

SWT Executive

**Wednesday, 20th November, 2019,
6.15 pm**

**Somerset West
and Taunton**

**Council Chamber - West Somerset
House**

**Members: Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair), Benet Allen (Deputy Chair),
Chris Booth, Ross Henley, Marcus Kravis, Richard Lees,
Peter Pilkington, Mike Rigby and Francesca Smith**

Agenda

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee.

(Pages 7 - 12)

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The personal interests of Councillors and Clerks of Somerset County Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

4. Public Participation

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

5. Executive Forward Plan

(Pages 13 - 14)

To receive items and review the Forward Plan.

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|--|--------------------------|
| <p>6. Mid-year Budget Monitoring and In Year Budget Request</p> <p>Report Authors: Paul Fitzgerald (Strategic Finance Advisor and S151 Officer) and Emily Collacott (Finance Business Partner)</p> <p>This report provides an update on the projected outturn financial position of the Council for the financial year 2019/20 (as at 30 September 2019)</p> | <p>(Pages 15 - 28)</p> |
| <p>7. Statement of Community Involvement</p> <p>This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mike Rigby</p> <p>The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Somerset West and Taunton will involve our community and stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and review of local planning policy and the consideration of planning applications within the Local Planning Authority area</p> | <p>(Pages 29 - 48)</p> |
| <p>8. Local Plan Issues and Options Document</p> <p>This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mike Rigby</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the first public consultation stage (the Issues and Options Document) in the Local Plan making process</p> | <p>(Pages 49 - 94)</p> |
| <p>9. Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order - approval for consultation</p> <p>This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mike Rigby</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the public consultation of the Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order (LDO)</p> | <p>(Pages 95 - 198)</p> |
| <p>10. North Taunton Woolaway Project Phase A Update and Home Owner Acquisition budget</p> <p>This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Francesca Smith</p> <p>The regeneration of the North Taunton Woolaway Project is an essential part of the Council's commitment to offer a choice of good quality homes for our residents, whatever their age and income, in communities where support is available for those in need. The proposals identified in this Report will assist the progression of vacant possession of Phases B – E n a timely manner</p> | <p>(Pages 199 - 218)</p> |

11. Access to Information - Exclusion of Press and Public

During discussion of the following item(s) it may be necessary to pass the following resolution to exclude the press and public having reflected on Article 13 13.02(e) (a presumption in favour of openness) of the Constitution. This decision may be required because consideration of this matter in public may disclose information falling within one of the descriptions of exempt information in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Executive will need to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Recommend that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

12. Somerset Building Control Partnership Draft Variation Agreement

(Pages 219 - 226)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Marcus Kravis

The purpose of this report is to agree a variation to the Inter-Authority Agreement for the Building Control Services Partnership between Somerset West and Taunton Council, Mendip District Council and Sedgemoor District Council



**JAMES HASSETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions. There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions. Speaking under "Public Question Time" is limited to 3 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chair will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate. Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, if a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chair will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group. These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room. Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

The meeting room, including the Council Chamber at The Deane House are on the first floor and are fully accessible. Lift access to The John Meikle Room, is available from the main ground floor entrance at The Deane House. The Council Chamber at West Somerset House is on the ground floor and is fully accessible via a public entrance door. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available across both locations. An induction loop operates at both The Deane House and West Somerset House to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. For further information about the meeting, please contact the Governance and Democracy Team via email: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

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SWT Executive - 23 October 2019

Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)
 Councillors Benet Allen, Chris Booth, Ross Henley, Marcus Kravis, Peter Pilkington, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith and Alan Wedderkopp

Officers: James Barrah, Nick Bryant, Brendan Cleere, Paul Fitzgerald, Paul Harding, James Hassett, Gerry Mills, Sarah Povall, Marcus Prouse, Clare Rendell, Graeme Thompson and Fiona Webb

Also Present: Councillors Ian Aldridge, Hugh Davies, Dave Durdan, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Brenda Weston and Gwil Wren

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

48. **Apologies**

An apology was received from Councillor R Lees.

49. **Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive**

(Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 18 September 2019 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of the Executive held on 18 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

50. **Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

| Name | Minute No. | Description of Interest | Reason | Action Taken |
|-------------------|------------|--|----------|-----------------|
| Cllr C Booth | All Items | Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr H Davies | All Items | SCC | Personal | Spoke |
| Cllr J Lloyd | All Items | Wellington & Sampford Arundel | Personal | Spoke |
| Cllr D Mansell | All Items | Wiveliscombe | Personal | Spoke |
| Cllr P Pilkington | All Items | Timberscombe | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr M Rigby | All Items | SCC & Bishops Lydeard | Personal | Spoke and Voted |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Cllr F Smith | All Items | Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr F Smith-Roberts | All Items | Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr V Stock-Williams | All Items | Wellington | Personal | Spoke |
| Cllr R Tully | All Items | West Monkton | Personal | Spoke |
| Cllr A Wedderkopp | All Items | SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr B Weston | All Items | Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke |
| Cllr G Wren | All Items | Clerk to Milverton PC | Personal | Spoke |

51. **Public Participation**

No members of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

52. **Executive Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Executive Forward Plan, circulated with the agenda).

Councillors were reminded that if they had an item they wanted to add to the agenda, that they should send their requests to the Governance Team.

Resolved that the Executive Forward Plan be noted.

53. **Corporate Equalities Action Plan**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was raised on the induction sessions held for Councillors and that the Equality Workshop had not been made mandatory for attendance. *The Portfolio Holder for Community agreed and highlighted that the attendance had been poor for the induction session and welcomed another session being held. He was keen to set up a group to review and update the equality actions and wanted to get officers involved in the training sessions.*
- The Leader welcomed the comments made and advised that the Equality Action Plan was a 'living' document so would be continually updated. She agreed that training was important and should be made mandatory.
- Concern was raised on the generic use of the word disabled and that it could cover a number of disabilities. Councillors requested that there should be distinctions given between the different types of disabilities within the document. *The Strategy Specialist advised that the range of disabilities should be addressed as part of the Equality Impact Assessment.*
- Councillors queried whether an audit had been carried out on how the various Outside Bodies were funded by the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Community confirmed that a meeting had been set up to review the funding given to Outside Bodies.

- The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources highlighted the importance of unconscious bias and offered to hold a Member Briefing on the subject. *The Strategy Specialist advised that they had reviewed the e-learning packages that could support the work on a Member Briefing on unconscious bias.*
- Councillors agreed with the report recommendations and thanked officers for their work.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- a) Reviewed and approved the Plan, with the amendments suggested by the Audit, Governance & Standards Committee; and
- b) Adopted the equality objective referred to within para 4.10 of the report.

54. **Taunton Garden Town Charter and Checklist**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was raised on the principles that were included in the document and that they should sit within the boundaries of the Garden Town and that developments could overlap the boundaries.
- Councillors wanted reassurance that the document fed into the Local Plan and queried whether the neighbourhood plans were linked to the Local Plan or whether they were an interim measure. Concern was raised on the ability to enforce the document. *The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation agreed that the document was only as good as how it was implemented and enforced. The Head of Strategy advised that it was an interim measure until the district wide Design Guide was introduced.*
- The Leader supported the document and highlighted that it set out the vision of the Council and set the tone for developers so they knew where and how the Council wanted to deliver projects.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- a) Recommended that Full Council formally adopt the Taunton Garden Town Charter and Checklist as Council policy and technical guidance for development control purposes to help the Local Planning Authority assess the quality of proposed developments and to clearly set out the standard expected for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods in the Garden Town area; and
- b) Authorised the Head of Strategy, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to make any necessary editorial corrections and minor amendments to the document, and to agree the final publication style.

55. **Somerset Climate Emergency Framework and SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors supported the work that had been carried out and were pleased to see actions put in place that were being followed up with details.
- Councillors on the Shadow Executive supported the document and agreed that it was essential that the Council took action. They were pleased to see the projects and commitments within the report and that the Council was taking the issues seriously. They highlighted that there was still work to be done but it was a good starting point.
- The Leader thanked the Councillors for their support. The document was the golden thread that linked all that they wanted to achieve and agreed that it was a starting point and that work would continue on the project.
- Councillors thanked officers for their work and wanted them to relay and publicise that discussions and debates were taking place to show members of the public that the Council took climate change seriously.
- The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change thanked the Councillors for their comments and advised that they were due to start work on the Green Audit on the Councils actions, buildings and other assets.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 1) Noted the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and the Climate Change Member Working Group included in the appended minutes of each meeting;
- 2) Noted the timeline for delivery of both documents, and high level comments in relation to funding and resources going forward;
- 3) Endorsed the Draft SWT Framework as a driver for stakeholder engagement and public consultation activities over November 2019 – January 2020;
- 4) Delegated authority to agree and endorse the future Draft SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan due in early Spring 2020 to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change (Cllr Peter Pilkington) in consultation with the Climate Change Member Working Group, noting that the final draft strategy would come to Executive and Full Council for approval;
- 5) Endorsed the Draft Somerset-wide Framework as a driver for stakeholder engagement and public consultation activities subject to potential amendments to be discussed with the Joint Task and Finish Group and agreed by the Joint Cabinet/Portfolio Holders Group, in line with the agreed governance arrangements; and
- 6) Delegated authority to agree and endorse the future Draft Somerset-wide Strategy due in early Spring 2020 to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change (Cllr Peter Pilkington) in consultation with the Joint Task and Finish Group, noting that the final strategy would come to Executive and Full Council for approval.

56. **Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order - Approval for Public Consultation**

Resolved that the item be deferred until the meeting of the Executive scheduled for 20 November 2019.

57. **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved that the press and public be excluded during consideration of agenda item 14 on the grounds that, if the press and public were present during the item, there would be likely to be a disclosure to them of exempt information of the class specified in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended as follows: The item contained information that could release confidential information that related to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It was therefore agreed that after consideration of all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

58. **SWT Commercial Investment Strategy**

The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development introduced the report which concerned the proposed Commercial Investment Strategy for Somerset West and Taunton Council. The Strategy was one of the key pillars that supported the delivery of additional income needed by the Council to meet the targets set within the Financial Strategy that Executive approved on 18 September 2019, which aimed to achieve ongoing financial stability.

Recommended to Council to approve the recommendations contained as written within the report.

(The Meeting ended at 8.20 pm)

EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN 2019-20

| Meeting | DRAFT AGENDA ITEMS | LEAD OFFICER |
|--|--|--|
| 20 November 2019 (next Council 3 December) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Community Involvement • Local Plan Issues and Options Document • Mid-year Budget Monitoring and In Year Budget Request • North Taunton Woolaway Project Phase A Update and Home Owner Acquisition budget • SBCP Draft Variation Agreement • Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order – approval for consultation | P. Browning L. Higgins Finance R. Wiseman N. Green S. Povall |
| 18 December 2019 (next Council 26 February) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment to Income and Arrears Management Policy • SWT Prosperity/Economic Development Strategy • Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and Action Plan • Monkton Heathfield Phase 2 Master Plan • Somerset Waste Partnership Business Case • East Quay Wall • Hinkley Phase 3 – Housing Funding Strategy • Budget Update and Outline MTFP 2020/21 • Review of New Homes Bonus Allocations • Earmarked Reserves Review • Wellington Railway Station/Metro-link • Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements (TSFAI) phase 2 • Land South of Langaller • Taunton BID (confidential) | J. Collins M. Wathen H. Bryant and M. Leeman A. Penna/N. Bryant N. Green/Mickey Green C. Hall M. Leeman P. Fitzgerald/Finance P. Fitzgerald/Finance P. Fitzgerald/Finance N. Bryant/S. Povall A. Rhodes A. Penna L. Redston |
| 22 January 2020 (next Council 26 February) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order • Somerset Waste Partnership Annual Business Case • HPC S106 Tourism Delivery Plan • Design Guide for SWT • Social Value Strategy & Priorities • SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan and Somerset Wide Climate Change Strategy • SWP Business Plan - partner approval • Otterford Travellers Site • Citizens Advice Financial Sustainability • | N. Bryant R. Downes/N. Maclean N. Bryant P. Harding G. Thompson N. Green J. Barra |
| 10 February 2020 (next Council 19) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRA Budget 2020/21 • General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2020/21 • Capital Strategy 2020/21 • Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020/21 • Investment Strategy 2020/21 | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>February for Budget 26 Feb for others)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHSF HIF • CIL Allocations • Fees and Charges • HRA Acquisitions at Priory Bridge Road and Staplegrove Road | <p>K. Murdoch K. Murdoch Finance Wendy Lewis/Rich Wiseman</p> |
| <p>18 March 2020 (next Council 31 March)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Strategy – Action Plan for SWT • District Housing Action Plan • North Taunton Woolaway Project Phase B Update and Home Owner Acquisition budget • Annual Business Plan 2020/21 • Pay Policy Statement | <p>M. Leeman R. Wiseman P. Harding N. Rendell</p> |
| <p>22 April 2020 (next Council TBA)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterways Strategy and Action Plan | <p>D. Webb</p> |

Report Number: SWT 93/19

Somerset West and Taunton Council

SWT Executive – 20 November 2019

Financial Monitoring – 2019/20 as at 30 September 2019

Report Authors: Paul Fitzgerald (Strategic Finance Advisor and S151 Officer) and Emily Collacott (Finance Business Partner)

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the projected outturn financial position of the Council for the financial year 2019/20 (as at 30 September 2019).
- 1.2 Monitoring the budget is an important part of the Council's performance management framework. Reporting is undertaken regularly to the Senior Leadership Team, with periodic reporting to the Executive Committee. Reporting is primarily 'by exception' and focusses on the forecast position for the year as a whole compared to the Annual Budget. Forecasts are compiled by budget holders, with support and advice as appropriate from finance specialists (accountants) and case officers. Forecasts will take into account known / committed items as well as assumptions about future performance and demand.
- 1.3 The current revenue forecast outturn for the financial year 2019/20 is summarised as follows. These are the best estimates at the mid-point of the financial year based on information currently available:
 - a) General Fund (GF) Revenue Budget = forecast net overspend of £795k. This report includes a request to approve an in-year budget increase to offset the majority of this forecast cost pressure.
 - b) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget = forecast net underspend of £19k.
- 1.4 The current Capital Programme forecast position for 2019/20 is as follows:
 - (a) The General Fund Capital Programme budget is £53.503m. No significant variations to budget are currently reported.
 - (b) The HRA Capital Programme budget for 2019/20 is £23.093m. As previously reported, it is expected costs will be phased over more than one year so a proportion of the budget will need to be carried forward at the end of the financial year.

The Capital Programmes are shown in detail in Appendices A and B.

- 1.5 The General Fund general reserves balance as at 31 March 2020 is projected to be

£2.744m (subject to risks identified). The opening balance has been adjusted due to an accounting error correction in last year's accounts, as explained in this report. The balance is below the operational target of £3m, but above the financial resilience target of £2.4m as approved in the Council's Financial Strategy in September 2019.

- 1.6 The General Fund earmarked reserves balance at the beginning of the year was £18.242m. The net movement in year is currently an increase of £4.721m, mainly contributions to the New Homes Bonus and Business Rates Smoothing earmarked reserves. A number of allocations from reserves are applied at the end of the financial year and will be included in the Outturn report at that stage.
- 1.7 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) general reserve balance as at 31 March 2020 is projected to be £2.711m (subject to risks identified). This is above the current recommended operational target level (£2.4m) set within the Council's Finance Strategy and HRA Business Plan.
- 1.8 The HRA earmarked reserves balance at the beginning of the year was £2.719m, with £1.379m committed to be spent within the next three years and the remaining £1.340m for the Social Housing Development Fund will be used as required to fund social housing development.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Executive notes the Council's forecast financial performance for 2019/20 financial year as at 30 September 2019.
- 2.2 The Executive recommends that Full Council approves a Supplementary Budget of £747,000 in the General Fund Revenue Budget for transitional and service resilience costs in 2019/20, funded from the New Homes Bonus / Growth earmarked reserve.
- 2.3 The Executive approves a virement within the HRA Revenue Budget of £339,000, from in year underspend and managed savings to transitional and service resilience costs in 2019/20.
- 2.4 The Executive notes the risk to funding of future growth programme priorities, and commits to reviewing future options through the budget setting process.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Financial forecasts are based on known information and projections based on assumptions. As such any forecast carries an element of risk. The current forecasts included in this report are considered reasonable, and based on experience it is feasible the year end position could change, where it is reasonable to assume volatility of say +/- £100k compared to the mid-year forecast.
- 3.2 Salient in year budget risks are summarised in sections 8 and 11 in this report. The Council manages financial risk in a number of ways including setting prudent budgets, carrying out appropriate monitoring and control of spend, operating robust financial procedures, and so on. The Council also holds both general and earmarked reserves which include contingencies to manage budget risk.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 This report provides the Council's forecast end of year financial position for revenue and capital expenditure as at 30 September 2019 for the Council's General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 4.2 The regular monitoring of financial information is a key element in the Council's Performance Management Framework. Crucially it enables remedial action to be taken in response to significant budget variances, some of which may be unavoidable. It also provides the opportunity to assess any consequent impact on reserves and the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 4.3 Members will be aware from previous experience that the position can change between 'in-year' projections and the final outturn position, mainly due to demand-led service costs and income levels. The budget monitoring process involves a detailed review of the more volatile budgets and a proportionate review of low risk/low volatility budget areas.
- 4.4 Budget Holders, with support and advice from their accountants, regularly review the position and update their forecasts based on currently available information and knowledge of service requirements for the remainder of the year. As with any forecast there is always a risk that some unforeseen changes could influence the position at the year-end, and a number of risks and uncertainties are highlighted within this report. However, the following forecast is considered to be reasonable based on current information.

