protected and that the design including proposals for lighting does not cause severance or is a barrier to movement.
- ii. Where there is a reasonable likelihood of the presence of protected and priority species development design should be informed by, and applications should be accompanied by, a survey and impact assessment assessing their presence. If present, a sequential approach to the design of the proposal should be taken that aims first to avoid harm, then to lessen the impact, and lastly makes compensatory provision for their needs.
- iii. Development will not be allowed to proceed unless it can be demonstrated that it will not result in any adverse impact on the integrity of national and international wildlife and landscape designations, including features outside the site boundaries that ecologically support the conservation of the designated site.
- iv. Development must not risk the integrity of internationally, nationally or locally designated wildlife sites.

Woodlands and Forest

- 14.44 South Somerset has only 5% coverage of woodland, which is significantly below the County average of 9%. This is a reflection of the rolling lowland character of the district, where good soils have led to the land being cleared for agriculture over past centuries. There are a few exceptions to this such as the eastern scarp boundary, which is well wooded, the hills east of Bruton, south of Crewkerne and the edge of the Blackdown Hills around Chard. Over the remainder hedgerow trees, small copses and locally significant old orchards, often on the edge of villages, dominate the landscape. Significant linear woodlands such as those along the Fivehead and Somerton ridges also define the Western edge of the District. These both have a high proportion of Ancient Woodland²⁵⁹. Ancient Woodland and ancient and veteran trees outside of woodland require particular protection. Traditional old orchards and veteran trees are important historical features of the region, providing good habitats for wildlife.
- 14.45 The UK Forestry Standard²⁶⁰ expresses Government policy on the roles and maintenance of woodland and forest, setting out what is needed to help secure the future of these assets.
- 14.46 Areas of woodland should be expanded where appropriate to support other habitats, act as carbon sinks, enhance landscape character and as a key part of providing green infrastructure in and around new development. Any unavoidable loss of woodland should be replaced via agreements with developers and other mechanisms. The removal and management of trees and woodland may be necessary where this is needed to meet conservation objectives for open habitats, such as heathland and grassland.
- 14.47 Sustainable tourism development opportunities presented by woodlands and forests should be promoted, particularly in rural areas. The wider economic use of woodlands and forests should also be promoted, for example with regards to wood fuel. The procurement of locally grown timber products to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)²⁶¹ should be supported, particularly in relation to development, in order to achieve improved sustainability of construction and in support of local supply chains.
- 14.48 In line with the NPPF²⁶² development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons.

²⁵⁹ Ancient woodland is defined as land continually wooded since at least AD1600, Natural England and Woodland Trust

²⁶⁰ [The UK Forestry Standard - GOV.UK](#)

²⁶¹ The UK Woodland Assurance Standard was developed by a group of forestry and environmental organisations to provide a standard for certification relevant to UK woodlands and which satisfies the standards required by both the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Pan European Forest Certification (PEFC)

²⁶² NPPF, July 2018. Paragraph 175 and footnote 58.

POLICY EQ7 – WOODLAND AND FORESTS

- i. South Somerset District Council will support the implementation of the UK Forestry Standard, ensuring the environmental, social and economic value and character of the District's trees, woods and forests are protected and enhanced in a sustainable way. Woodland areas, including ancient and semi-natural woodland should be maintained at least at 2005 levels and expanded where possible to provide a buffer to core areas of woodland.
- ii. The loss of ancient woodland as well as ancient or veteran trees should be protected against wherever possible. Where secondary woodland is unavoidably lost through development it should be replaced with appropriate new woodland on at least the same scale.

Pollution Control

- 14.49 Paragraphs 178 - 183 of the NPPF²⁶³ set out the need for Local Authorities to consider the impact of new development on ground conditions, noise, air and light pollution. This aims to ensure that new developments do not harm existing residents, future residents or the natural environment. This includes minimising air, noise, light, water quality or odour pollution, that would be harmful to other land uses, human health, tranquility or the natural and built environment. The NPPF states that plan policy aims to avoid and mitigate the impacts of potential pollution associated with development.
- 14.50 Potentially noisy developments will be expected to be accompanied by an appropriate noise assessment. Developers will be required to demonstrate the potential impact of proposals on the environment and on residential amenity and the ability to mitigate to an acceptable level.²⁶⁴
- 14.51 Noise Exposure Category maps exist for three airfields in the district, RNAS Yeovilton in Ilchester, RNAS Merryfield in Ilton and Westlands airfield in Yeovil (see Appendix Four). These have been produced by predicting the likely noise exposure from the expected number of aircraft at each airfield. The contours produced are designed to act a guide to where new development is likely to be adversely affected by aircraft noise, and where development is likely to be unsuitable or would need more robust noise insulation – see Noise Exposure Category Guidelines (Appendix Four). However as with any scientific assessment, there is a margin of error associated with the prediction, this is due to uncertainties surrounding the number and path of aircraft movements, the type of aircraft involved and local metrological conditions. The Government recognises that noise contours are only one form of definition and measurement

²⁶³ NPPF July 2018

²⁶⁴ Noise Policy Statement for England 2010 (NPSE)

of noise, and other measures, could also be used to inform Development Management decisions where concerns are raised²⁶⁵.