5 General Fund Revenue Budget – 2019/20 Forecast Outturn

- 5.1 The Council is currently forecasting an overall net overspend of £795k (3.5% of £22.3m Net Budget), as summarised below.

Table 1 - General Fund Revenue Outturn Summary 2019/20

| | Current Budget £'000 | Outturn £'000 | Variance | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| Performance and Governance | 10,948 | 10,928 | -20 | -0.1% |
| Communication and Engagement | 562 | 562 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Customer | -979 | -788 | 191 | 0.9% |
| Localities | 4,708 | 4,797 | 89 | 0.4% |
| Commercial Investment | 1,880 | 2,041 | 161 | 0.7% |
| Strategy | 662 | 662 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Transition and service resilience | - | 747 | 747 | 100.0% |
| Net Cost of Services | 17,781 | 18,949 | 1,168 | 6.6% |
| Interest and Investment Income | -969 | -1,342 | -373 | -1.7% |
| Transfers from Earmarked Reserves | 7,056 | 7,056 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Transfers from General Reserves | -65 | -65 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Capital and Other Adjustments | -1,471 | -1,471 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Net Budget | 22,332 | 23,127 | 795 | 3.5% |
| Funding | -22,332 | -22,332 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Variance | 0 | 795 | 795 | 3.5% |

5.2 The table below provides more detail on the significant variance forecast for the year.

Table 2 - Summary of Significant Forecast Variances for the Year

| | Staffing £'000 | Other Expenditure £'000 | Income £'000 | Total £'000 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Members allowances | n/a | 21 | 0 | 21 |
| Operational and Deane Helpline Rota | 16 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| Operation Clean Sweep | n/a | 50 | 0 | 50 |
| Phase 2 Information Project | n/a | 20 | 0 | 20 |
| B&B/Homelessness | n/a | 82 | 0 | 82 |
| Performance & Governance | n/a | 50 | 0 | 50 |
| Pest Control | n/a | -17 | 46 | 29 |
| Community Grants | n/a | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Insurance | n/a | -281 | 0 | -281 |
| IT Comms | n/a | 170 | 0 | 170 |
| Community Safety | n/a | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Pollution Control | n/a | 15 | 0 | 15 |
| Welfare Funerals | n/a | 10 | 19 | 29 |
| Shopmobility | n/a | -28 | 0 | -28 |
| Car parking | n/a | -62 | 129 | 67 |
| Asset Management | n/a | 161 | 0 | 161 |
| Transition and service resilience | 747 | 0 | 0 | 747 |
| Interest Receivable | n/a | 0 | -76 | -76 |
| Interest Payable | n/a | -297 | 0 | -297 |
| TOTAL – over / (-)underspend | 763 | -86 | 118 | 795 |

5.3 The main variances to budget are explained as follows:

- a) **Members Allowances:** The allowance scheme agreed in March 2019 and executive arrangements approved by Members in May 2019 is projected to cost £21k more than the original budget estimate set by the Shadow Council in February 2019.
- b) **Operational and Deane Helpline Rota:** An increase in the standby payments has been applied to ensure that we have the necessary skills and resources available. The payment had not be altered for some time and had fallen behind what is reasonable for the commitment required when undertaking this role.
- c) **Operation Clean Sweep:** Additional costs associated with an intensive clean up, repair and refurbishment of Taunton’s street scene and wider public areas, carried out during Spring 2019. The intensive cleaning equipment used as part of this work has also been deployed in other parts of the district.
- d) **Phase 2 Information Project:** This work is required for GDPR compliance and will cost an additional £20k.
- e) **B&B Homelessness:** The cost of Bed and Breakfast expenditure is forecast to exceed the budget by £82k. The inception of the Homeless Reduction Act (HRA),

has resulted in a marked increase in approaches for advice and assistance and has extended the timescales under the relief stage of the act. Officers investigate and try to relieve homelessness within 56 days before making a decision to accept or discharge the application for homelessness. Any emergency accommodation offered under our statutory duty to eligible clients will be throughout this 56 day period. A further financial burden are clients assessed as being intentionally homeless (ie no duty owed) who previously would have had a homeless decision made quickly and averting the need for B&B. These families are now placed in B&B until either alternative accommodation is secured or a duty is decided.

- f) **Performance & Governance:** As previously reported, a budget error has been identified that will be corrected for 2020/21 base position but results in a variance this year.
- g) **Pest Control:** The discretionary Pest Control service was previously operated with a subsidy as the cost of delivering it exceeded the income. The historic income budget of £29k remained within the budget approved in February, however the service is no longer providing the service and should be removed, which is why the accounts show a budget variance. This will be corrected for 2020/21.
- h) **Community Grants:** Grants offered have marginally exceeded the budget.
- i) **Insurance:** Following procurement of updated insurance arrangements for the new authority, premiums have significantly reduced. Insurance cover levels have been maintained so this represents a significant saving. The total savings against budget across both the HRA and the General fund is £408k. A provisional assumption has been made that the General fund will benefit from 68% of the savings against the budget. This amounts to £281k.
- j) **IT Comms:** BT costs account for the majority of the overspend, most of which is due to lines no longer being recharged out to individual areas. In addition there are 200 more mobile phone contracts than originally budgeted, and the requirement for 8x8 licences was underestimated with 150 more 8x8 standard users than budgeted. Officers are currently reviewing mobile phone usage with the aim of reducing the number of phones in use as well as working with Vodafone to review contracts to control and reduce costs. We are also updating our policies on the use of mobile phones for different roles and on ICT usage generally. This will help to reduce costs in-year.
- k) **Community Safety:** This is mainly the result of insufficient inflation costs estimate within the budget for the CCTV contract.
- l) **Pollution Control:** Private water sampling income is lower than budget as at the end of September as we are a bit behind on our expected delivery of work at the mid-year point. This will be impacted further in the near future due to staff turnover.

- m) **Welfare Funerals:** This is mainly due to income held awaiting a probate claim by relatives which wasn't carried forward from last year, and a predicted overspend on funerals based on last year's number of funerals.
- n) **Shopmobility:** The contract is below the amount budgeted for and no further costs are anticipated, providing a net underspend for the year.
- o) **Car parking:** Income is currently forecast to be under budget and parking enforcement contract costs are also expected to exceed the budget estimate. This is partly offset by a net underspend on maintenance and business rates.
- p) **Asset Management:** The overspend is mainly due to additional security implemented at West Somerset House in Williton for health and safety reasons, costs of business rates negotiations which will yield savings in the longer term, and professional advice on asset based projects and cases such as valuations as backlog cases are addressed and key projects progressed.
- q) **Interest Receivable:** Treasury investment income is forecast to exceed the budget by £76k. The S151 plans to exercise further placement of cash balances in strategic funds planned to be held for the long term and producing higher returns than very low risk alternative investment options. This approach is in line with the approved Treasury Strategy.
- r) **Interest Payable:** The General Fund has had minimal need to externalise its borrowing requirement this year and continues to prioritise use of 'internal borrowing'. The current forecast assumes no additional external borrowing this year, however this may change depending the scale of capital expenditure in the second half of the year. It is likely that any external borrowing will focus on short term inter-authority lending which would keep costs to a minimum.

6 Transitional and Service Resilience – Supplementary Budget Requirement

- 6.1 The new Council was implemented on 1 April 2019, formed as part of the wider transformation plans agreed by its predecessor Councils. The expected financial savings from the transformation business case were factored into the budget and medium term financial plan from this financial year. The predecessor Councils, and Shadow Council for the new authority, approved temporary additional resources to fund transition costs this year as the implementation of programme of change is ongoing. Additional resources have also been previously agreed to support service resilience and quality where the disruption during the change programme has had a deeper impact.
- 6.2 The Council's leadership has identified ongoing pressures this year as some of the expected service process efficiencies and greater customer access to self-service are taking time to be fully delivered, putting service standards at risk. In order to protect service standards and maintain capacity to manage these changes, additional staff resources have been maintained and are needed for a longer period. Significant detailed analysis of staff costs has been completed in recent weeks to ensure forecasts are robust and financial information is sound. As a result of this, costs are projected to

exceed the current General Fund budget provision by £747,000 this financial year, and this is reflected in the forecast outturn within this report. The risk of a cost pressure was highlighted to Members in the previous budget monitoring report earlier this year.

- 6.3 There is insufficient headroom in General Reserves to meet this cost pressure, therefore it is proposed to utilise New Homes Bonus funding currently held in earmarked reserves. As highlighted in the Financial Strategy update to Scrutiny Committee in November 2019, there is a high degree of uncertainty and therefore cautious forecasting in respect of future New Homes Bonus income. It is highly probable NHB income will be lower than previous financial planning assumptions, therefore the leadership team (officers and Executive Councillors) will need to review priorities and plans, and it is recommended that this is considered as part of the budget setting process for 2020/21. The remaining net overspend of £48k will be managed as part of the budget monitoring process.
- 6.4 Similarly, transition and service resilience cost pressures of £339k are forecast within the HRA this financial year. It is expected that this can be offset by underspends in other budget areas within the HRA, as shown section 10 below.

7 General Fund (GF) Reserves

- 7.1 Following the completion of the audit for the final accounts for Taunton Deane Borough Council, and accounting adjustment has been recorded in 2018/19 which amends the General Reserves balance transferred to SWTC on 1 April 2019. This amendment corrects an accounting error in respect of the debtors balance on 31 March 2019, which has reduced by £347k. The reserves balance transferred from Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils on 1 April is therefore corrected to £2.857m.
- 7.2 Table 3 below summarises the movement in GF General Reserves to 30 September 2019. The forecast balance as at 31 March 2020 is £2.744m, this would be £256k below the recommended operational minimum balance of £3m. The balance is only a forecast and can change which means it must be caveated at this stage. If the position at the end of the financial year remains below the recommended operational balance, plans will need to be implemented to increase reserves in future years.

Table 3 - General Reserve Balance

| | £000 |
|---|--------------|
| Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2019 (as corrected per 7.1 above) | 2,857 |
| Approved Transfers to date | -65 |
| 2019/20 Projected Outturn Variance – Month 6 Forecast (assuming NHB is approved to fund transition and service resilience cost pressures) | -48 |
| Projected Balance 31 March 2020 | 2,744 |
| Operational Minimum Balance | 3,000 |
| Projected Balance below recommended minimum | -256 |
| Financial Resilience Minimum Balance | 2,400 |
| Projected Balance above recommended minimum | 344 |

- 7.3 The projected balance remains above the minimum requirement for financial resilience purposes, but is projected below the operational target. It is therefore recommended that Members seek to increase General Reserves in future as part of the ongoing financial

strategy. It is important that the leadership team and Members consider the need to increase reserves in the short to medium term when considering financial decisions.

Earmarked Reserves

7.4 The General Fund Earmarked Reserves brought forward balance for 2019/20 is £18.242m. In-year movements to date amount to an additional £4.721m, which included the recent approvals to fund the new Director posts and continued subsidy to the park and ride service in Taunton. The current balance as at 31 July is to £22.963m.

7.5 The following table details those reserves with balances greater than £500,000.

Table 4 - GF Earmarked Reserves

| | Opening Balance | Transfers To/From | Closing Balance |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| New Homes Bonus | 6,168 | 3,089 | 9,142 |
| Business Rates Smoothing | 3,547 | 2,869 | 6,416 |
| General Funds General Carry Forwards | 1,135 | -1,135 | 0 |
| Garden Town | 944 | 0 | 944 |
| Transformation | 728 | 0 | 728 |
| Transition | 648 | 0 | 648 |
| Strategic Housing Market Assessment | 576 | 0 | 576 |
| Revenue Reserves held for Capital Projects | 888 | 0 | 888 |
| Other; with an individual balance less than £500k | 3,608 | -102 | 3,506 |
| TOTAL | 18,242 | 4,721 | 22,963 |

7.6 Earmarked reserves are reviewed during the year. This is in order to confirm they align to current priorities, and to identify any surplus balances that can be redirected to mitigate in-year financial risks or be returned to general reserves.

8 General Fund - Risk and Uncertainty

8.1 Budgets and forecasts are based on known information and the best estimates of the Council's future spending and income. Income and expenditure over the 2019/20 financial year is estimated by budget holders and then reported through the budget monitoring process. During this process risks and uncertainties are identified which could impact on the financial projections, but for which the likelihood, and/or amount are uncertain. The Council carries protection against risk and uncertainty in a number of ways, such as insurances and maintaining reserves. This is a prudent approach and helps to mitigate unforeseen pressures.

8.2 The following general risks and uncertainties have been identified:

- a) **Fluctuation in demand for services:** We operate a number of demand-led services and the levels of demand do not always follow a recognisable trend. We therefore have to caveat the forecasts in these areas to account for fluctuations.

- b) **Forecasting Assumptions:** It is conceivable that, whilst budget holders are optimistic that they will spend all of their budget, experience shows we could see underspends of £50k-£100k by year-end caused by the cumulative effect of minor underspends in a number of service areas.
- c) **Year-end Adjustments:** Certain items are not determined or finalised until the financial year-end. For example, the final assessment of provisions required for bad debts, and final allocations of support service recharges. These can result in potentially significant differences to current forecasts.
- d) **Business Rates:** There are inherent risks and uncertainties within the Business Rates Retention system. The Council's share of business rates funding is directly linked to the total amount of business rates due and collected in the area, which can fluctuate throughout the year and be affected by the result of Rateable Value changes e.g. as a result of Appeals.
- e) **Recruitment costs:** There is a risk of no savings within salary budgets to take into account these costs – these costs are normally covered by vacancy savings in-year.
- f) **Interest receivable:** This has been forecast on the basis that interest rates will remain as they are currently. However, interest rates are unpredictable and there is a risk that interest rates could decrease further, and investment fund performance is susceptible to financial markets.

9 General Fund Capital Programme

- 9.1 The current capital programme budget is £53.5m, which is to be funded by a combination of Capital Grants and Contributions, Capital Receipts, Revenue Funding, Reserves and Borrowing. No potential overspends have been identified at this stage.
- 9.2 The major growth and regeneration projects account for £36.3m of the total capital budget. Due to the nature of capital projects the costs are likely to be incurred over more than one financial year. Budget Holders are projecting that £11.573m will be spent during 2019/20 with the remainder due to be spent in future years. Within this total, the largest projects are: Coal Orchard regeneration, Great Western Railway development loan, Seaward Way development, Employment Site Enabling, Major Transport Schemes and Watchet East Quay development loan. There is also an amount of up to £7m identified in respect of planned loans to Somerset Waste Partnership, however it is probable that only £5m will be needed in practice.
- 9.3 The following table summarises the current capital programme.

Table 5 - GF Capital Programme Summary

| | SWTC Approved Budget 19/20 | TDBC Schemes Brought Forward | WSC Schemes Brought Forward | Total |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Growth Programme | 2,027 | 4,190 | 0 | 6,217 |
| IT Projects | 154 | 544 | 354 | 1,052 |
| Major Projects | 7,500 | 16,250 | 6,362 | 30,112 |
| Housing | 1,695 | 2,703 | 567 | 4,965 |
| Other Projects | 398 | 486 | 463 | 1,347 |
| S106 – General | | | 271 | 271 |
| S106 – Hinkley Funded | | | 3,539 | 3,539 |
| CIL – Infrastructure Projects | 6,000 | | | 6,000 |
| TOTAL | 17,774 | 24,173 | 11,556 | 53,503 |

10 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- 10.1 The HRA is a ring-fenced, self-financing account used to manage the Council's housing stock of some 5,700 properties, with the Council operating as the Landlord.
- 10.2 The majority of the HRA income is in the form of rent for council dwellings. HRA income is used to meet the costs of managing and maintaining the housing stock, as well as meeting the repayment of capital debt and interest costs.
- 10.3 The HRA budget for 2019/20 is budgeted to break-even (net of approved transfers to/from HRA Reserves).
- 10.4 The current year end forecast outturn position for the Housing Revenue Account for 2019/20 is a net underspend of £19k. The Month 4 forecast was a £17k overspend.

Table 6 - HRA Outturn Summary

| | Budget £'000 | Outturn £'000 | Variance | |
|---|-----------------|------------------|----------|-------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| Gross Income | -26,217 | -26,217 | - | 0.0% |
| Service Expenditure | 13,814 | 13,387 | -428 | -3.1% |
| Transition and service resilience costs | - | 339 | 339 | - |
| Other Operating Costs and Income | 9,381 | 9,451 | 70 | 0.7% |
| Unearmarked Reserve Transfers | - | - | - | 0.0% |
| Capital Financing and Debt Repayment | 2,992 | 2,992 | - | 0.0% |
| Total | -30 | -49 | -19 | -0.1% |

- 10.5 The variances forecasted for the year are described below.
- 10.6 **Right To Buy:** the original budget estimated that 46 properties would be sold to existing tenants under the RTB scheme. However the current forecast is that there will be only 36 RTB sales (34 sales in 2018/19; 53 sales in 2017/18). Therefore an under-recovery of RTB admin fee grant income is being reported of £13k (although a positive impact on

rental income assumptions is likely as a result).

- 10.7 **Insurance:** following an authority wide re-tender exercise for insurance premiums the new authority has been successful at significantly reducing their annual premiums. Whilst a provisional saving against budget of £66k is being reported. Officers are working through the premiums to identify the actual savings against budget to be realised by the HRA.
- 10.8 **Repairs and Maintenance:** Overall this is a very demand led and reactive service based on the needs of the tenants. There are also a number of uncontrollable variables associated with this service such as the weather (e.g. cold winters causing burst pipes), condition of properties when returned (e.g. void refurbishments), consumer demand on minor internal / external repairs (e.g. broken door or fence) and the type of repair work required. The current forecast is an underspend of £375k based on 6 months' worth of data, however it is highly likely this forecast will change and consequently this variance should be regarded with caution.
- 10.9 **Interest Receivable:** the actual interest receivable in 2018/19 was nil due to internal borrowings exceeding investments. The expectation is that this situation will arise again and therefore a variance of £70k is now being reported.
- 10.10 Transition and Service Resilience: see section 6 above.

11 **HRA Risks and Uncertainty**

- 11.1 Budgets and forecasts are based on known information and the best estimates of the Council's future income and expenditure activity. Income and expenditure over the financial year is estimated by budget holders and then reported through the budget monitoring process. During this process any risks and uncertainties are identified which could impact financial projections, but for which the likelihood and/or amount are uncertain.
- 11.2 There are also a number of areas where the financial impact is not known until the end of the financial year such as depreciation charges and change in provision for bad debt.
- 11.3 The service is in discovery mode and the 2019/20 budgets are still being reviewed for accuracy in relation to the new Somerset West and Taunton operating model and staffing structure. This could result in variances being identified and reported in future reporting cycles.
- 11.4 The current areas of risk and uncertainty being reported include:
- a) **Tenancy Management:** The current year spend to date is low against budget due to the embedding of a new team in a new operating model. There may be an underspend but this will not be known with certainty until later in the year to allow the service time to explore the demands of this service against current budget provision.

- b) **Dwelling Rental Income:** There may be a reduction in general needs dwelling rental income due to the impact of additional voids resulting from the decants in relation to the North Taunton Regeneration scheme. Officers are currently working through the time-tabling of activities to identify when and financially how much this will impact the service.
- c) **Interest Payable:** There is a risk that the HRA may need to externalise its internal borrowing from the General Fund. The HRA may also need to take on more borrowing to finance capital schemes such as buybacks. As a consequence the interest payable may increase on any additional loans taken.

12 HRA Capital Programme

- 12.1 The HRA approved Capital Programme is £23.093m. This consists of £9.586m of new schemes approved for 2019/20 plus £13.507m carried forward from the previous financial year. In addition, a supplementary budget was approved by Full Council on the 16 July 2019 for Laxton Road for £331k funded by RTB Receipts. The Capital Programme relates to schemes which will be completed over the next five years.
- 12.2 The Council is supporting this investment through the use of the Major Repairs Reserve, Capital Receipts, Revenue Funding and Borrowing.
- 12.3 **Appendix B** provides a breakdown of the HRA Capital Programme projected outturn by scheme and the actual spend incurred within the first four months of the year.
- 12.4 **Delegated Authority:** On the 8 Oct 2019 Full Council approved the request for the Housing Director / Head of Function in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder to be granted delegated authority to make changes to the profile of budgeted spend for all of the HRA capital schemes, whilst remaining within the approved Capital Programme for 2019-20. Any virements will be reported as part of Appendix A to SLT on a bi-monthly basis and to Members on a 4-monthly basis.
- 12.5 The capital programme can be split into three distinct areas:
- 12.6 **Major Works:** The original budget of £7.322m is funded by the Major Repairs Reserve and relates to spend on major works on existing dwellings such as kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, roofs, doors and windows.
- 12.7 **Improvements:** The original budget of £2.710m is funded by the Major Repairs Reserve and relates to spend on improvements such as disabled facilities adaptations, asbestos removal and environmental improvements.
- 12.8 Due to timing of spend it is feasible that part of the approved budget will roll forward into 2020/21 for Major and Improvement Works at the end of the current financial year. This is due to the substantial disruption caused by transformation – implementing a new staffing and operational model – and also due to the number of significant contracts for works coming to the end of their contract period during 2019/20 making it necessary to review the delivery of capital works and improvements schemes in the future as part of the HRA Business Plan review.

12.9 **Housing Development:** The remaining budget of £13.061m is for the provision of new housing through schemes such as North Taunton Regeneration, Weavers Arms and other buybacks to increase the Council's housing stock.

13 **HRA Earmarked Reserves**

13.1 The HRA Earmarked Reserves (EMR) at the beginning of 2019/20 were £2.719m (see Table 7 below). Of this, half the funds have been specifically committed to be spent within the next three financial years. The other half relates to the Social Housing Development Fund which will be used as required to fund social housing development feasibility studies and usage approved through the Housing Programme Board.

Table 7 - Balance of HRA Earmarked Reserves held at 1 April 2019

| Description | Balance b/f |
|---|--------------|
| | £'000 |
| HRA Carry Forwards | 186 |
| HRA Electrical Testing | 474 |
| HRA Employment and Skills Dev | 102 |
| HRA One Teams | 50 |
| Leasehold Schemes HRA Advanced Payments | 9 |
| Social Housing Development Fund | 1,340 |
| HRA Contribution to Transformation | 380 |
| HRA Contribution to Transition | 178 |
| HRA Total | 2,719 |

14 **HRA General Reserves**

14.1 The HRA reserves at the start of the year were £2.718m. This is £318k above the recommended operational reserve level of £2.4m, providing a level of resilience in light of the significant contractual risk in relation to North Taunton and other risks identified in this report. On the 30 July 2019 Full Council approved a Structural Change to the Senior Leadership Team and one-off additional funding of £26k from HRA general balances for 2019/20.

14.2 The current outturn position is forecast to be a net underspend of £19k. If this is the position at year end then this will be added to general balances.

Table 3: HRA Reserve Balance

| | £k |
|--|--------------|
| Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2019 | 2,718 |
| Approved In-Year Transfers | -26 |
| Forecast Outturn 2019/20 (as at 30 September 2019) | 19 |
| Forecast Balance Carried Forward 31 March 2019 | 2,711 |
| Recommended Operational Balance | 2,400 |
| Forecast Balance above recommended operational balance | 650 |

15 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

15.1 The financial performance of the Council underpins the delivery of corporate priorities and therefore all Corporate Aims.

16 Partnership Implications

16.1 A wide range of Council services are provided through partnership arrangements e.g. SLM for leisure services and Somerset Waste Partnership for Waste and Recycling services. The cost of these services is reflected in the Council's financial outturn position for the year.

17 Other Implications

17.1 None for the purpose of this report.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny – No**
- **Executive – 20 November 2019**
- **Full Council – TBC**

Reporting Frequency: 4 Monthly

List of Appendices

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|------------|---|
| Appendix A | General Fund Capital Programme |
| Appendix B | Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme |

Contact Officers

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Name | Emily Collacott |
| Direct Dial | 01823 218742 |
| Email | e.collacott@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Name | Jackie Evans |
| Direct Dial | 01823 219483 |
| Email | j.evans@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Name | Kerry Prisco |
| Direct Dial | 01823 218758 |
| Email | k.prisco@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Name | Paul Fitzgerald |
| Direct Dial | 01823 217557 |
| Email | p.fitzgerald@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk |

Report Number: SWT 94/19

Somerset West and Taunton Council

SWT Executive – 20 November 2019

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): consideration of comments submitted on draft document

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mike Rigby

Report Author: Paul Browning: Strategy Specialist

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Somerset West and Taunton will involve our community and stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and review of local planning policy and the consideration of planning applications within the Local Planning Authority area.
- 1.2 The Council has legal duty to prepare an SCI under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 1.3 We consulted on our first Statement of Community Involvement between 19 July and 30 September 2019. This report summarises the comments made during this period and how these responses have been addressed. Prior to publication, executive is asked to approve minor updates to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 With regard to the production of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), **Executive resolves to:**
 - Approve the proposed response to matters raised by the respondents (as set out in Appendix 1); and
 - in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport delegate authority is given to the Head of Strategy and the Principal Planner Specialist to agree any necessary final amendments prior to its publication.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The potential risks that might impact on the preparation and timely delivery of the Local Plan and other Development Plan documents are set out the “Risk Assessment section of the Local Development Scheme.
- 3.2 The risks associated with the SCI are set out in the table below.

| Description | Likelihood | Impact | Overall |
|---|------------|--------------|---------|
| The 2004 Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act remains the legal driver under which SCIs are produced. SCIs are no longer examined by an independent Inspector. There is also no legal requirement for local planning authorities to consult when reviewing and updating their SCI's. SCI's can create fertile ground for legal challenge if promises and expectations set out within them go unfulfilled. | Rare (1) | Moderate (3) | Low (3) |

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 We are required under various pieces of legislation (such as the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) (the Act)) to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 4.2 Members will recall that the draft SCI was approved for public consultation at Executive on the 9th July 2019. A copy of this document is available on our web site at: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/statement-of-community-involvement/>

How did SWT consult on the draft SCI?

- 4.3 This was our first SCI. Its contents were based upon the SCI's that were adopted by the former Taunton Deane BC and West Somerset Council in 2014.
- 4.4 SWT consulted on the draft SCI between 19 July and 30 September 2019. All the various stakeholders on our local plans data base (eg statutory and non statutory organisations, parish councils, parish and town councils, bodies representing interests of minority and disabled groups) were informed about the publication of the draft SCI and invited to comment.
- 4.5 During normal office hours, paper copies of the document were be available to view in the reception of the Council offices at Deane House, Taunton and West Somerset House, Williton. The document and feedback form could also be viewed online at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/statement-of-community-involvement/>.

Responses received and proposed response on matters raised

- 4.6 Nine responses raising various matters were received during the consultation period on the draft SCI. A summary of the representations made is enclosed as Appendix 1. Where appropriate, the matters raised by the respondent are

accompanied by a proposed response from SWT on how each representation will be addressed.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

5.1 A new Corporate Strategy to replace those previously prepared for Taunton Deane and West Somerset was approved at Full Council on the 8th October 2019. The Local Plan is an important document which will help articulate and translate the Council's emerging strategic objectives into planning policy. This decision is linked to delivering outcomes of:

- **Priority theme 1. Our environment and economy.** A low-carbon, clean, green and prosperous district that attracts high quality employment opportunities and encourages healthy lifestyles.
- **Priority theme 2. A transparent and customer-focused Council.** A Council which informs and engages openly with our stakeholders and which consistently delivers excellent customer service.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

6.1 There is an agreed budget and reserves to support the delivery of the Local Plan process.

6.2 The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport and the Head of Strategy has reviewed and approved this report with no issues arising.

7 Legal Implications (if any)

7.1 The Council's Constitution describes how Somerset West and Taunton will discharge its responsibilities, including responsibilities for the preparation and adoption of the Local Plan, which must be considered and endorsed by Full Council, prior to adoption.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications

8.1 No direct impact on delivering our carbon reduction target (carbon neutral by 2030).

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)

9.1 None at this stage.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 None at this stage. In order to comply with the public sector equality duty: an Impact Assessments (IA) accompanies this series of reports and agenda items on the SCI and Local Plan. Further Impact Assessments will be prepared in due course as part of the plan making process. Further, details of the process

are also available from:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/equality-and-diversity/>

11 Social Value Implications (if any)

11.1 None at this stage.

12 Partnership Implications (if any)

12.1 The SCI is in accordance with the Council's Constitution which describes how Somerset West and Taunton will discharge its responsibilities with regard to joint arrangements and partnerships.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)

13.1 None at this stage.

14 Asset Management Implications (if any)

14.1 None at this stage.

15 Data Protection Implications (if any)

15.1 None at this stage.

16 Consultation Implications (if any)

16.1 None at this stage.

17 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)

17.1 A verbal update will be given to Executive.

Democratic Path:

- ~~Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No~~
- ~~Cabinet/Executive – Yes / No~~
- ~~Full Council – Yes / No~~

Reporting Frequency: Once only Ad-hoc Quarterly
 Twice-yearly Annually

List of Appendices

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| Appendix 1 | Schedule of Representations submitted on the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2019) |
|------------|--|

Background papers (links)

Documents relating to the draft Statement of Community Involvement can be viewed at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/statement-of-community-involvement/>

All documents relating to adopted Local Plans for Taunton Deane BC and West Somerset Council can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/>

The National Planning Policy Framework can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2#history>

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) (the Act)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>

Government advice and criteria for assessing local planning authority performance in determining planning applications

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-planning-performance-criteria-for-designation>

[The Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015m \(as amended\),](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents/made)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents/made>

Note: For sight of individual background papers and more information on the supporting evidence base please contact the report author.

Contact Officers

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Name | Paul Browning: Strategy Specialist |
| Direct Dial | 01984 600614 |
| Email | P.Browning@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk |

Schedule of Representations submitted on the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2019)

This document has been prepared by Somerset West and Taunton.

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Copies of SCI LDS are available from: Somerset West and Taunton

The Strategy Team, Deane House, Taunton, TA1 1HE

Tel: 0300 304 8000

Email: strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

For further details and to view and download this and other documents, please visit our website.