- 14.52 Light pollution refers to the effect of excessive or intrusive lighting arising from poor or insensitive design. The Council will seek to reduce light pollution by encouraging the installation of appropriate lighting and only permitting lighting proposals which would not adversely affect amenity or public safety. Lights should be appropriately shielded, directed to the ground and sited to minimise any impact on adjoining areas, and of a height and illumination level of the minimum required to serve their purpose.
- 14.53 Air quality is generally good in South Somerset, with low levels of sulphur, oxides of nitrogen and particulates in comparison to the rest of England, although one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared in Yeovil, where national air quality objectives are not likely to be achieved; and an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) is in place²⁶⁶. It is shown on the Proposals Map (adopted Local Plan - Yeovil Inset). This AQMA is within the urban area where air pollution results mainly from traffic. Air quality should be considered when assessing development proposals, particularly in or near the AQMA and where significant doubt arises as to the air quality impact then a cautious approach should be applied.
- 14.54 In some circumstances the development of a site may be unacceptable due to land contamination or other pollution. The wrong development in a polluted area may also introduce a 'sensitive receptor' (such as new homes next to a noisy or smelly site), causing amenity issues, and potentially impacting negatively on neighbouring, polluting uses that were so located to avoid such conflict. Access requirements for operational vehicles and maintenance activities associated with polluted areas should be considered. The District Council's Environmental protection officers have produced a guide to planning and contaminated land which gives general advice.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Aviation Policy Framework (March 2013)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/153776/aviation-policy-framework.pdf

²⁶⁶ https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/759286/asr_2017.pdf

²⁶⁷ https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/46047/cl_guide_for_dev_2008.pdf

POLICY EQ8 – POLLUTION CONTROL

- i. Development that, on its own or cumulatively, would result in air, light, noise, water quality or other environmental pollution including traffic emissions or harm to amenity, health or safety will only be permitted if the potential adverse effects would be mitigated to an acceptable level by other environmental controls, or by measures included in the proposals. This may be achieved by the imposition of planning conditions or through a planning obligation.
- ii. New development should not exacerbate air quality problems in existing and potential AQMA's and development will need to support the objectives of the AQAP. This should include consideration of the potential impacts of new developments and increased traffic levels on internationally designated nature conservation sites, and adopt mitigation measures to address these impacts.
- iii. The Airfield Noise Contour Maps and Guidance for noise sensitive uses set out in Appendix Four must be taken into account in the consideration of new development where relevant.
- iv. Development proposals on, or near sites which are known, or are suspected to be, potentially contaminated, or proposals for sensitive land uses, will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they will not expose people, the natural environment, property, water bodies, or other receptors to levels of potential contamination which give rise to unacceptable risks or harm to health or other adverse impacts. Applicants will be required to submit details of:
 - a. the extent, scale and nature of the potential contamination;
 - b. an assessment of potential risks upon human health, property, nature conservation, water quality or other receptors; and
 - c. any preventative, mitigation or remedial measures and supporting assessments.
- v. Development proposals will not be supported where they would spread existing contamination, or cause contamination of land.

Equine Development

14.55 By its nature equestrian development requires a countryside location but the cumulative impact of development can have an adverse impact on the rural character of the area. New buildings can adversely affect landscape character and natural beauty where they detract from existing characteristics e.g. due to scale or materials or design. Therefore it is important to consider the current character of the countryside and how equine development can ultimately impact upon it.

5.45 Consideration for such proposals should have regard to such aspects as:

- Whether the site is located within or adjacent to an existing settlement;
- It should avoid exposed skyline locations;
- It should avoid the loss of existing vegetation;
- The existing landform and vegetation should be utilised to integrate development with the surrounding landscape;
- Vernacular design and building hierarchy must be respected;
- Materials that blend with the surrounding landscape should be considered;
- Bright finishes and unsuitable materials should be avoided;
- New native planting can help to integrate buildings with their surroundings;
- The proposals should be close to the bridleway network; and
- Conflict could arise between road users due to horse transportation, deliveries and horses using narrow lanes.

POLICY EQ9 – EQUINE DEVELOPMENT

- i. Horse related facilities and equestrian enterprises in the countryside will be permitted provided:
 - a. New stables/field shelters closely relate to existing settlements or groups of buildings and should not interfere with the amenities of the adjoining residents;
 - b. Their design, scale, siting and materials respect the landscape character of the locality;
 - c. Development will not be allowed to proceed unless it can be demonstrated that it will not result in any adverse impact to the integrity of national and international wildlife and landscape designations, including features outside the sites boundaries that ecologically support the conservation objectives of designated sites;
 - d. Any proposal for equestrian development including apparatus, jumps, menages, schooling areas and field sub division should respect or enhance the characteristic pattern and features of the surrounding landscape.
- ii. Proposals for larger scale private or commercial enterprises should not be unacceptably harmful to highway safety. This should be demonstrated by means of a traffic impact assessment.

15. Implementation and Monitoring

Monitoring Framework

- 15.1 The Local Plan Review looks forward to 2036, monitoring how well the Local Plan Review is performing and being implemented is therefore an essential element of the planning system. As well as other tools such as the housing trajectory and annual 5 year housing land supply report, the Council has also established a set of monitoring indicators which are set out in the Figure 15.1 below.
- 15.2 The monitoring focuses on indicators from a range of different sources that help the Council to identify trends and provide a means of assessing how well the policies set out in the Local Plan are performing. The indicators are therefore structured around specific policies. Where appropriate, targets have been indicated to make it easier for a judgement to be made on how well the policy is being implemented. Given some cross-cutting issues in the Local Plan are addressed through a number of policies, in many instances the indicator specified will be relevant to a number of policies.
- 15.3 The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) will review and report on the indicators each year. Where appropriate (e.g. if better data becomes available in the future) the AMR may include additional or revised indicators. If any changes are made these will be explained in the AMR.
- 15.4 Over the plan period the circumstances in which the plan has been produced may change. For example, this may include a change in economic climate or expected future demographic changes. Many of these factors may be outside of the Council's control. With this in mind the Local Plan has sought to be flexible in its approach. Nevertheless, it may be necessary to undertake a review of all or part of the Plan in order for it to remain up-to-date, for example if it becomes inconsistent with national policy or is not delivering in key policy areas. In any case current the NPPF expects that Local Plans will need to be reviewed in whole or in part at least every five years to ensure they remain up-to-date and effective.