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-developmentscheme/>

Accessibility: this document is also available in Braille, large print, on tape and on disc and we can translate it into different languages. We can provide a member of staff to discuss the details. (confirm / insert appropriate equalities logos / text when upload onto SWT web site)



| Organisation | Comment ID | Summary of comment | Proposed / Recommended Response | Proposed / Recommended Change |
|--------------|------------|--|--|--|
| 1) SWT | SCI/1/1.1 | Note that draft SCI combines the statutory lists under the planning act and the Duty to Cooperate regulations. Suggests identifying the following as solely Duty to Cooperate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEP, Office of Rail Regulator, Local Nature Partnerships, Civil Aviation Authority, National Health Service Commissioning Board, Clinical Commissioning Groups. | Agree with the suggested change which accords with the legislation. | Within Appendix A identify those organisations listed by the respondent as “solely as “Duty to Cooperate”. |
| | SCI/1/1.2 | Within the former West Somerset Council area there are zones around Hinkley which statutorily require the LPA to consult the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR). | Although on our contact data base, this organisation was omitted in error. | Within Appendix A add Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR). |
| | SCI/1/1.3 | The statutory provider for Health Services is South West NHS. Non-statutory consultees: | Although on our contact data base, this organisation was omitted in error. | Within Appendix A add South West NHS. |
| | SCI/1/1.4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackdown Hills AONB and Quantock Hills AONB. Very valuable bodies who carry out the function on behalf of the other LPA’s and SCC. Not technically a statutory body for planning policy. As they do not fit particular well under the other categories and they are an “arm” of the LPA’s and keep them in the statutory list. | Noted. | No change required. |



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| | SCI/1/1.5 SCI/1/1.6 SCI/1/1.7 SCI/1/1.8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mono Consulting are a private company and infrastructure provider – suggest they are removed from the list. • RWE npower are a private company and infrastructure provider – suggest they come off the list. • Avon and Somerset Police under the Police and Crime Commissioners Office are a general consultee rather than a specific – but it’s difficult to see where under the general they would go. • Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue and South west Ambulance Trust (as above). | <p>Agree with the suggested changes which accord with the legislation.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> | <p>Within Appendix A, remove “Mono Consultants Ltd and RWE”.</p> <p>No change required.</p> <p>No change required.</p> |
| 2) South West Water | SCI/2/1.1 | Note content of document. No specific comments. | Noted. | No change required. |
| 3) Highways England | SCI/3/1.1 SCI/3/1.2 SCI/3/1.3 | <p>Note that Highway England (HE) are a Statutory consultee within the SCI.</p> <p>No specific comments on draft SCI.</p> <p>Within context of Local Plan process, HE are keen to work with SWT to ensure the early identification and assessment of transport matters and options.</p> | <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Welcome forthcoming cooperation on such matters.</p> | <p>No change required.</p> <p>No change required.</p> <p>No change required.</p> |



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| 4) Carhampton PC | SCI/4/1.1 | <p>Page 7 para 19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refers to the Localism Act 2011 and appears to indicate that this Parish Council should have been or be looking at preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Is this something we have to do or an option open to us. | <p>The Localism Act 2011 (as amended) and other Acts gives the Parish / Town Council the opportunity to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan. You do not have to. As written, we accept that this is not clear. We will look to amend this text in the final version of the SCI.</p> | <p>Amend para 19, the start of the 2nd sentence to read as follows:</p> <p>“Town/parish councils make the decision on whether to prepare these documents, when successfully completed, they form”</p> |
| | SCI/4/1.2 | <p>Page 16 para 66 last sentence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the previous West Somerset Council, if a PC raised an objection to a planning application, that application had to be determined by the Planning Committee. It now appears that a PC have only 14 days from Validation in which to get its Ward Councillor to seek “call in” of an application. This shortened time limit is unfair. PC asks that further consideration be given to the period of 14 days. If implemented, would mean that the Parish Council has just 14 days from validation of an application to lodge an objection through one of the Ward Councillors for initial consideration by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the | <p>The Council changed the scheme of delegation for the former West Somerset area so that it now aligns with the former Taunton Deane area.</p> <p>The Council accepts that the last sentence of para 66 should be amended to reflect current practice that</p> | <p>Amend para 66, last sentence to read as:</p> <p>“Given this, a <u>21 day response period will usually apply to the initial consultation</u> and a 14 day response period will usually apply for reconsultation.”</p> |



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| | | <p>Planning Committee who would alone determine if the application was determined by the Committee or by officers under delegated authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In line with members of the public, parish councils should have 21 days from validation to make lodge comments. • The suggestion that Parish Council objections should be routed through the relevant District Ward Councillor is impractical and potentially unnecessarily time and consuming. | <p>SWT allows 21 days for an initial consultation, if we receive amended plans a follow up consultation will be sent allowing 14 days for any additional comments.</p> <p>We also note the parish councils concerns regarding “call in” but are not proposing to amend the SCI on this matter. In our opinion, the concern expressed is not an accurate record of the process for an application being taken out of Officer Delegation which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there are conflicting views (giving clear planning reasons) from a Town/Parish Council, Parish Meeting or Ward | <p>No change required with regard to “call in”.</p> |
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| | <p>SCI/4/1.4</p> | <p>Page 23 4th line from the bottom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is reference to “TDBC development plan” but no reference to the West Somerset version. Is there a reason for this? | <p>Member as well as from four or more individuals.</p> <p>To be consistent with other parts of the SCI, we accept that this sentence should also refer to West Somerset. We will look to amend this text in the final version of the SCI.</p> | <p>Amend 4th line from the bottom of page 23: after TDBC add “and WSC”</p> |
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| 5) North Curry Parish Council | SCI/5/1.1 | Seek acknowledgement that PC's continue to be recognised as a statutory consultee for plan making and development management. In return, the Parish Council will respond to consultations on planning and other proposals that affect North Curry. Where major changes are proposed, we will provide facilities for exhibitions, meetings and visits by Members and Officers of the District Council to ensure councillors and parishioners are fully informed and involved. | Appendix A already acknowledges Parish and Town Councils as statutory consultees. The offer of support and facilities that the Parish Council can provide is welcomed. | No change required. |
| | SCI/5/1.2 | Expectation for SWT to prepare a revised Core Strategy covering its wider area, taking account of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the results from the 2011 Census, • recent proposals for the A358, • balance to be struck between site allocations for housing and employment. | The Parish Councils expectations are noted. The timetable for producing our new district wide local plan is set out in our Local Development Scheme which is publically available on our web site at: https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-development-scheme/ | No change required. |



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| | SCI/5/1.2 | Seeking assurance that no further housebuilding is encouraged or allowed until provision is made for jobs and community infrastructure. | This is not a matter for the SCI. The forthcoming "Issues and Options" document afford the chance to express such views. | No change required. |
| | SCI/5/1.3 | Concern expressed that the local capacity of roads, schools and places of assembly should match the additional population that housing brings. | This is not a matter for the SCI. The forthcoming "Issues and Options" document afford the chance to express such views. | No change required. |
| | SCI/5/1.4 | Look forward to the next round of consultation when SWT brings forward their perception of the issues facing rural communities and the options for addressing those issues. " | Noted. | No change required. |



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| <p>6) Creech St Michael Parish Council</p> | <p>SCI/6/1.1</p> | <p>With regard to DM consultations, requests that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the PC is informed of ALL planning applications in its Parish. • If a request for PC observations on a Planning application have not been forthcoming at the end of the agreed period (normally 21 days unless agreed alternatively) a reminder to be sent to the Clerk. • Once initial consultations and responses have been received a reply should be sent to advise of acceptance (or not) of the point made to SWT. Thereafter, a further, shorter consultation be undertaken in order that consultees can see the other responses and SWT proposed changes ahead of a report going to Executive for decision/ratification. • Once consultation has taken place, revision or amendment be identified then correspondence should be sent to those who were consulted (incl PC) ahead of a decision. | <p>The suggested amendments would appear the run contrary to the governments advice and criteria for speeding up the determination of planning applications as set out on their web page at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-planning-performance-criteria-for-designation</p> <p>SWT’s approach to consultation periods and processes is consistent with government legislation.</p> | <p>No change required.</p> |
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| | <p>SCI/6/1.2</p> | <p>With regard to App D Neighbourhood Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inclusion of include a single page schematic giving an overall diagram and timeline of the steps stated in order to pictorially demonstrate the NH Plan process being undertaken. | <p>Welcome suggestion. We will look to include a diagram explaining the Neighbourhood plan process in the final version of the SCI.</p> | <p>Change required. Within Appendix D, insert a diagram explaining the Neighbourhood plan process (draft attached).</p> |
| | <p>SCI/6/1.3</p> | <p>Request that planning policies (such as the Playing Pitch Strategy) be subject to a programme of policy reviews and that PCs have input into the form of the reviews.</p> | <p>Noted. However, this is not a matter for the SCI. The timetable for producing our new district wide local plan and its associated documents is set out in our Local Development Scheme which is publically available on our web site at:</p> <p>https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-development-scheme/</p> | <p>No change required.</p> |



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| <p>7) West Somerset Flood Group</p> | <p>SCI/7/1.1</p> | <p>Given the importance of the Climate Emergency for local place making, the Group would like to be included in the list of General Consultation Bodies in Appendix A.</p> | <p>The organisations listed reflect the statutory lists under the planning act and the Duty to Cooperate regulations.</p> <p>We do understand the importance of the West Somerset Flood Group and will ensure that they continue to be included on the Council's contact database.</p> | <p>No change required.</p> |
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| <p>8) Langford Budville Parish Council</p> | <p>SCI/8/1.1 SCI/8/1.2</p> | <p>Note contents of draft SCI.</p> <p>As the Local Plan progresses, the PC looks forward to setting out their views on planning development and related issues for our parish on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The protection and maintenance of listed buildings. • The protection of the rural location with an emphasis on retaining the unique identity of the villages and hamlets in our community. • The possibility of ceasing to consider planning applications from Tone where a small area falls into our parish. • The possibility of moving the village envelope (settlement boundary) in Langford Budville, to reflect a sensible approach to recent development / outline planning permission. <p>"</p> | <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. The forthcoming "Issues and Options" document afford the chance to express such views.</p> | <p>No change required. No change required.</p> |
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| 9) Lichfields: (on behalf of client- Bourne Leisure Limited) | SCI/9/1.1 | <p>Pre- Application (for the applicant to undertake)- Paragraph 52 Endorse the Council’s recognition that Community Involvement and Engagement is a key part of the planning process However, to in order to accord and align with the wording within National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 40) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) suggest that paragraph 52 of the SCI is amended to read as follows:</p> <p><i>“We recommend that <u>all</u> applicants undertake appropriate and effective pre- application consultation with the community before submitting an application, <u>taking into account the scale of the development proposal</u>. Early engagement with the Council, local community and key stakeholders can identify and address issues before applications are submitted, shape the design of the development and ensure sufficient information is submitted for an application to be registered and a recommendation made.”</i></p> | Agree in full. | Amend paragraph 52 of the SCI as suggested by the respondent. |
| | SCI/9/1.2 | <p>Also that the beginning of paragraph 55 of the SCI is amended to read: <i>“<u>Where appropriate</u>, the Council expects an applicant....”</i> Proposed amendments <u>underlined and in red</u>.</p> | Agree in full. | Amend paragraph 55 of the SCI as suggested by the respondent. |

Source of Data: H:\Local Plan SWT01 Project Management\05 SWT District Wide LP SCI\SCI Public Consultation Responses

Proposed diagram outlining the Neighbourhood plan process.

(In response to representations made by Creech St Michael Parish Council (Rep No SCI/6/1.2))



Report Number: SWT 95/19

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 20 November 2019

Local Plan Issues and Options Document – Approval for Public Consultation

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mike Rigby

Report Author: Laura Higgins, Strategy Specialist

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the first public consultation stage (the Issues and Options Document) in the Local Plan making process.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Recommendations are that Executive resolves to:

- 1) **approve** the Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan Issues and Options Document for public consultation (Appendix A);
- 2) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport, delegated authority is given to the Head of Strategy to make any necessary editorial corrections, minor amendments to the documents, agree the ‘summary’ section, and to agree the final publication style.

3 Risk Assessment

| Description | Likelihood | Impact | Overall |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------|
| Not undertaking this Issues and Options consultation will mean that the Council is less informed about the local issues that are important to residents, businesses and organisations. This would adversely affect the quality, robustness and soundness of the next stages in the Local Plan process. | Likely (4) | Moderate (3) | Medium (12) |

4 Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 Somerset West and Taunton has the statutory responsibility to prepare a Local Plan which covers the whole of the new local authority area (excluding Exmoor National Park). It is a requirement that these **Page 47** kept up-to-date and fit for purpose, with

planning policy guidance advising on updating such Plans in whole (or in part) at least every 5 years.

- 4.2 Members will recall that the timetable for producing the Local Plan and other development plan documents (ie The Local Development Scheme) was approved at Full Council on the 16th July 2019. A copy of this document is available on our web site at: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-development-scheme/>
- 4.3 Members will also recall that an “Issues” document (draft) was considered at Scrutiny on the 12th June 2019 and Executive on the 18th June 2019. The decision was deferred at Executive to allow for full reporting of the Scrutiny recommendations. Officers subsequently recommended moving straight to a combined Issues and Options later in 2019 document to avoid consultation over the summer.
- 4.4 The West Somerset Local Plan was adopted in Nov 2016 and is deemed up-to-date at present as it is based upon the most recent housing need assessment guidance and adopted within the past 5 years. The Taunton Deane Core Strategy was adopted in September 2012 and its housing requirement figure was not based on the most recent housing need assessment. The Core Strategy is also more than 5 years old which is a threshold in the National Planning Policy Framework for determining whether a Plan is up-to-date. Given the position of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, and the introduction of the Government’s Standard Method for calculating housing need, there statutory need to produce a new Local Plan.
- 4.5 The creation of the new Council administrative area provides a positive justification to producing a new Local Plan to reflect the aims, aspirations and direction of travel for the new Council. In accordance the Local Government (Boundary Changes) Regulations 2018, we must adopt a local development document under section 23 of the 2004 Act to apply to the whole of the area within a period of 5 years starting with the reorganisation date.
- 4.6 The geographical scope of the new Local Plan is the administrative boundary of Somerset West and Taunton but excludes the Exmoor National Park which has its own Local Planning Authority.
- 4.7 The Local Plan plan-making process must comply with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. We are at the very first stage of the process where we gather evidence, identify issues and present options for consultation (Regulation 18). Regulation 18 should involve some public consultation but it is up to the Council to decide what form this consultation takes and what each stage covers before the more formal consultation required at Regulation 19.
- 4.8 We have set out in the Local Development Scheme (for approval at Full Council on 16th July 2019) the timetable of the various stages of the Local Plan which is, in summary:

- Consultation on the Issues and Options Document (Reg 18) document in Q3 of 2019/20;
- Publication of a Draft Local Plan (Reg 19) in Q2 of 2020/21;
- Submit the Plan to the Secretary of State (Reg 22) in Q3 of 2020/21.
- Examination hearings (Reg 24) with appointed Planning Inspector - Q1 of 2021/22.
- Local Plan adopted in Q3 of 2021/22.

The Issues and Options Document (**Appendix A**) incorporates views made by the Local Plan Member Steering Group when the draft document was considered by them on the 23rd October 2019. Amendments were made to the document to that cover:

- Reference to the Equalities Action Plan;
- An explanation of carbon neutrality and increasing the emphasis of energy efficiency and renewable energy in achieving carbon neutrality ;
- Rewording the draft objectives to make them more focussed;
- Requiring cabling for electric vehicle charging or chargers in new development;
- Referencing support for community de-centralised renewable energy schemes;
- Adding clarity to the section on the settlements tiers;
- Amending text around lifetime housing;
- Requiring full-fibre connections to the cabinet and premises;
- Referencing the allocation of sites for tree planting;
- Referencing exploring opportunities for Local Green Space designations;
- Including a 'summary' section of the key messages

- 4.9 The Issues and Options document is the first stage Local Plan process. It sets out the draft objectives for the Local Plan and the social, environmental and economic issues we face in Somerset West and Taunton including any differences across the District. It includes proposed policies for the Local Plan and, where we are unsure of the best approach, reasonable options for policies that we could include. The consultation asks for views on the Objectives, Issues and Options presented.
- 4.10 The Issues and Options document will be desktop published before publication. Formal public consultation will be in line with our approved Statement of Community Involvement (see Agenda of this Committee) and is anticipated to take place for a period of 6 weeks from Monday 13th January to Monday 24th February 2020. As part of this we will hold some public exhibitions.
- 4.11 The document will be available (in its pre-desk top published form) prior to the formal consultation period as it is made publicly available for this Executive meeting. We also intend to consult on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and a Habitats Regulation Assessment (to avoid adverse impacts on sites and species of European importance) at the same time.
- 4.12 Following the consultation, we will review the comments received and produce a report which will form part of the evidence base for the next stage of the Plan-making

process. We will also be reviewing and updating the evidence base to inform the next stage.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

5.1 A new Corporate Strategy to replace those previously prepared for Taunton Deane and West Somerset was approved at Full Council on 8 October 2019. The Local Plan is an important document which will help articulate and translate the Council's emerging strategic objectives into planning policy. This decision is linked to delivering the following Corporate Strategy themes:

- *“A low-carbon, clean, green and prosperous district that attracts high quality employment opportunities and encourages healthy lifestyles”*
- *“A district which offers a choice of good quality homes for our residents, whatever their age and income, in communities where support is available for those who need it”*

6 Finance / Resource Implications

6.1 The estimated cost for delivering the Local Plan Issues and Options consultation in this paper will be £2,000, to be spent on publicity and consultation during the 2019-20 financial year. The estimated cost for delivering the full completion of the Local Plan review will be £266,540, to be spent on evidence base studies and Examination in Public during the 2018-19 to 2021-22 financial years. Officer time has not been quantified as a cost but will be a priority call on existing staff resources.

6.2 £148,540 of these costs will be funded from existing resources held within the Local Plan earmarked reserve and it's requested that the remaining funding of £118,000 be included as a pressure within the MTFP (£82,000 within 2020/21 and £36,000 within 2021/22), this will be included within the budget setting reports to future meetings.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The Council's Constitution describes how Somerset West and Taunton will discharge its responsibilities, including responsibilities for the preparation and adoption of the Local Plan, which must be considered and endorsed by Full Council, prior to adoption.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications

8.1 The climate emergency, and our response to it, is a strong theme running throughout the document. The proposed policies aim to mitigate the climate emergency and adapt to its effects. It covers issues including reducing carbon emissions through walking, cycling and public transport, the location of development in sustainable locations, the energy efficiency of buildings, renewable energy, biodiversity enhancements, tree planting and flood risk. Comments on the Issues document by Scrutiny on 12 June 2019 helped embed this within the document.