Figure 15.1 – Monitoring Indicators

Indicator – what is monitored	What is the target?	Relevant Local Plan Review Policy/Policies
Net gain in the number of new homes completed annually	726 per year	SS1 and SS2
Net gain in the number of new homes completed over the plan period (and where they are located).	14,510 between 2016 and 2036	SS1 and SS2
Five-year housing land supply within South Somerset	This is measured against the target of 3,630 (5 x 726) plus the appropriate buffer,	SS1 and SS2

	plus any shortfall from earlier in the plan period	
The number and location of new homes granted planning permission but not completed (commitments) across the District.	These will contribute towards the five-year housing land supply.	
The number of new homes allocated in Neighbourhood Plans	No target but will contribute towards the overall housing supply in South Somerset.	
Number of affordable housing units by size and tenure secured on site through open market housing development	28% of the total number of dwellings on qualifying sites. 80% Social/affordable rented and 20% affordable home ownership products	HG2
Number of affordable homes completed on Rural Exception sites	No target. Important context for understanding where affordable housing is being delivered.	HG2
Number of market homes granted planning permission by number of bedrooms and type	As set out in Figure 9.2.	HG4
Net gain in the amount of new employment land delivered	91 ha	SS3
Amount of floorspace and land granted planning permission for non-employment uses on existing employment sites (loss of employment land).	No target. Information to understand commercial trends, needs for land and premises and inform other strategies associated to business needs.	EP3
Number of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites granted planning permission by 2032	24 Residential pitches 10 Transit pitches 6 Travelling Showpeople plots	HG6
Town centre uses within the defined town centres and the number of vacant units.	No target but provides an indication of the health of the town centres in the District.	TC5, TC6
Delivery of Yeovil Refresh regeneration sites	No target. Provides an indication of whether Council objectives are being achieved.	TC1
Delivery of Chard Town Centre – Boden Mill site	No target. Provides an indication of whether Council objectives are being achieved.	TC3
Amount of new retail floorspace delivered in out of centre locations.	No target. Informs town centre regeneration strategies.	TC5, TC6
Town Centre Vacancy Rates	Target – reduction in previous year.	TC7

Number of dwellings approved with one or more parking spaces that provide at least one charging point	All new dwellings.	TA1
Number and site area of equipped play areas and youth facilities lost to other development.	0	HW4

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16. Appendices

Appendix One – Strategic Policies

The table below lists the reference numbers and titles of the Local Plan Review policies in Plan order. The comparative adopted Local Plan references are included for information.

Neighbourhood Plans must be in general accordance with those Policies that are identified as being strategic ('Yes' in the final column.)

Adopted Local Plan 2015 Policy Reference	Local Plan Review Policy Reference	Subject	Strategic Policy Yes / No
SD1	SD1	Delivering Sustainable Development	Yes
SS1	SS1	Settlement Strategy	Yes
SS4 & SS5	SS2	Delivering New Housing Growth	Yes
SS3	SS3	Delivering New Employment Growth	Yes
SS2	SS4	Development in Rural Settlements	Yes
SS6	SS5	Infrastructure Delivery	Yes
YV2	YV1	Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions	Yes
N/A	YV2	Yeovil Housing Growth North West of Brimsmore Key Site	Yes
N/A	YV3	Yeovil Housing Growth South of Keyford	Yes
N/A	YV4	Yeovil Housing Growth at Brimsmore Gardens	Yes
N/A	YV5	Yeovil Housing Growth at Mudford Road	No
N/A	YV6	Yeovil Housing Growth at the Former Bus Depot, Reckleford	Yes

Adopted Local Plan 2015 Policy Reference	Local Plan Review Policy Reference	Subject	Strategic Policy Yes / No
N/A	YV7	Yeovil Housing Growth North of Junction of St Michaels Road and Victoria Road	Yes
N/A	YV8	Yeovil Housing Growth at Eastville Road	Yes
YV4	YV9	Yeovil Flight Safety Zone and Noise Contours	Yes
PMT1 and PMT2	CH1	Chard Eastern Development Area	Yes
N/A	CH2	Housing Growth at Land East of Crimchard	Yes
N/A	CH3	Housing Growth at Land west of Crimchard	No
N/A	CR1	Housing Growth East of Lang Road	Yes
N/A	CR2	Housing Growth at Land Rear of Penlain	Yes
N/A	CR3	Housing Growth at Land West of A356 (Station Road)	Yes
N/A	CR4	Housing Growth at Land East of Charlton Close	No
PMT3	IM1	Housing Growth South west of Canal Way	Yes
N/A	IM2	Housing Growth at Shudrick Lane	Yes
N/A	IM3	Housing Growth at Station Road	Yes
N/A	IM4	Employment Development at Station Road, Ilminster	Yes
N/A	WN1	Housing Growth west of Wincanton Business Park and New Barns Farm	Yes
N/A	WN2	Housing Growth at The Tythings	Yes

Adopted Local Plan 2015 Policy Reference	Local Plan Review Policy Reference	Subject	Strategic Policy Yes / No
<i>PMT3</i>	WN3	Employment Development West of Wincanton Business Park	Yes
<i>LMT1</i>	AC1	Housing Growth North West of Ansford	Yes
<i>LMT1</i>	AC2	Housing Growth East of Station Road, Castle Cary	Yes
<i>LMT1</i>	AC3	Education Development at Torbay Road, Castle Cary	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	AC4	Car Parking at the Railway Station, Ansford	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	LH1	Housing Growth at Land Between Somerton Road and Field Road (The Trial Ground)	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	LH2	Housing Growth at Land Between Somerton Road and Wearne Lane	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	SM1	Housing Provision on Land west of St Cleer's Orchard	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	SM2	Employment Growth at Bancombe Road	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	BT1	Housing Provision at Brewham Road	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	BT2	Housing Provision at Frome Road	No
<i>N/A</i>	IL1	Housing Provision North of Troubridge Park	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	MB1	Housing Provision North of Coat Road	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	MB2	Housing Provision South of Coat Road	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	MB3	Housing Provision South of Hills Lane	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	MP1	Housing Provision North of Wheathill Lane	Yes

Adopted Local Plan 2015 Policy Reference	Local Plan Review Policy Reference	Subject	Strategic Policy Yes / No
N/A	MP2	Housing Provision South of Court Lane	Yes
N/A	SP1	Housing Provision South of Hospital Lane	Yes
N/A	SP2	Housing Provision at Rear of Littlehays	Yes
HG1	HG1	Strategic Housing Site (Crewkerne Key Site saved allocation)	Yes
HG3 & HG4	HG2	Provision of Affordable Housing	Yes
N/A	HG3	Affordable Housing - Internal Space Standards	Yes
HG5	HG4	Achieving a Mix of Market Housing	Yes
HG6	HG5	Care Homes and Specialist Accommodation	Yes
HG7	HG6	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	Yes
HG8	HG7	Replacement Dwellings in the countryside	No
HG9	HG8	Housing for Agricultural and Related Workers	No
HG10	HG9	Removal of Agricultural and other Occupancy Conditions	No
EP1	EP1	Strategic Employment Sites	Yes
EP3	EP2	Protecting Employment Sites and Premises	Yes
N/A	EP3	Enhancement of Existing Employment Areas	No
N/A	EP4	Delivering Employment Land in Villages, Rural Settlements and the Countryside	Yes
EP4	EP5	Expansion of Existing Business in the Countryside	Yes
EP5	EP6	Farm Diversification	Yes
EP6	EP7	Henstridge Airfield	No

Adopted Local Plan 2015 Policy Reference	Local Plan Review Policy Reference	Subject	Strategic Policy Yes / No
EP8	EP8	New and Enhanced Tourism Facilities	Yes
N/A	TC1	Yeovil Town Centre Regeneration Sites	Yes
N/A	TC2	Development in the Designated Yeovil Town Centre	Yes
N/A	TC3	Chard Town Centre Regeneration Site	Yes
EP9	TC4	Retail Hierarchy	Yes
EP11	TC5	Location of Main Town Centre Uses (The Sequential Approach)	Yes
EP12	TC6	Floorspace Thresholds for Impact Assessments	Yes
EP13	TC7	Protection of Retail Uses in Primary Shopping Areas	Yes
EP14	TC8	Neighbourhood Centres	Yes
EP15	TC9	Protection and Provision of Local Shops, Community Facilities and Services	Yes
TA1	TA1	Low Carbon Travel	Yes
TA2	TA2	Rail Facilities	Yes
TA4	TA3	Travel Plans	Yes
TA5	TA4	Transport Impact of New Development	Yes
TA6	TA5	Parking Standards	No
HW1	HW1	Provision of Open Space, Outdoor Playing Space, Sports, Cultural and Community Facilities in New Development	Yes
EQ5	HW2	Green Infrastructure	Yes

Adopted Local Plan 2015 Policy Reference	Local Plan Review Policy Reference	Subject	Strategic Policy Yes / No
<i>HW3</i>	HW3	Sports Zone	Yes
<i>HW3</i>	HW4	Protection of Play Spaces and Youth Provision	Yes
<i>EQ1</i>	EQ1	Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset	Yes
<i>EQ2</i>	EQ2	General Development	Yes
<i>EQ3</i>	EQ3	Historic Environment	Yes
<i>N/A</i>	EQ4	Landscape	Yes
<i>EQ4</i>	EQ5	Biodiversity	Yes
<i>EQ6</i>	EQ7	Woodland and Forests	Yes
<i>EQ7</i>	EQ8	Pollution Control	Yes
<i>EQ8</i>	EQ9	Equine Development	No

Appendix Two – Maps

SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT

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Appendix Three – Glossary

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in July 2018 contains a comprehensive glossary of national planning terms that should be read in conjunction with this glossary. The NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary can be viewed on the Government website at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/740506/National_Planning_Policy_Framework_print_version.pdf

Affordable Housing (as defined in the NPPF): housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- b) **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- c) **Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

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c) **Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Air Quality Management Area: An area designated by the Council that is not meeting national air quality objectives.

Ancient or veteran tree: A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

Ancient woodland: An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Authority Monitoring Report (AMR): Assesses whether policies and related targets or milestones have been or are being met (including progress against Local

Development Scheme), or if not, the reasons why, what impact the Policies are having on national, regional and local targets, and whether policies need adjusting or replacing.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): Under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Natural England may designate Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Their primary purpose is to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural landscape beauty, including the protection of fauna, flora and geological features.

Best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land: Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

Biodiversity: The variety of life on Earth.

Brownfield Land: See Previously Developed Land

Care Home: A residential setting where a number of older people live, usually in single rooms and have access to on-site care services. Since April 2002 all homes in England, Scotland and Wales are known as 'care homes', but are registered to provide different levels of care.

- A home registered simply as a care home providing personal care will provide personal; care only – help with washing, dressing and giving medication.
- A home registered as a care home providing nursing care will provide the same personal care but also have a qualified nurse on duty twenty-four hours a day to carry out nursing tasks. These homes are for people who are physically or mentally frail or for people who need regular attention from a nurse. Some homes, registered either for personal care or nursing care, can be registered for a special care need, for example dementia or terminal illness (HousingCare.org).