8.2 The Local Plan is ultimately examined against its sustainability credentials as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. This is tested through an Examination in Public by an independent Planning Inspector and through Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment (Background Papers)

which will be prepared as part of the plan making process.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 None at this stage.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 None at this stage. In order to comply with the public sector equality duty: an Impact Assessments (IA) accompanies this series of reports and agenda items on the Local Plan (enclosed as Appendix B). Further Impact Assessments will be prepared in due course as part of the plan making process. Further, details of the process are also available from: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/equality-and-diversity/>

11 Social Value Implications

11.1 None at this stage.

12 Partnership Implications

12.1 As part of the Duty to Co-operate requirement (Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012), we will be expected to work with other public bodies, particularly neighbouring planning authorities and the County Council on any cross boundary strategic plan making issues to develop sound Local Plans.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

13.1 None at this stage.

14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 None at this stage.

15 Data Protection Implications

15.1 With permission from the consultee in line with the Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), personal data will be collected as part of the consultation on the Issues and Options document.

16 Consultation Implications

16.1 The consultation on this document will be in line with the Statement of Community Involvement (see Agenda of this Committee). This is the first stage of the Local Plan process and no previous consultation on this document has taken place. The results of this consultation will inform the next stage.

17 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)

17.1 The main comments and recommendations of Scrutiny on 12th June revolved around the earlier but related "Issues" document being stronger on how the Local Plan should respond to the climate emergency and specifically referring to the Council's target of working towards carbon neutrality by 2030.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny – No**
- **Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency: Once only

List of Appendices

| | |
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| Appendix A | Local Plan Issues and Options Document for consultation |
| Appendix B | Equality duty: Impact Assessments (IA) |

Background papers

- Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report and pre-Habitats Regulation Assessment
www.somersetwestandtaunton/localplan

Contact Officers

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Name | Laura Higgins |
| Direct Dial | 01984 600197 |
| Email | l.higgins@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk |

**Somerset West
and Taunton**

LOCAL PLAN 2040

Issues and Options document

Consultation Document

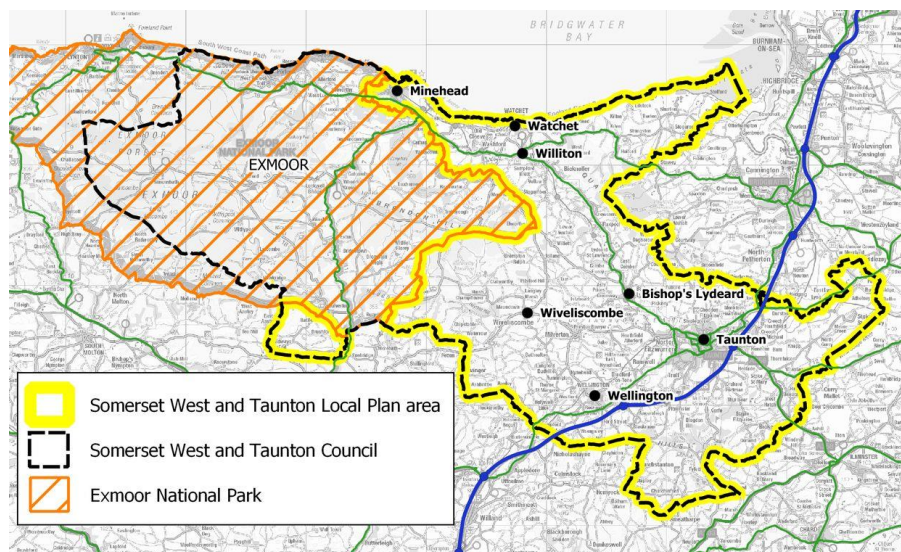
January 2020

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1 Introduction

A New Council, a New Local Plan

- 1.1 The new Somerset West and Taunton Council came into being on Monday 1 April 2019 and combined the former West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council into a brand new District council.
- 1.2 This is an exciting time for our area and we are keen to keep up momentum and progress with a new Local Plan. The Local Plan will set out the spatial strategy for where new development will be located over the next 20 years and set out our ambitions and aspirations for addressing issues affecting our area now and in the future.



This Issues and Options consultation document

- 1.3 This document is the first consultation stage in the Local Plan process. It has some brief facts about our area (Section 3) and draft Local Plan Objectives (Section 4). Section 5 sets out the key issues for the Local Plan and suggests ways in which we could address these and meet the Objectives through the Local Plan (otherwise known as 'Options'). Options are where we have not decided on the best course of action (and may be awaiting further technical evidence) and would like to hear your views.
- 1.4 Section 5 also sets out additional policy approaches that we intend to take forward into the Local Plan to meet the relevant Objective. We don't provide any alternative options to choose from for these approaches as we think these are the only reasonable things to do but we welcome views on these.
- 1.5 All the comments received before the consultation closes will be analysed and a summary report produced and published on our website. The responses will be carefully considered and used to help prepare the Draft Local Plan which will include detailed policy wording.

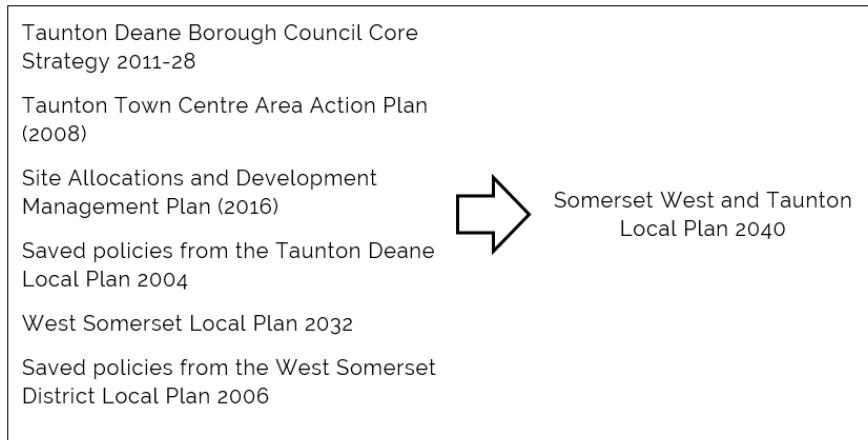
What about the existing Local Plan documents?

- 1.6 Many of the policies and allocations for new development within our current Local Plan documents¹ may still be relevant but it is important that we don't just roll forward existing policies. We must review our spatial strategy and policies in the light of up-to-date evidence and guidance.
- 1.7 Combined, our existing Local Plan documents contain a large number of allocations for new housing and employment. We will use updated evidence on need and deliverability to determine whether all of these are appropriate to be retained or if further sites are required.
- 1.8 Once the new Local Plan is adopted, the current Local Plan documents will all be superseded. Neighbourhood Plans will remain in place.

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulation Assessment

- 1.9 Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), is an important process when producing a Local Plan and is required by law². The SA process makes sure that the Local Plan considers improvements in environmental, social and economic matters and minimises any potential negative effects of the Local Plan. The first stage is the Scoping Report³ which identifies issues and objectives which the Local Plan will be judged against. Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency were all consulted on this.
- 1.10 It is also required by law⁴ for us to consider the impacts of the Local Plan on European designated sites including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites of which there are a number within or close to our area. This process is called the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA).

Evidence



- 1.11 Local Plan policies must be justified with up-to-date evidence. Evidence could be in the form of data, information or technical reports by experts. We will need to gather some new evidence to develop our new Local Plan policies.

The Council's Corporate Strategy and other strategies

- 1.12 The Corporate Strategy sets out the high-level priorities for the Council. The two themes relevant to the Local Plan are:
- *A low-carbon, clean, green and prosperous district that attracts high quality employment opportunities and encourages healthy lifestyles*
 - *A district which offers a choice of good quality homes for our residents, whatever their age and income, in communities where support is available for those who need it*
- 1.13 Other Council strategies are also relevant to the Local Plan including the Taunton Garden Town Vision, the Carbon Neutrality & Climate Resilience Plan, Waterways Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, Taunton Transport Strategy, Taunton Cultural Strategy and the Equalities Action Plan.
- 1.14 Other local strategies include the Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24, the Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24, the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2031, Somerset's Future Transport Plan 2011-2026 and the forthcoming Somerset Housing Strategy and Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy.
- 1.15 We have joined many other local authorities across the UK in declaring a climate emergency and we have committed to working towards making the Council and district as a whole carbon neutral by 2030. 'Carbon Neutrality' means balancing a measured amount of carbon released with an equivalent amount absorbed, removed or offset. This would achieve 'net-zero carbon emissions'.

- 1.16 The emerging Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan responds to the IPCC report⁵ to set out our actions to deliver or support the carbon neutrality target.
- 1.17 The Local Plan plays a key role in mitigating and adapting to the climate emergency and we are also legally required to make sure that development and use of land contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change⁶.
- 1.18 The new Local Plan will have mitigation of and adaptation to the climate emergency at its heart and these measures will not be viewed as an optional extra or "nice to have". The Local Plan will look to push the boundaries of planning policy to deliver Carbon Neutrality.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.19 The National Planning Policy Framework⁷ sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Local Plans must be in line with the NPPF.
- 1.20 The Local Plan will cover many issues such as the climate emergency and flood risk; the location and design of development; transport and infrastructure needs; new homes, businesses, shops, leisure and community facilities; the protection and enhancement of our heritage, landscapes, local character and improving biodiversity.

What Happens Next?

- 1.21 This Issues and Options document is part of Stage 1. All the comments received before the consultation closes will be analysed and a summary report produced and published on our website. The responses will be carefully considered and, along with technical evidence, will to help prepare the draft Local Plan (Stage 2).

| | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|--|-------------|
| Stage 1 | Evidence gathering (Reg 18) | Includes the consultation on this Issues and Options document (Jan-Feb 2020), draft Sustainability Appraisal of alternatives, Habitat Regulation | We are here |
|---------|-----------------------------|--|-------------|

| | | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|--|--------------|
| | | Assessment production of technical evidence | |
| Stage 2 | Draft Plan (Reg 19) | Consultation on draft policies, potential development locations and supporting information, informed by the previous stage and further technical evidence | Jul-Sep 2020 |
| Stage 3 | Publication version of the Plan | Consultation on the revised plan, changed in light of the previous stage and further evidence gathering. Plan and comments go to the Planning Inspector | Oct-Dec 2020 |
| Stage 4 | Planning Inspector's hearings | An independent Planning Inspector examines the plan, evidence and comments made. The Inspector holds hearing sessions to discuss the 'soundness' of the plan | Apr-Jun 2021 |
| Stage 5 | Plan is adopted | The plan is adopted and is used to inform local planning policy and decisions on planning applications | Sep-Dec 2021 |

How to get involved

[consultation dates, methods and contact details to be inserted]

2 Summary

[to be inserted]

3 About our area

- 3.1 The Local Plan covers the whole of the former West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council excluding Exmoor National Park (ENPA) which has its own separate Local Plan. Somerset is a two tier local authority area and Somerset County Council is responsible for preparing the Minerals and Waste Local Plans. We will continue to work closely with the ENPA and the County Council to ensure that our Plans relate well to each other.
- 3.2 The largest settlements of Taunton and Wellington have good access to the transport network. The northern part of our area is characterised by a series of coastal communities and we have a large area of rural communities which have a poor road network. This has influenced how the settlements have developed over time with housing and employment growth occurring in the more accessible locations.
- 3.3 The quality of the landscape and setting of our area is of a particularly high standard including the Blackdown Hills and Quantocks Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Somerset Levels and Moors to the east and Brendon Hills in the west. The Severn Estuary and Somerset Levels and Moors are recognised as Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar sites whilst there are also five Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) at Exmoor and Quantock Oakwoods, Severn Estuary, Hestercombe House, Quants and Holme Moor, Clean Moor. There are 25 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as well as over 480 local/County wildlife sites within the District.
- 3.4 Our 53 Conservation Areas, nearly 3,000 Listed Buildings, over 2,200 recorded archaeological sites, 87 Scheduled Monuments, 9 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, and 73 areas of High Archaeological Potential provide us with a rich heritage and contribute to the cultural value of our area.
- 3.5 Along the coast there are areas vulnerable to sea flooding between Blue Anchor and Minehead. There is also a risk of river flooding across the District particularly from the Rivers Tone, Exe, Parrett and tributaries and a risk of extensive flooding in the Somerset Levels and Moors and these risks are projected to increase with climate change.
- 3.6 There is a significantly higher proportion of over 65s (33.7%) compared to the UK (22.2%) and Somerset (31.9%) and there are noticeable differences across the district with 29.3% of former Taunton Deane population over 65 whilst 50.8% of former West Somerset are over 65⁸. There are parts of Taunton which fall within the 10% most deprived parts of the country⁹.
- 3.7 The ratio of house prices to earnings is one measure of how affordable it is to buy a property. 'Lower quartile' price provides an indication of the entry level house price in a local market, typically those purchased by first-time buyers. In 2018, there was a lower quartile house price to earnings ratio¹⁰ of 9.87 in former West Somerset and 8.55 in former Taunton Deane. With mortgage lenders capping the ratio at 4.5 times¹¹, this shows how challenging it is to buy a home in this area.
- 3.8 Unemployment in Somerset West and Taunton is 3.2% which is below the Great Britain average of 4.2%¹².

4 Objectives

These are our proposed Objectives which will set the framework for the Local Plan policies.

Objectives question: Do you agree that these are the right Objectives for the Local Plan?

| |
|--|
| Objective 1 To ensure all new development works towards the District's "carbon neutrality by 2030" target |
| Objective 2 To enhance the role of Taunton town centre in the sub-region and to strengthen the function, vitality and self-containment of all our towns |
| Objective 3 To provide a sufficient and varied supply of high quality and affordable homes to meet the needs of all sections of our communities |
| Objective 4 To create a prosperous, resilient and entrepreneurial economy ensuring competitiveness across the wider sub-region and attracting the most talented workers to the District |
| Objective 5 To ensure that new development is supported by essential infrastructure in a timely manner |
| Objective 6 To achieve a major change in travel behaviour towards walking, cycling and public transport and to reduce the need to travel |
| Objective 7 To protect and enhance the environmental, historic, economic and wellbeing value of the District's distinctive landscapes biodiversity and local character. |
| Objective 8 To boost tourism, economic development, agricultural transformation and deliver more affordable homes in our rural and coastal communities |
| Objective 9 To improve wellbeing, inclusivity and a reduction in inequalities enabling independence and facilitating social interaction |

5 Issues and options

This section sets out what we consider to be key issues for our Local Plan that relate to an objective. It focusses on the matters where we need your input to help us agree a way forward. The sub-sections are generally set out in this format:

The structure of Section 5:

5.1.1 This sub-heading is a key issue for our Local Plan

The grey box sets out some **Options** that relate to the key issue and a **question** about it. This will help us decide the policy that will go in the Local Plan

The white box lists **additional policy approaches** relating to the Objective. These are policy approaches that we intend to include in the Local Plan. We ask a **question** about whether you agree with these.

5.1 Carbon neutrality

Objective 1 - To ensure all new development works towards the District's "carbon neutrality by 2030" target

5.1.1 Issue: Achieving carbon reduction from new development

To achieve carbon neutrality (see 1.15), we must achieve minimum fabric energy efficient standards measures and use low and zero carbon technologies to limit on site built emissions particularly as the Government has a target of no new gas connections after 2025.

The Government is consulting on proposals to increase the energy efficiency requirements to future-proof homes with low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency to be introduced by 2025¹³. Before any changes come in, it is crucial that the Local Plan policy requires carbon reduction from new

development above and beyond the current minimums set out in Building Regulations¹⁴.

The policy would set a carbon reduction requirement expressed as a series of percentage reduction improvements over Building Regulations progressing towards zero carbon. The policy would be flexible as to how this could be achieved as different approaches might suit different contexts and we would not want to stifle innovation.

We need to decide at what date we will require all new developments to be zero carbon. This is a balance between the need for urgent action, the need for new homes to address the housing crisis, and the priority for other infrastructure and policy requirements in assessing viability of development. In exceptional circumstances, the Local Plan could also consider the use of carbon offsetting financial contributions if a development can't meet the requirements, but this should be a last resort.

Option 1a: Achieving carbon reduction from new development

A policy which requires a stepped carbon reduction improvement over Building Regulations, incorporation of on-site renewable energy (with the specific approach to meeting the requirement being reasonably flexible) and potentially allowing for carbon offsetting in certain circumstances. Steps towards requiring zero carbon development could be:

- i) Short-term (e.g. by 2025); or
- ii) Medium-term (e.g. by 2030).

Adoption of zero carbon requirements any later than 2030 is not thought to be a reasonable response to the climate emergency.

Question 1a: *Should we aim to require that all new development is 'zero carbon' by as soon as possible (e.g. by 2025) or give slightly more time (e.g. by 2030) for developers to adapt their design approaches, materials and suppliers?*

5.1.2 Issue: Delivering low carbon and renewable energy infrastructure

It is essential that our energy sector moves from fossil fuels such as coal to low carbon and renewable technologies. Wind farms on land are the best value for money per tonne of carbon saved, and the cost of solar PV panels has reduced significantly in the last few years. The Local Plan will set a positive and proactive policy position encouraging low carbon and renewable energy generating

infrastructure. This could take the form of a simple, criteria-based policy that sets out the circumstances when such developments would be acceptable.