Code for Sustainable Homes: The Code for Sustainable Homes in Government Guidance provided a comprehensive measure of the sustainability of new homes, ensuring that sustainable homes deliver real improvements in key areas such as carbon dioxide emissions and water use. It is no longer in place.

Conservation Area: The statutory definition of a conservation area under the Planning, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 is “an area of special architectural interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”

Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC): Continuing Care Retirement Communities are part independent living, part assisted living and part skilled nursing home. CCRCs offer a tiered approach to the ageing process, accommodating residents' changing needs. Upon entering, healthy adults can reside independently in single-family homes, apartments or condominiums. When assistance with

everyday activities becomes necessary, they can move into assisted living or nursing care facilities.

Convenience Shopping: Convenience retailing is the provision of everyday essential items, including food, drink, newspapers/magazines and confectionery.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): A levy which allow the Council to raise money from owners or developers of land to help pay for infrastructure.

Comparison Shopping: Comparison retailing is the provision of items not obtained on a frequent basis. These include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.

Development Management (DM) Policies: Limited suite of positive, general policies that are set out in the Local Plan and set the criteria against which planning applications will be considered, in order to seek and shape developments in a locally distinctive way.

Development Plan: Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made.

Edge of centre: for retail purposes, a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

Employment Land Review (ELR): Report examining existing supply and future demand for employment land in the District.

Extra Care Housing: Extra Care Housing is housing designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site. People who live in Extra Care Housing have their own self-contained homes, their own front doors and a legal right to occupy the property. Extra Care Housing is also known as very sheltered housing, assisted living, or simply as “housing with care”.

Green Infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Gross Floor Area (GFA): The total of all enclosed spaces fulfilling the functional requirements of the building measured to the internal structural face of the enclosing walls.

Gross Value Added (GVA): Gross Value Added is a measure in economics of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.

Highways Agency (HA): An Executive Agency of the Department for Transport (DfT) responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport.

Housing Delivery Test: Measures net additional dwellings provided in a local authority area against the homes required, using national statistics and local authority data. The Secretary of State will publish the Housing Delivery Test results for each local authority in England every November.

Housing Market Area: The geographical area in which a substantial majority of the employed population both live and work, and where most of those changing home without changing employment choose to stay.

Housing Need: The number of households who lack their own housing or who live in unsuitable housing and cannot afford to meet their housing needs in the market.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP): Outlines the delivery and implementation of the Local Plan, with particular regard to the infrastructure necessary to deliver and service the development that is required in the plan period and what funding will be necessary to achieve that infrastructure.

- a) **Priority 1** – infrastructure that is fundamental to the delivery of development proposed in the Local Plan. It is likely that development will not be able to commence without the infrastructure. This could include some flood risk mitigation, transport or utility infrastructure.
- b) **Priority 2** – infrastructure that is required to support new development proposed in the Local Plan, but the precise timing and phasing is less critical and development can commence ahead of its provision. This could include schools, health care facilities, and sports/play facilities with a specific project and funding commitment.
- c) **Priority 3** – infrastructure that is needed in order to build sustainable communities. Although the timing is not as critical as Priority 1 or 2 infrastructure, these items are still desired in order to create high quality places in which to live and work. This could include open space, libraries and other community facilities.

Listed Building: A building which has been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest requiring a separate application process for development and more stringent consideration.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP): A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

Local Nature Partnership: A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

Local Plan: A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the Council in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

Local planning authority: The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. In this instance South Somerset District Council.

Low Carbon Economy: Although there is no consistent working definition of a low carbon economy it is best understood as a range of activities which are materially supported by the need to reduce the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Local Development Scheme (LDS): A three year work programme showing what future planning documents will be produced and when.

Local Strategic Partnership: Non-statutory, non-executive body bringing together representatives of the public, private and voluntary sectors, which is responsible for preparing the Sustainable Community Strategy; known in our district as “South Somerset Together”. This group of organisations includes the District Council and Yeovil College (more information can be found on www.southsomersettogether.gov.uk).

Major development: For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Market Town: The settlements of Ansford/Castle Cary, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Langport/Huish Episcopi, Somerton and Wincanton that provide a broad range and mix of services and facilities and act as general service and employment hubs for the more rural population as well as their own populations. They have a level of growth appropriate to their size.

Migration: The movement of people between geographical areas primarily defined in this context as Local Authority Districts. The rate of migration is usually measured as an annual number of households living in the District at a point in time who are not resident in that District one year earlier.

Ministry of Homes Communities and Local Government: The Central Government department responsible for planning and local government

Modal Shift: Ways of enabling travel other than by private car.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): National document setting out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is a consideration in planning decisions.

National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG): Government planning guidance.

Neighbourhood Centres: Small parade of shops of purely neighbourhood significance generally located within large residential estates and designed to give access to day-to-day top-up items and services.

Minimum Annual Local Housing Need figure: This is the number of new homes that should be built in South Somerset every year based on the Government's standard method of calculation.

Office of National Statistics (ONS): Government Agency that produces independent information to improve our understanding of the UK's economy and society.

Open book: The sharing of verifiable information between the applicant and Local Planning Authority that might be potentially commercially sensitive for the purposes of establishing the degree of viability of the site in question under prevailing market conditions.

Open market housing: Homes available for sale on the open market without restriction.

Open space: Informal recreational open space, formal parks and gardens, country parks, natural open space and woodlands.

Outdoor Playing Space: Playing pitches, equipped play areas and youth facilities.

Out of centre: A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

Out of town: A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.

Planning condition: A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning obligation: A legal agreement entered into under section 106 (S.106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Playing field: The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Planning Inspector: Independent person appointed from a Central Government agency of Inspectors that deal with planning application appeals/inquiries and Examinations of Local Plans.

Previously Developed Land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Primary Shopping Area: Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage).

Primary and secondary frontages: Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.

Registered Providers: Previously known as Registered Social Landlords until 1st April 2010, providers of affordable housing including social and affordable rented housing and other home ownership products.

Rural Centres: The settlements of Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port and South Petherton that act as focal points in their areas for local employment, shopping, social and community activity, serving the day-to-day needs of their own population and their hinterlands. Provision of growth meeting local needs is appropriate.

Safeguarding Employment Land: Maintenance of existing supply and protection of overall availability and distribution of employment land is a goal. Employment land in this context is defined as uses within Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended.

Self-containment: A good indicator of the level of self-containment of a settlement is the number of people who live and work in that settlement. A high figure reflects a good level of self-containment.

Special Protection Area (SPA): Sites of international importance classified for rare and vulnerable birds and regularly occurring migratory bird species, in accordance with an EC Directive. The Somerset Levels and Moors SPA is the only one in South Somerset.

Superstore: Self-service store selling mainly food, or food and non-food goods, usually with more than 2,500m² trading floorspace, with supporting car parking.

Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA): Document showing land that has the potential for housing development. Key to demonstrating a 5 year supply of deliverable and 10 year supply of developable land for housing. Can be thought of as a “stock take” of land in order to help provide more certainty when planning for the future.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA): Document identifying the types of homes needed in the District.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): A statement setting out the ways in which the community will be involved/consulted during the production of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.

Strategic policies: Policies and site allocations which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of Section 19 (1B-E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Strategic policy-making authorities: The authorities responsible for producing strategic policies. This applies to South Somerset District Council.

Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA): SA is a tool to appraise the degree to which plans and Policies contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. SA incorporates SEA, which is required by an EU Directive where significant development is proposed. An SA/SEA must be undertaken for all DPDs and also SPDs where relevant. The SA Report is published for consultation alongside the Local Plan.

Sustainable Development: A common definition of sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs”. NPPF presents a precise working definition.

Sustainable Transport Measures: Sustainable Transport Measures refers to any means of transport with low impact on the environment, and includes walking and cycling, transit oriented development, green vehicles, car sharing and building or protecting urban transport systems that are fuel-efficient, space-saving and promote healthy lifestyles.

Town centre: Area defined on the local authority’s proposal maps, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in Local Plans, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

Travel Information Packs: Travel Information Packs can improve transport choice through raising awareness and encouraging travel to work and school by public transport, cycling and walking by including details of care share schemes and local bus information amongst other things.

Travel Plan: A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed.

Travel to Work Area (TTWA): Catchment area within which people travel to work in a particular place e.g. Yeovil.

Zero Carbon: A zero carbon development is one that achieves zero net carbon emissions from energy use on site, on an annual basis.

DRAFT

Appendix Four – Noise Exposure Maps

There are three noise exposure maps for South Somerset relating to the noise effects of the airbase at RNAS Yeovilton (Appendix 4a), the airbase at RNAS Merryfield (Appendix 4b), and Yeovil Westlands Airfield (Appendix 4c).

The noise exposure maps should be used in conjunction with the policies in the local plan, specifically those relating to the affected settlements and villages. The maps can be interpreted by using the accompanying noise guideline table, and will be used in decision-making on planning applications for noise-sensitive uses which are within the noise exposure category areas.

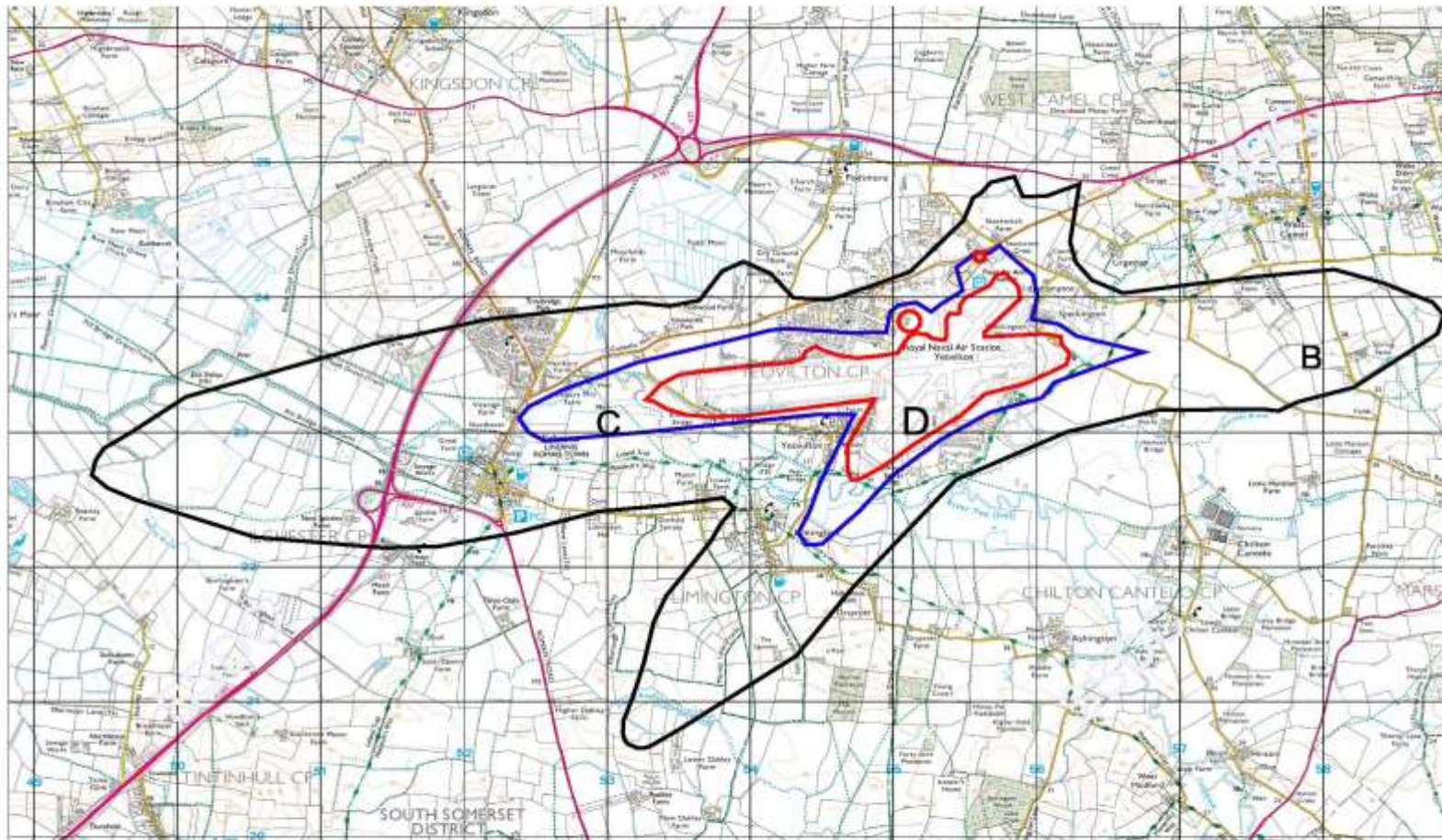
More detailed maps of each of the Noise Exposure areas can be found by using the following links:

Noise Exposure Maps	
Appendix 4A	Noise Exposure Categories for RNAS Yeovilton
Appendix 4B	Noise Exposure Categories for RNAS Merryfield
Appendix 4C	Noise Exposure Categories for Yeovil Westlands Airfield

Planning and Aircraft/Helicopter Noise Guidelines

Noise Exposure Category	A	B	C	D
dBA Leq (0700 - 2300)	Aircraft Noise: Below 57	Aircraft Noise: 57-66 (if helicopter noise: 57-63)	Aircraft Noise: 66-72 (if helicopter noise: 63-72)	Aircraft Noise: Over 72
New dwellings, conversion or intensification of housing use	No comment	Any development should be provided with suitable acoustic insulation.	Refuse new build. Allow extensions and conversions where this would not provide the potential for an increase in the number of households in occupation and where suitable acoustic insulation is provided.	Refuse new build. Allow extensions and conversions where this would not provide the potential for an increase in the number of households in occupation and where suitable acoustic insulation is provided.
Offices, schools, hospitals, clinics	No comment	Thermal quality glazing sound insulation.	Each case to be considered on its merits.	Each case to be considered on its merits.

Appendix 4A - Noise Exposure Categories for RNAS Yeovilton



Noise Exposure categories for RNAS Yeovilton - Appendix 4A
(July 2010)

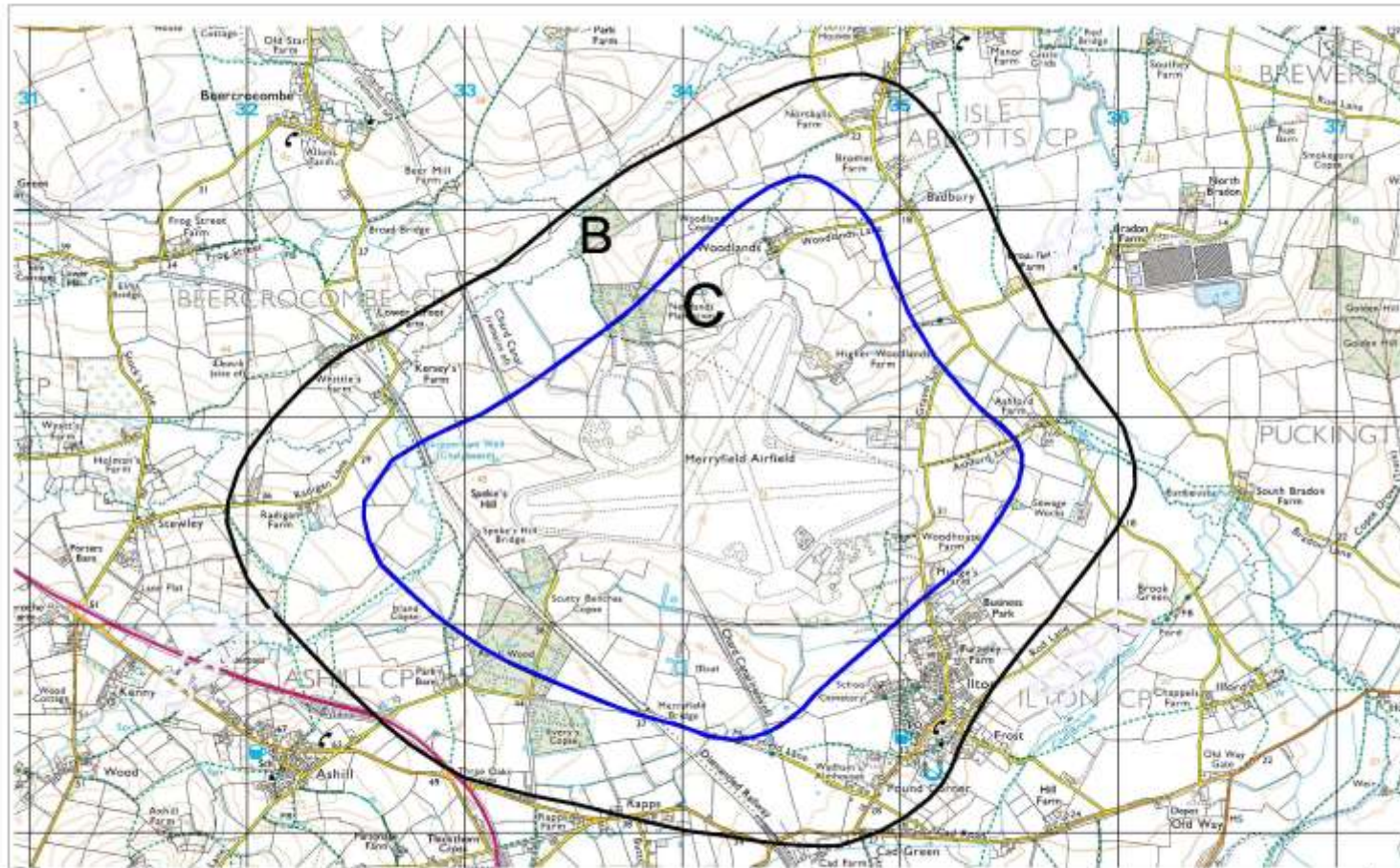
- 72 dB LAeq, 16h
- 66 dB LAeq, 16h
- 57 dB LAeq, 16h