To achieve the target of carbon neutrality by 2030, the Council will need to set a policy framework that encourages the maximum capacity of generation possible so we are considering whether it is best to directly allocate sites or simply indicate suitable areas for such developments.

Question 1b: *Should we allocate sites for specific renewable energy development or identify broad areas which we consider suitable?*

Option 1b: Delivering low carbon and renewable energy infrastructure

Include a policy that will encourage and support new low carbon and renewable energy infrastructure developments in line with specific criteria and also:

Option i) Allocate specific sites; or

Option ii) Identify suitable areas for development of such infrastructure through criteria based policies

We propose these additional policy approaches to meet Objective 1:

Question 1c: *Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?*

- 1c/1** Set a target to achieve carbon neutrality across the district by 2030 and require developments to consider and demonstrate their impact on the district achieving this target (this policy is in addition to carbon reduction design requirements placed on new development – Option 1a)
- 1c/2** Require the integration of sustainable, adaptable and resilient design into new developments to ensure they are future-proofed, requiring cabling ready for the installation of electric vehicle charging or electric vehicle chargers in all new residential parking spaces
- 1c/3** Encourage and enable the sustainable retrofit of existing buildings and communities
- 1c/4** Support community de-centralised renewable energy schemes and microgeneration
- 1c/5** Protect best and most versatile agricultural land and sets criteria as to when it is acceptable for its loss, protect soil quality and require mitigation from developments to avoid detrimental impacts
- 1c/6** Allow for and facilitate rural diversification where it will enable farmers to change practices and deliver ecosystem services
- 1c/7** Maximise the efficiency and convenience of recycling with a policy ensuring good accessibility for waste/recycling vehicles in new developments and the good design of waste and recycling facilities for homes

5.2 Sustainable locations

Objective 2 - To enhance the role of Taunton town centre in the sub-region and to strengthen the function, vitality and self-containment of all our towns

5.2.1 Issue: The settlement tiers

An important part of the Local Plan in responding to the climate emergency and meeting our Carbon Neutrality target by 2030 is our settlement strategy – this is where new development will be located. To mitigate the effects of climate change it is essential that new development is directed to the most sustainable locations that maximise accessibility by sustainable modes of transport, minimise the need to travel, is close to jobs and services, is focussed on brownfield land as much as possible and away from areas of flood risk.

New development should put people rather than vehicles at its heart. It should facilitate easy access to day-to-day services and be designed to prioritise walking, cycling, and the use of public transport to provide real choices for everyone. Development in sustainable locations drives up the viability of public transport services to those locations, creating the opportunity to further improve services and living conditions. Transport considerations need to be fundamental to the Local Plan process and not retrofitted later.

Our two former district areas have their own separate settlement strategies for the location of new development. The challenge for the Local Plan is to develop a new coherent sustainable strategy covering the whole Local Plan area.

There are a large number of housing commitments (planning permissions) in our area which give an existing pattern of new development or 'direction of travel' particularly a commitment to deliver Garden Town communities at Monkton Heathfield, Comeytrowe and Staplegrove and associated infrastructure at Taunton.

This existing strategy of focussing development at our largest town is sustainable and appropriate to our Local Plan and Corporate Plan objectives. Taunton has the most comprehensive bus network in our area and a rail station. It is the home of major employers, education and health facilities and services. For these reasons we will continue to focus most development at Taunton.

The level of settlements beneath Taunton has been reviewed as part of Topic Paper 1⁵ (Table 8). This is a very high level assessment and is a 'first draft' to start the discussion. The position of settlements will be refined with further work.

Question 2a: Do you agree with the tiers that identifies Taunton followed by 5 tiers covering the other settlements. If not, what changes would you make and why?

Question 2b: Do you think Watchet and Williton should be seen as associated settlements for the purposes of the Local Plan due to their close proximity and in complementing the services of each other (and therefore be in a higher tier to Bishops Lydeard and Wiveliscombe)?

The settlement tiers

- Tier 1 - Strategic Growth Garden Town: **Taunton**
- Tier 2 - Sub-strategic town: **Wellington**
- Tier 3 - Coastal Town (Major Rural Centre): **Minehead/Alcombe**
- Tier 4 - Rural Centres: **Bishops Lydeard, Watchet, Williton, Wiveliscombe**
- Tier 5 - Minor Rural Centres: **Bicknoller, Carhampton, Churchinford, Cotford St Luke, Creech St Michael, Crowcombe, Kilve, Milverton, North Curry, Stogumber, Stogursey, West Quantoxhead, Washford**
- Tier 6 - Villages: **Ashbrittle, Ash Priors, Battleton, Bishopswood, Blagdon Hill, Bradford-on-Tone, Brompton Ralph, Brushford, Burrowbridge, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Combe Florey, Corfe, Dunster Marsh, Fitzhead, Halse, Hatch Beachamp, Henlade, Holford, Kingston St Mary, Langford Budville, Lydeard St Lawrence, Nynehead, Oake, Pitminster, Ruishton, Sampford Arundel, Stoke St Gregory, West Bagborough, West Buckland, West Monkton**
- Tier 7 - Other smaller settlements and communities (not listed)

The position of settlements in the lower tiers (particularly Tiers 4-7) may change following further work on the Role and Function of settlements which will look at issues including population, public transport, travel time/carbon emissions, facilities, shops, jobs and development constraints as these may have changed since the existing Local Plans were adopted. This work will be prepared to inform the next stage of the Local Plan.

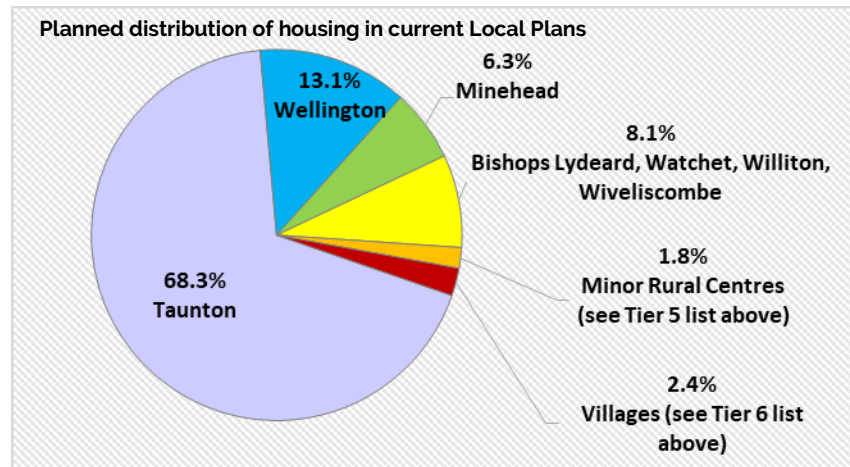
[To be inserted – Map of settlements]

5.2.2 Issue: The distribution of housing

We also need to decide how much new housing will be directed to each tier. At the moment we haven't decided upon our final housing requirement figure (see section 5.3.1. Option 3a) as we are still gathering technical evidence (a Housing Needs Assessment) so we cannot yet precisely suggest the number of homes per tier.

What we can look at now is whether we should be doing anything different to our current Local Plans in terms of where we should focus housing particularly as we are trying to reduce the need to travel and encourage use of public transport, walking and cycling to jobs and services.

Currently, the combined housing planned for in our current Local Plans is distributed in the following way:



The pie chart shows the planned distribution of housing. The reality of where growth has come forward first has been on greenfield sites in Wellington and Rural Centres and Villages including Bishops Lydeard, Creech St Michael, Churchinford and North Curry. Part of this has been that these are all greenfield sites which had little constraints. Taunton delivery has been steady but has more constraints due to infrastructure and viability issues. Brownfield town centre sites have struggled due to the economic crisis in 2008 but progress is now happening on some key town centre sites.

Minehead, Watchet and Williton are not delivering as much housing as planned¹⁶. We will need to look at why this is and what it means for the new Local Plan.

Topic Paper 1 has looked at ways in which we could distribute housing with three out of eight options¹⁷ potentially compatible with the draft Local Plan objectives and sustainable development. These are:

Topic Paper 1 Option B Current Local Plan Strategies existing proportions of development;

Topic Paper 1 Option D Taunton increase, Minor Rural Centres reduction. This retains some development to support the vibrancy of villages (Tier 6) but redistributes some housing from Tier 5 to Tier 1;

Topic Paper 1 Option E Taunton and Wellington increase, Minehead and Rural centres reduction. This retains some development to support the vibrancy of Tiers 5 and 6 but redistributes housing from Tiers 3 and 4 to Tiers 1 and 2.

Importantly, the housing requirement figures in our current Local Plans are significantly higher than the new Standard Method figure required by the Government (Option 3a). This means that even if the proportion of housing development increases in any of the tiers, it is possible (depending on the outcome of Option 3a) that the number of homes directed to any of the tiers may still be fewer than the current Local Plan requirement.

Once we have refined the housing requirement figure we will be able to indicate the number of dwellings for each tier. There are many factors in deciding whether a place is suitable for development. We will look at characteristics and constraints of individual settlements which may limit their suitability for housing growth.

The distribution of housing

Question 2c: Do you think we should carry on with the way housing is currently distributed across our area (see pie chart) or should we be doing something different, such as one of the three options suggested above?

Some things to think about are:

- i) whether the current distribution (pie chart) is best for our area in terms of delivering sustainable development and responding to the climate emergency;
- ii) whether Taunton, as the most sustainable place, should take a higher proportion of new housing so that smaller and less sustainable towns and villages receive a lower proportion but still maintain their vitality;

- iii) whether Taunton's highway network (even with a major shift in travel behaviour to public transport, walking and cycling) is a constraint to new large scale housing development;
- iv) whether both Taunton and Wellington should take a higher proportion of new housing given that Wellington may improve its sustainability if a rail station opens there;
- v) whether Watchet and Williton, being closer to major employment towns of Taunton and Bridgwater and close to Hinkley Point C, should be more of a focus for housing development than Minehead which is further away and more remote;
- vi) whether settlements closer to the M5 corridor should have a higher proportion of development (than those closer to the coast) due to their higher land values and ability to deliver new housing.

Further information on Objective 2

Site selection

As discussed in Section 5.3, we already have commitments (planning permission granted) of 6,177 dwellings and further sites identified as deliverable¹⁸ of 7,911 dwellings¹⁹ coming forward under the existing Local Plan policies including new Garden Neighbourhoods at Taunton (Monkton Heathfield, Comeytrowe and Staplegrove).

Further strategic housing allocations may not be required but this will depend on our final housing requirement figure which is yet to be determined.

Even though we have large numbers of housing allocated in the existing Local Plans, the sites should still be appraised to confirm whether allocations are still appropriate. The first stage of the assessments are part of the Sustainability Appraisal²⁰ (SA) which considers the sites against environmental, economic and social criteria. The sites assessed came from the most recent Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments²¹ (SHLAA).

For the next stage of the Local Plan, these sites will be looked at in terms of their suitability for development in relation to the settlement strategy that we decide to take forward (Section 5.2) and whether the site is likely to be delivered. At that stage we will also consider any new sites suggested to us through our ongoing 'call for sites'²². This information will help create a map that sets out our pattern of development.

We propose these additional policy approaches to meet Objective 2:

- 2b/1** Ensure development proposals demonstrate how they will reduce the need to travel through their location, design and infrastructure and where appropriate, providing a mix of uses
- 2b/2** Making the most effective and efficient use of land, giving preference to the recycling of previously developed land where this aligns with the settlement strategy and other policies
- 2b/3** Support for higher densities in town centres and on public transport routes
- 2b/4** Support for small sites that are in line with the settlement strategy and other policies and encouragement for Neighbourhood Plans to allocate small sites

Question 2d: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?

5.3 New and affordable homes

Objective 3 - To provide a sufficient and varied supply of high quality and affordable homes to meet the needs of all sections of our communities

5.3.1 Issue: Providing the right number of new homes

The Local Plan will have a housing requirement figure and must have pro-active policies to help deliver this amount of housing. The Government's 'Standard Method' calculates our minimum figure which is 702 dwellings per year totalling 14,040 dwellings over 20 years.

To put this in context, we already have commitments (planning permission granted) of 6,177 dwellings and further sites identified as deliverable²³ of 7,911 dwellings²⁴. These total 14,088 dwellings and with many further sites identified as developable²⁵²⁶ and small windfall sites continuing to come forward the housing supply in our area is very healthy and it is unlikely that any further significant allocations will need to be made if we use 702 as our annual requirement figure. We will check the suitability of known sites against the spatial strategy that we take forward (see Section 5.2.2).

We must decide if we should use this 702 figure or a higher figure. We will produce technical evidence to understand what the higher figure might be. Reasons for a higher figure could be:

- to deliver an economic growth strategy that needs more housing to support it (see Issue 5.4.1) to be informed by the Economic Development (Prosperity) Strategy;
- to support strategic infrastructure improvements;
- To deliver unmet need from neighbouring planning authorities (Exmoor National Park);
- whether past higher housing delivery rates are justification for a higher target

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing. Affordable housing is a key priority for the Council, particularly social rented housing which helps those households in greatest need. Affordable housing is usually delivered by housebuilders as a legal requirement. The Local Plan will set out the percentage of new dwellings on a site that must be affordable. It is likely that we will set out the tenure requirement focussed on social rented

affordable housing in a Supplementary Planning Document. We will investigate opportunities to deliver key worker housing. We will update our evidence of need and we will produce a Viability Assessment to make sure that the percentage and tenure of affordable housing we ask for does not make development unviable (see Section 5.5.1).

Option 3a: Providing the right number of new homes

- To reflect the Standard Method (minimum of **14,040** dwellings over 20 years 2020-40 or **702** dwellings per year); or
- To use a higher housing requirement figure with the precise figure to be determined following further work. To be informed by:
 - Economic growth strategies;
 - The need to support strategic infrastructure improvements;
 - The need to accommodate any unmet need from neighbouring planning authorities;
 - Existing delivery rates (existing Local Plan requirement is a minimum of **19,900** dwellings over 20 years 2020-40 or **995** dwellings per year);

Question 3a: *Should our housing requirement figure match the Government's minimum figure of 702 dwellings per year or should we have a higher figure?*

5.3.2 Issue: Providing pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Government guidance requires us to identify sites for pitches for at least 10 years-worth of need²⁷, providing certainty for travellers, for the resident population and minimise unauthorised encampments. However, this is a significant challenge as it relies on landowners being willing to release land for pitches which, compared to general housing, has a much lower land value.

Option 3b: Providing pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- Apply rural exceptions criteria for small scale residential sites where pitches which would be affordable in perpetuity. and/or
- Require a proportion of development sites to provide an area for residential Traveller pitches; and/or

- iii) Allocating sites specifically for pitches.

Question 3b: *How should we proactively plan for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches?*

5.3.3 Issue: Providing accessible and lifetime homes

In our area there is a high and growing proportion of older people²⁸. Housing to suit the needs of older people could be as bungalows, or could be as homes which can be adapted to meet a change in people's needs over their lifetime. Such housing should be in locations with good access to services and facilities.

With a higher than average proportion of people with a long-term health problem or disability that limits a person's day to day activities²⁹ there is a need for housing which has high accessibility standards, is adaptable or fully wheelchair accessible. The Local Plan can require a proportion of dwellings to meet any of these categories. Including these dwellings affects the viability of development so a balance will need to be taken against other requirements (see Section 5.5.1).

Option 3c: Providing accessible and lifetime homes

- i) Do not require specific measures for adaptable, accessible and wheelchair homes
- ii) Require a proportion of dwellings to meet the category standard as set out in Building Regulations Part M. The proportion would be determined through evidence of need and the forthcoming Viability Assessment.

Question 3c: *Should we require all new housing developments to make sure that a percentage of the new homes are designed to be accessible, adaptable and wheelchair accessible?*

5.3.4 Issue: Providing custom self-build plots

The Government expects us to give suitable permission to enough plots of land to meet the demand for custom self build (CSB) and we are currently delivering enough sites to comply with this. We need to consider whether the Local Plan should be pro-active towards CSB. It is not affordable housing (by definition) in its own right but it could be a method of delivering affordable housing, typically as affordable low-cost market (intermediate) housing.

Option 3d: Providing custom self-build plots

- i) A positive encouragement policy, including for community-led projects, and leave the housing market to deliver plots as and when demand arises; and/or
- ii) Identify and allocate specific sites for self-build plots in locations related to where people want to live according to our self-build register; and/or
- iii) Include a requirement for all housing development sites over a threshold to include a proportion of plots as self-build plots; and/or
- iv) Allow self-build plots on Rural Exception sites provided that they are secured as affordable housing in perpetuity.