1:25,000



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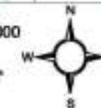
Appendix 4B - Noise Exposure Categories for RNAS Merryfield



Noise Exposure categories for RNAS Merryfield - Appendix 4B
(November 1996)

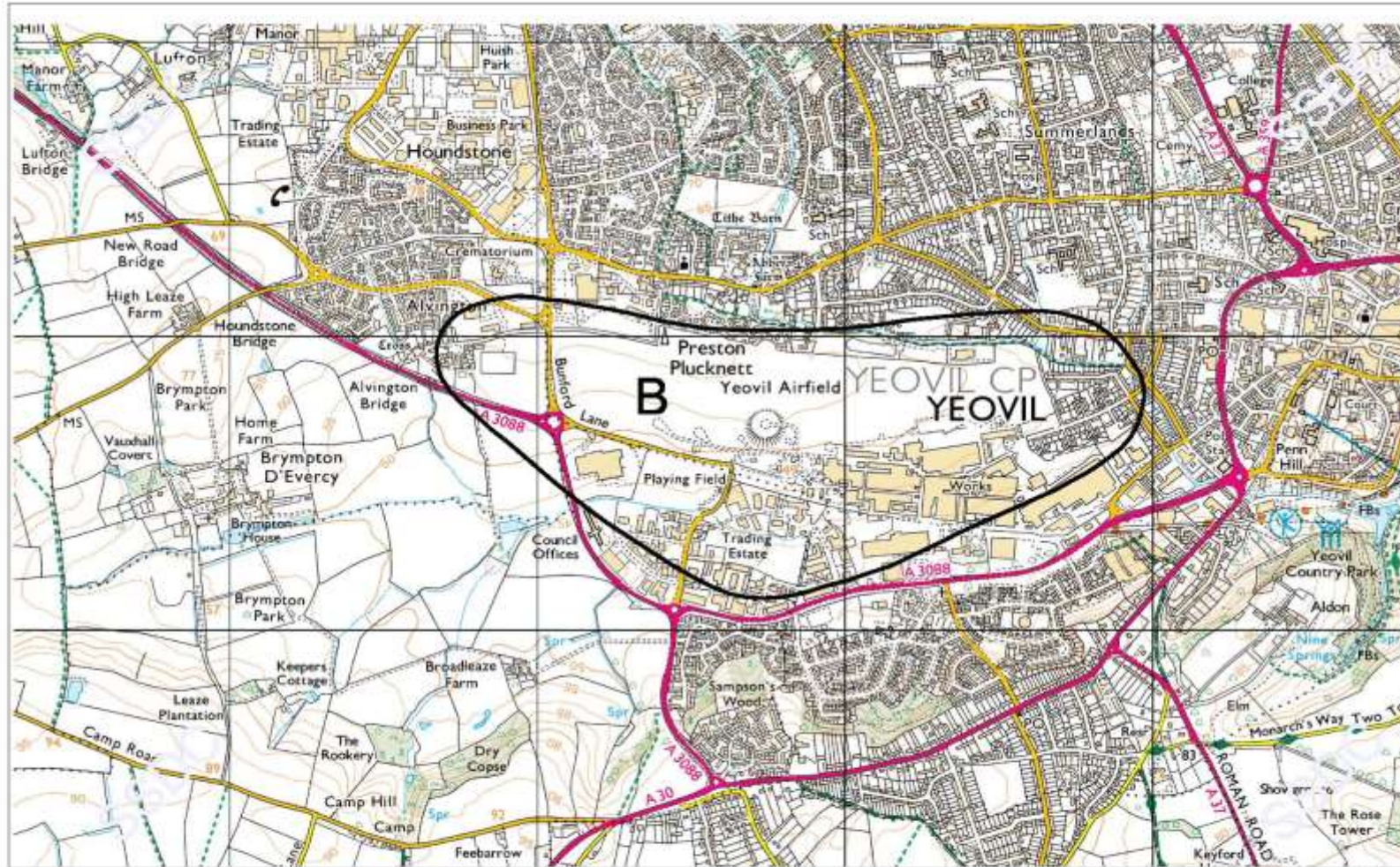
57 dB LAeq, 16h
66 dB LAeq, 16h

1:16,000



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Appendix 4C - Noise Exposure Categories for Yeovil Westlands Airfield



Noise Exposure categories for Westlands Airfield- Appendix 4C
(March 1996)

57 dB LAeq, 16h 1:8,000