Question 3d: *Should we allocate sites and/or make sure a percentage of housing developments are for self-built plots for people wanting to build their own homes? Should we allow self-build plots on Rural Exceptions sites provided that they are affordable?*

We propose these additional policy approaches to meet Objective 3:

- 3e/1** Requiring affordable housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or greater (matching the Planning Practice Guidance)
- 3e/2** A percentage requirement of affordable housing on residential and mixed use sites with residential to be informed by a Viability Assessment and a balance of other developer contributions (See Section 5.5.1)
- 3e/3** A tenure mix requirement with the intermediate tenures limited to those evidenced as affordable in our area. Tenure mix to be informed by evidence of need and a Viability Assessment
- 3e/4** A housing size mix to reflect need in our area. A Supplementary Planning Document or Technical Advice Note could provide more detail
- 3e/5** Support for:
- Specialist housing for older people in sustainable locations close to public transport, services and facilities which follows HAAP1 (Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) principles of design
 - Affordable housing on Rural Exception sites
 - Permanent and temporary housing for rural workers
- 3e/6** Requiring internal space of dwellings to meet the Government's space standards³⁰
- 3e/7** Policy detail to guide development for outdoor space requirements; conversions, alterations and extension; ancillary accommodation; subdivision of dwellings and live/work units

Question 3e: *Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?*

5.4 A prosperous economy

Objective 4 - To create a prosperous, resilient and entrepreneurial economy ensuring competitiveness across the wider sub-region and attracting the most talented workers to the District

5.4.1 Issue: Setting a strategic economic growth target

Our local economy is underpinned by jobs in public services; professional and other private services; tourism; wholesale and retail; and accommodation, food services and recreation. Construction will account for a larger percentage of jobs now that construction works at Hinkley Point C are under way.

For many years we have had high aspirations for attracting new businesses to the area but this has not been as successful as we hoped. The new Local Plan, along with the emerging Economic Development (Prosperity) Strategy will try to understand and address this issue.

The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership is seeking to double the size of the economy of the sub-region over 20 years³¹. This would be a high economic growth target and would require a significant increase in the number of jobs in our area. This may also require an increase in our housing target about the Standard Method (see Section 5.3.1).

However, we have a higher proportion of older people here compared to the national average, particularly nearer the coast. Fewer young people makes it a challenge for businesses to attract the talent and workforce that they demand and may choose not to locate here. A lack of labour is likely to act as a constraint to growth meaning a high economic growth scenario may not be realistic for our area.

Our emerging Economic Development (Prosperity) Strategy will set local economic growth targets which recognise the constraints in our labour supply so it would be more realistic and deliverable. It will still be ambitious in driving up productivity but it would do this through improving the quality of the jobs on offer rather than a significant increase in the number of jobs and associate housing.

Clean energy and digital technology have been identified as knowledge sectors of the economy that our area might focus upon³². Development that supports the circular economy of eliminating waste and the continual use of resources is important in mitigating climate change and minimising plastic waste and its harm on our environment. Providing opportunities for these sectors will give our area the best chance of achieving a strategic economic target and meeting the wider objectives of the Local Plan particularly around the climate change emergency.

For this reason, we will include a policy within the Local Plan that encourages and supports growth of these sectors.

Option 4a: Setting a strategic economic growth target

- i) Develop bespoke and realistic growth ambitions linked to the Council's Economic Development (Prosperity) Strategy (ie increase the proportion of higher value jobs within existing overall job numbers and not pursue a significant increase in job numbers overall); or
- ii) Align with the Heart of the South West growth ambitions (deliver a shift towards a significant increase in overall job numbers including higher value jobs)

Question 4a: Should we ensure the growth of our local economy through an increase in the proportion of higher value jobs (with limited increase of jobs overall) or through a significant increase in the number of jobs?

5.4.2 Issue: Making better use of employment sites

The Local Plan will help deliver economic growth through maintaining a range of good quality employment sites in sustainable locations so that businesses can stay in the area as they expand. Providing small start-up units as new build or subdivision of larger buildings will encourage micro business and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) particularly in the rural and coastal areas.

Many businesses can reduce their office space as more people work flexibly from home which also reduces their carbon footprint. Requiring full-fibre digital connectivity in housing and employment development will further encourage this.

Evidence³³ shows that we have too much new land allocated for employment compared to demand. We will review our employment sites in terms of their quality and sustainability and, informed by the forthcoming Economic Development (Prosperity) Strategy, whether or not they should be retained for alternative employment uses. Those that remain should be of the highest quality, have potential for modernisation, be attractive to employers and have links to the clean growth agenda. Often though the most attractive sites to employers are those with good car parking and road access so we will need to ensure that employment sites have good access to convenient public transport, or contribute to public transport improvements, otherwise this may not see a reduction in car-based traffic.

Option 4b: Making better use of employment sites

- i) Retain all existing and currently allocated employment sites; or
- ii) Allow the loss of specific sites for alternative uses – with a high flexibility buffer (i.e. fewer sites lost); or
- iii) Allow the loss of specific sites for alternative uses – with a low flexibility buffer (i.e. more sites lost); or
- iv) Develop flexible policy allowing for the loss of any existing/ proposed employment site subject to specific criteria

Question 4b: *Should we keep all of our existing employment sites and allocations in employment use or should we allow the loss of some to other uses? How should we decide which ones to lose?*

5.4.3 Issue: Improving the vitality of our town centres

Evidence³⁴ suggest that there is no need for any further retail or leisure sites in our area beyond existing planned sites. However, there are place-making benefits from having small-scale convenience shops (food, drink, newspapers etc), comparison shops (TVs, mobile phones, cars) and leisure uses including food and drink as part of new settlements/urban extensions.

With increased online shopping³⁵ and people choosing the convenience of travelling to out of town stores, our high streets may need to be less dependent on traditional retail shops in order to thrive. Our Local Plan should be more flexible to allow empty retail units to be used in a more diverse way by creative trades, pop-ups, libraries, exhibitions, markets, cultural events. If our shopping areas regularly offered something new they could attract more regular return visits.

Empty spaces above shops can be converted to flats or start up offices, and resisting out of town retail stores would add to the vibrancy of our towns with more people spending money locally. Making more efficient use of space in town centres can help address housing need. Section 5.10 covers Taunton town centre specifically.

We propose these additional policy approaches to meet Objective 4:

- 4c/1** Supporting clean energy and digital technology and infrastructure sectors
- 4c/2** Developing a circular economy in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, then recycle and regenerate products and materials
- 4c/3** Supporting the conversion of premises to employment and expansion of existing sites and premises to make best use of land and support existing business. Support the delivery of affordable employment sites.
- 4c/4** Integrate communal work hubs into new developments and existing communities, as well as encourage or require home offices to be included on a certain percentage of new dwellings
- 4c/5** Work to secure Local Labour Agreements with developers and contractors on allocated sites to secure job sustainability in construction industries by improving local skills and support proposals which strengthen the range and quality of training opportunities
- 4c/6** To encourage their success and vitality, define our network and hierarchy of town centres to focus new shops in town centres first, then edge of centres, and a requirement for impact assessments when proposals are not in town centres
- 4c/7** Allow our town centres to diversify to respond to changes in the retail and leisure industries, allow a suitable mix of uses (including housing) whilst reflecting their individual character. Encourage the use of vacant upper floors for other uses
- 4c/8** Show on the Policies Map the town centre, primary shopping areas and shopping frontages and make clear the range of uses permitted
- 4c/9** Policy detail to guide development for advertisements and shop fronts/signage

Question 4c: *Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?*

5.5 Infrastructure

Objective 5 - To ensure that new development is supported by essential infrastructure in a timely manner

5.5.1 Issue: Deciding on our priorities for developer contributions

Local Plans put expectations on new developments to deliver high quality development with infrastructure that supports the local community. These requirements have financial implications for developments. Our policies should be clear so that developers do not pay too much for a piece of land then calculating that they cannot afford to meet our policy requirements. To help us set our policy requirements at a level that is viable for development to go ahead, the Council has commissioned a Viability Assessment.

All policy requirements are important but no requirement can be too high that it makes development unviable so if one is raised, another may need to reduce. We want to understand what you think is most important out of these key policy requirements.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing meets the need of those unable to afford their own home and is mainly delivered by housebuilders as a legal requirement. It is the biggest influence on the viability of development. The type of tenure required will also affect viability where social rent is more costly compared to intermediate tenures (shared ownership, affordable rent, low cost market etc) (see Section 5.3). We will require a percentage of new homes on sites to be affordable.

Designing for the climate emergency

Carbon reduction targets and design requirements make developments more sustainable, adaptable and resilient to climate change but cost more than standard homes due to features such as special construction materials, renewable energy technology and electric charging points although this could be offset by such homes selling for more money (see Section 5.1.1).

Accessible, Adaptable and Wheelchair Accessible homes

We can require a proportion of homes on a site to be more accessible, adaptable or fully wheelchair accessible for those with long-term health issues. These homes have additional construction costs and take up more land as they often require greater internal space standards (see Section 5.3.3).

Contributions to strategic infrastructure

Contributions towards school place provision, transport improvements, sports and community facilities etc. is strategic infrastructure and are currently delivered either through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) ³⁶ (in the former Taunton Deane) or using Section 106 legal agreements (in the former West Somerset).

Under CIL, contributions towards strategic infrastructure are pooled together. Once the money is collected, the Council later decides what projects the money will be spent on rather than it being set out in the Local Plan. For this reason, the question below asks about strategic infrastructure in general rather than individual types.

The Council will continue to investigate opportunities, including bidding for Government funding, to deliver infrastructure as soon as possible subject to viability.

Option 5a: Deciding on our priorities for developer contributions

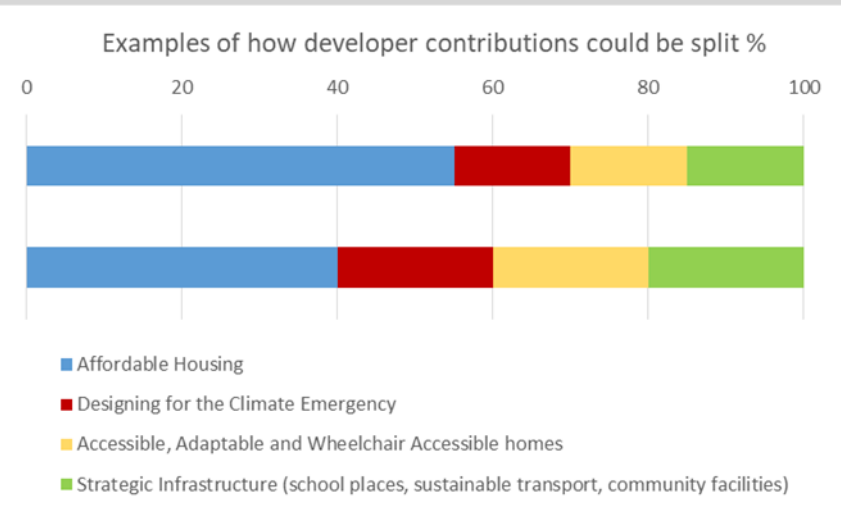
Affordable Housing is the biggest influence on viability so this option first asks whether we should prioritise affordable housing or not. Should we require:

- i) More affordable housing but lower design and infrastructure requirements; or
- ii) Less affordable housing but higher design and infrastructure requirements

Whether you prefer Option (a) or (b) we also want to know what you think is most important out of the following:

- Carbon reduction design/renewable energy infrastructure
- Accessible, adaptable or fully wheelchair accessible homes
- Strategic Infrastructure (School place provision; bus services, walking and cycling; community and sports facilities)

The chart shows two examples (i) is where affordable housing is a higher priority (ii) is where affordable housing is a lower priority. If any one of the types of infrastructure was increased, it would reduce how much money to go to other types of infrastructure



Question 5a: *On what infrastructure should we should prioritise developer contributions?*

We propose these additional policy approaches to meet Objective 5:

- 5b/1** Set out the approach of using viability assessments³⁷
- 5b/2** Set out the approach to infrastructure provision via S106 or CIL
- 5b/3** Policy detail to guide development for power lines and telecommunications equipment
- 5b/4** Policy for requiring water and sewerage infrastructure and for surface water to be disposed of using Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

Question 5b: *Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?*

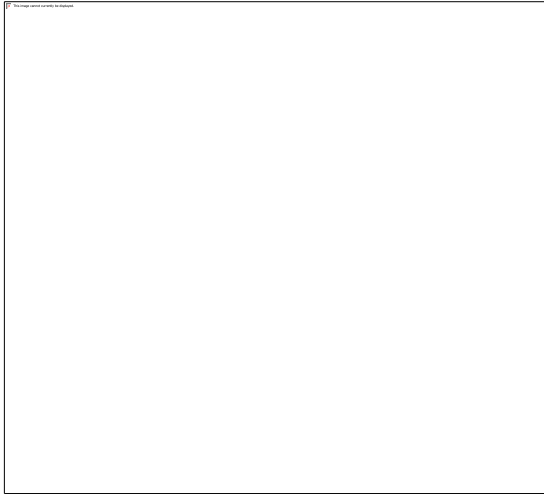
5.6 Connecting people

Objective 6 - To achieve a major change in travel behaviour towards walking, cycling and public transport and to reduce the need to travel

5.6.1 Issue: achieving a major change in travel behaviour

Movement

To mitigate the climate emergency our transport networks must be rebalanced in favour of more sustainable modes. We must provide more opportunities for people to reduce their need to travel, as well as walk, cycle and use public transport as an alternative to the private car. The spatial strategy (Section 5.2) plays a significant role in affecting the movement of people.



The Local Plan will ensure that the detailed design of all new development encourages people to walk and cycle with clear, safe and direct walking and cycling routes to shops, services and jobs. We will expect new development to contribute to improved bus routes as it can take many years for a new route to fund itself.

There is no up-to-date County-wide Transport Strategy so the Local Plan must take the lead in developing strong policies for public transport provision within our area and across to our neighbouring districts. We are also developing a Transport Strategy for Taunton. We need to work with the County Council to develop a network and infrastructure (such as bus priority and smart traffic management) which delivers benefits over using the car in terms of cost and/or journey time otherwise people won't use it. We must also consider how to improve strategic bus links such as a service from Williton to Bridgwater.

There has been a decrease in car ownership and driving licences especially in young people³⁸ so a convenient public transport network is essential in attracting

young people to work here. Recent improvements in real-time bus monitoring, ticketing apps, contactless payments, wifi on public transport and an increase in dockless bikes, on-demand and ride sharing services³⁹ all make public transport a more desirable option.

Digital connectivity

There is a need for high quality digital connectivity for residents, businesses and transport infrastructure⁴⁰. Our towns and some larger villages typically have access to superfast broadband but connection outside of these areas is extremely limited. The Government is proposing requiring all new build residential developments to be equipped with full fibre digital connections which our Local Plan will support.

The Government wants the UK to be a world leader in 5G mobile technology but this is frustrating for our rural areas, some of which have no mobile signal at all, or are only served by a single operator. The Local Plan should continue to support fixed mobile network infrastructure and support the effective use of rooftops and street furniture to accommodate mobile digital infrastructure, including small cells for 5G so that we are ready for the new technology. 5G rollout will rely on full-fibre connectivity and may potentially enable us to develop smarter transport and energy solutions in particular.

Question 6a: *How can we encourage people not to use their car when travelling into our towns for shopping and work? How can we provide more opportunities for using public transport in rural areas?*

We propose these additional policy approaches to meet Objective 6:

- 6b/1** New developments to be designed in line with Sport England's active design guidelines⁴¹ so that walking and cycling networks permeate through developments in a safe and convenient way
- 6b/2** Seek S106 contributions to develop new or enhance bus routes; developers to liaise with bus operators on highway design that facilitates new bus routes
- 6b/3** Policy detail to guide development for car and cycle parking standards; Travel Plans; Transport Assessments; protection and restoration of disused railway and canal corridors
- 6b/4** Ensure new residential developments are equipped with full fibre digital connections
- 6b/5** Support fixed mobile network infrastructure and support the effective use of rooftops and street furniture to accommodate mobile digital infrastructure where appropriate

Question 6b: *Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?*

5.7 The natural and historic environment

Objective 7 - To protect and enhance the environmental, historic, economic and wellbeing value of the District's distinctive landscapes, biodiversity and local character

[To be inserted – map of key constraints]

5.7.1 Issue: Achieving a net gain in biodiversity

Our natural environment is of huge value to local people in terms of health, well-being and recreation but is particularly at risk due to climate change specifically its effect on our biodiversity. IT is also at risk due to the cumulative effects of development.

The NPPF expects net gains in biodiversity from new development and so our new Local Plan will need to be strong in this regard. Somerset County Council has developed a procedure⁴² to assess how a development can provide net gains in biodiversity. Our Local Plan should require new development to follow this procedure. Trees provide habitats and wildlife corridors as well as shade, particularly in our towns, so opportunities could be explored to ensure further tree planting, of appropriate species, in new development and by allocating sites for tree planting.

Question 7a: *Are there any specific measures that you would like to see new developments deliver to improve biodiversity locally?*

5.7.2 Issue: Minimising flood risk

Rising sea levels and increased storm violence as a result of the climate emergency gives rise to a greater flood risk from the sea and rivers. This poses an increasing threat to new and existing development close to the parts of the coast and areas which are low-lying and/or which are unstable and vulnerable to rapid erosion and within or close to areas at risk from river flooding. We are updating our Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to ensure we avoid siting new development in areas of greatest flood risk.

5.7.3 Issue: Protecting our valued landscapes

The nationally protected landscapes of The Quantock Hills and Blackdown Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have the highest level of protection related to conservation and enhancement of the landscape and scenic quality, not only

through the NPPF but also the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The setting of these landscapes is however under considerable pressure with development encroaching closer to their boundaries. Statutory Management Plans are in place and are revised every 5 years⁴³. The Local Plan area adjoins Exmoor National Park so the impact of development on the setting of the national part is also important.

The Somerset Levels and Moors, which is internationally significant for wildlife, has a dramatic and unique landscape characterised by flat, wet meadows bordered by rhynes and ditches with low hills shaped by human history, farming and natural processes. There are Special Landscape Features within our area which should be protected from inappropriate development. As set out by the NPPF it is also important to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside despite areas not benefitting from having a designation.

5.7.4 Issue: Sustaining and enhancing the significance of our built heritage

The historic environment contributes to our sense of identity, knowledge and understanding. It is valued and should be protected from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension because of its cultural significance, special architectural features or historic interest. Effective management of the built heritage requires a clear understanding of what makes a place significant and how that significance might be vulnerable.

Historic England maintains a list of Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Parks and Gardens. The Local Authority is responsible for designating Conservation Areas. Our area has thousands of heritage assets, 26 of which are at risk including: Tonedale Mill, Tone Works, Sandhill Park, Barrow and Cairn Cemetery at Holford, St Audries Gardens and Wellington Conservation Area.

We propose these additional policy approaches to meet Objective 7:

- 7b/1** Maintain and enhance biodiversity, taking into account climate change and the need for habitats and species to adapt to it. Requirement of a net gain in biodiversity from new development using the Somerset Habitat Evaluation Procedure⁴⁴ which could include re-wilding and tree planting
- 7b/2** Protect and enhance the coherence and resilience of the ecological network and avoid/minimise the loss of or damage to trees, woodland and hedgerows
- 7b/3** Conserve and enhance the natural beauty and exceptional character and quality of the landscape in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- 7b/4** Protect the Somerset Levels and Moors, and the locally designated Special Landscape Features
- 7b/5** Protect, conserve or enhance landscape and townscape character whilst maintaining green wedges, green infrastructure networks and open breaks between settlements exploring opportunities for Local Green Space designations
- 7b/6** Avoid harm to, sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets and their setting. Require information to understand the significance of the heritage asset and sympathetic design
- 7b/7** Not worsen, and where possible improve the quality, quantity and availability of the water resource, reduce flood risk
- 7b/8** Focus development away from the areas at most risk of flooding. Ensure that flood risk is not exacerbated from increased surface water flows
- 7b/9** Protect the landscape, environmental quality, nature conservation, fisheries and recreational interest of water courses and wetlands and improve public access to, along and from our waterways
- 7b/10** Development on sites within the Bat and Wildfowl Consultation Zones will require a 'test of significance' under the Habitat Regulations to be carried out.
- 7b/11** Require evaluation of the archaeological value of sites where development affects a site of archaeological importance or an Area of High Archaeological Potential
- 7b/12** Allocate sites specifically for tree planting

Question 7b: *Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?*

5.8 Thriving coastal and rural communities

Objective 8 - To boost tourism, economic development, agricultural transformation and deliver more affordable homes in our rural and coastal communities

5.8.1 Issue: Managing development in rural settlements

The natural and built environment of our rural areas adds greatly to the quality of life resulting in high house prices and, coupled with low wages, means that many local people are priced out of the housing market. A lack of affordable housing and less traditional office and industrial employment space, particularly near the coast makes it difficult for young people to stay in the area.

Rural settlements have a variable and basic range of facilities such as a shop, pub, village hall, school and doctors' surgery but there are villages with no such facilities. Many smaller rural communities have extremely limited or no public transport provision and many lack safe footways.

We want to identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. However, there is a balance to be struck between a modest amount of new development, including both affordable and market housing, and harm to the character of a settlement.

A settlement boundary is a line drawn on a plan around a village, which distinguishes between what is considered to be its built form and the countryside. Different approaches are currently used in the former council areas. The former West Somerset area does not have settlement limits but instead it has a definition of the built-up area and a policy that within 50 metres of it would be considered for development⁴⁵. The former Taunton Deane area has defined settlement limits⁴⁶ for 35 of its towns and villages; other settlements without boundaries are classed as being in the open countryside.

These areas have very different development needs and pressures. There is significant development pressure around Taunton, Wellington, and Wiveliscombe and to some extent with some of the higher order settlements near Taunton (such as Creech St Michael, Henlade, Ruishton and Thornfalcon). The former West Somerset area does not have the same level of development pressure but a need remains for housing in this area, particularly affordable housing.

For further information on settlement boundaries see Topic Paper 2

Option 8a: Managing development in rural settlements

- i) Have settlement boundaries across the District; or
- ii) Do not have settlement boundaries but instead have a criteria based policy to determine development proposals against; or
- iii) Have a policy which is a hybrid of a) and b) where there are settlement boundaries only in areas of greater development pressure ie parts of the District that are more accessible - closer to the M5, Taunton and Wellington areas

Question 8a: *Should we keep or remove settlement boundaries? Or should we have settlement boundaries in areas where there is higher pressure from development i.e. closer to Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe but remove them in more remote areas to provide more options for development?*

We propose these additional policy approaches to meet

Objective 8:

- 8b/1** Criteria-based policy for when development in the countryside (outside of settlement limits) would be acceptable
- 8b/2** Support for sustainable tourism and facilities in settlements subject to criteria
- 8b/3** Support for farm diversification and transformation particularly where it responds to the need to address climate change impacts and mitigation.
- 8b/4** Policy to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land
- 8b/5** Criteria-based policy for the removal of agricultural/forestry occupancy conditions would be acceptable
- 8b/6** Ensure coastal development can take place without causing unacceptable damage to the coastal environment
- 8b/7** Limit development within the coastal change management areas and areas that are vulnerable to rapid coastal erosion.
- 8b/8** Ensure that Hinkley Point C nuclear power station proposals mitigate short and long term adverse cultural, economic, environmental and social impact and provides a net gain in biodiversity of the area

Question 8b: *Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?*

5.9 Wellbeing of our residents

Objective 9 - To improve wellbeing, inclusivity and a reduction in inequalities enabling independence and facilitating social interaction

5.9.1 Issue: Achieving high quality design to reduce inequalities

Local Plans should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places that promote social interaction, are safe and accessible and enable and support healthy lifestyles. The ability to access suitably designed and affordable housing is a key factor in the wellbeing of people and this issues is covered in section 5.3. Our area has a much higher proportion of older people than average and so high quality design to create environments suitable for older people is particularly important in our area. The Local Plan should also aim to provide opportunities to improve everybody's physical and mental wellbeing.

To help older people enjoy a better quality of life, the Local Plan will consider the location of development in relation to key services and facilities, supporting better rural public transport and improving the self-containment of settlements to reduce isolation.

It is also important that everybody is able to safely navigate their local communities and towns. The highway (footpaths and roads) and the public realm should be designed to be safe and accessible.

To help disabled people and people living with mental health problems feel more confident navigating the urban environment we will ensure that new development is designed to maximise accessibility such as streets being free from obstructions; bus stops conveniently located and with seating and handrails; parks and playgrounds are accessible by level walkways; public spaces are overlooked and have seating; direct and clear routes through new development; well-designed transport interchanges; good lighting to improve safety. The Council is producing a Design Supplementary Planning Document.

5.9.2 Issue: Encouraging healthy lifestyles

Our environment goes a long way to determining the quality of our health and wellbeing. Local Plans are encouraged by the NPPF to do more in terms of supporting healthy lifestyles for personal physical and mental health and for minimising our impact on the climate. For many years Local Plans have sought to encourage walking and cycling, provide sport and recreational facilities, play parks and open spaces, enable accessible primary healthcare among other measures that are inherent in good Plan-making. However, we should bring health and well-

being to the forefront of design through Health Impact Assessments and Active Design. We could also identify areas of the district where there are inequalities in health and actively try to deliver improvements in those areas. The Council will also be producing a Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

We propose these additional policy approaches to meet Objective 9:

- 9a/1** Ensure the consideration of healthy place-shaping from the outset by requiring Health Impact Assessments from larger developments (threshold to be determined) to demonstrate how the design incorporates Active Design measures
- 9a/2** Require high quality design from all developments to reflect the site and its context, including existing topography, landscape features and the historic environment and potentially requiring character appraisals to support proposals. The Council will be producing a Supplementary Planning Document on Design and will set out design principles/design codes for key development sites
- 9a/3** Allow flexibility in the design of the highway and public realm to achieve high quality design that maximises accessibility by those who are less mobile and prioritises accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport over the car
- 9a/4** Strengthen the self-containment of our settlements through the protection of community uses (eg pubs, sports facilities, recreational open space, community and leisure facilities, allotments), the allocation of sites to include multi-purpose community uses and support for uses that improve the balance of land uses and create mixed communities
- 9a/5** Ensure that air quality, pollution, contaminated land, noise, nuisance, smell, land instability are considerations for planning applications
- 9a/6** Include policies on public art, landscaping and tree planting
- 9a/7** Ensure new development enhances and does not detract from the Taunton skyline

Question 9a: *Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?*

5.10 Policies for our places: Taunton

Taunton is the historic county town of Somerset and has a population of around 69,426⁴⁷. The town is centrally located between Exeter and Bristol on the strategic road network. Taunton also provides good rail links to Bristol, Exeter and London Paddington.

Taunton is one of the fastest growing locations in the South West and the only settlement with "Garden Town" status. Planned growth in adopted Local Plans involves Taunton increasing in size by about 30% to approximately 85,000 people by 2028. This involves 13,000 new homes, with the majority in new garden communities at Monkton Heathfield, Comeytrowe and Staplegrove, and new jobs such as the Nexus 25 strategic employment site at Junction 25, and the regeneration of Firepool.

Due to its existing sustainable transport links and the concentration of the population, Taunton has the greatest potential of our local area to mitigate climate change through investment in further sustainable transport improvements and high quality design.

What's been happening in Taunton

Considerable progress has been made in delivering many of the key themes and projects from existing Local Plans and the Garden Town Vision. This includes:

- Awarded Garden Town status in 2017 and the delivery of over 900 homes so far at Monkton Heathfield Garden Community
- Adoption of a Local Development Order for Nexus 25 strategic employment site to deliver more than 3,500 jobs
- Council proposals to invest over £45m in town centre regeneration and related activities and seeking £25m match funding from the Government's High Street Fund

Key issues in Taunton for the Local Plan:

Employment & housing

- Economic growth not keeping up with nearby towns
- Reliance on public sector jobs which have significantly reduced in number over the last decade
- The lack of significant investment from the private sector over the last decade
- A need to establish a better digital infrastructure

- Stalled regeneration sites eg Firepool and a need to make more efficient use of land and introduce more housing to improve viability

Option 10a:

We could increase housing densities in Taunton town centre to make more efficient use of land and encourage the redevelopment of sites by:

- i) Requiring a housing mix skewed towards dwellings with fewer bedrooms; or
- ii) Positively encouraging taller buildings (subject to impact upon the skyline); or
- iii) Encouraging car-free developments (which could include allocating specific sites for car-free developments).

Question 10a: *How do you think we could introduce more housing into Taunton Town centre?*

Town centre & retail

- The need to diversify the nighttime and leisure offer
- Poor environment for pedestrians in the town centre
- Declining number of people visiting the town centre, some empty shops and reduced quality and variety of retail and visitor attractions
- Placing the river Tone and Taunton's waterways back at the heart of the town and the need to improve the access, quality and design of public spaces
- The desire for more compact and intensely used town centre

Infrastructure and accessibility

- Rebalancing the movement hierarchy in favour of active modes of travel. Integrating and improving the transport network with improved bus links and priority and greater prioritisation for pedestrians and cyclists
- Ensure there are sustainable transport corridors along green routes connecting the three new garden communities to the town centre
- Reduce risk of river flooding through further strategic flood schemes

Environmental quality

- Sustaining and enhancing significant and designated heritage, cultural and wildlife assets "Greening" urban spaces to support climate change objectives.

- Improve air quality in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) at the A358 in Henlade and East Reach, Taunton.

Heath & wellbeing

- Pockets of deprivation. Lambrook, Halcon and Lyngford in Taunton are within the most 10% deprived areas of the UK⁴⁸
- Musgrove Park Hospital: a new surgical centre to improve patient care and replace aging 1940's buildings.

We propose these additional policy approaches for Taunton to address these issues:

- 10b/1** Encouraging the redevelopment of key regeneration sites through site allocations that contain a mix of uses (including housing) to allow flexibility
- 10b/2** Creating a more compact town centre with a retail core centred around Market House, East Street, North Street and High St (through intensive use of upper floors and the fringes, increase housing in the town centre, built higher where appropriate)
- 10b/3** Diversifying the offer of the town centre to increase the mix of employment, retail, arts and leisure uses
- 10b/4** Improve choice and opportunities to use sustainable modes through measures including:
 - (i) Attractive, safe and convenient walking and cycling routes to key locations and public transport stops
 - (ii) Shifting the priority to pedestrians, cyclist and public transport through pedestrianisation and the reallocation of road space
 - (iii) Maintain and enhance sustainable transport links especially from the new garden communities and Nexus 25 to the town centre
- 10b/5** Providing strategic car parking provision through consolidation of existing parking freeing up land for other uses
- 10b/6** Continuing to deliver the new garden communities at Monkton Heathfield, Staplegrove and Comeytrowe
- 10b/7** Enhancing the public realm through high quality urban design, ensuring new development helps to deliver the Taunton Public Space Improvement Project and sustains and enhances the significance of heritage assets
- 10b/8** Improve access to Taunton's waterways
- 10b/9** Safeguarding a new surgical centre at Musgrove Park Hospital.
- 10b/10** Protecting and extending the "green wedges" and corridors developing a comprehensive network of green and blue infrastructure

Question 10b: *Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?*

5.11 Policies for our places: Wellington

Wellington provides an important function as a market town and it acts as focus for a rural hinterland which extends into Devon. The town has significant employment, retail and leisure offering and is the Districts secondary centre, after Taunton. The town occupies an attractive setting at the foot of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It has a rich history with historic core contributing a high proportion of listed buildings as well as a number of important non-designated heritage assets and is within the Conservation Area. Overall, the town centre is healthy and performing its role in the retail hierarchy and has a range of independent shops and restaurants. There is scope for improvement, particularly in terms of enhancing the public realm to encourage people using the town centre to increase dwell time and potentially also spend in the centre.

What's been happening in Wellington

- The re-opening of a railway station in Wellington is at an advanced stage
- All planned urban extensions are completed or under construction
- Project officer employed to work specifically on the heritage assets at risk within the town
- Aspirations to produce a Wellington Place Plan
- Clear business and community ambitions demonstrated through its own vision and plan for 2027⁴⁹.

Key issues in Wellington for the Local Plan:

- The town centre is fairly spread out and there is a need the need to retain the integrity of the retail 'core' to provide opportunities for competition and consumer choice
- The need to support employment generating uses and ancillary facilities especially in areas such as Westpark, Chelston, and Ryelands
- The general environment of the town centre is poor, and should be improved through:
 - a) supporting the restoration or rehabilitation of listed buildings in the Conservation Area, such as Cornhill, in addition to Tonedale Mill and Tone works at the north side of the town. Wellington Monument is a key marker and important asset for the town.
 - b) supporting the completion of the northern relief road to enable the enhancement of the town centre by removing HGV traffic

- c) Protecting and enabling a viable use for the historic area of Cornhill perhaps through a development brief.
- Supporting the re-opening of the Railway Station to encourage use by public transport and help with the regeneration of Tonedale Mill and Tone Works
- Risks to heritage assets in Wellington including:
 - a) The Conversation Area and Buildings at Risk at Cornhill, Tonedale Mill and Toneworks
 - b) Neglect of and incremental changes to designated and non-designated heritage assets particular by changes to windows and doors and neglect
 - c) The negative visual effect of vehicle domination through on-street parking and cars parked in backland areas and gardens
 - d) Infill development

We propose these policy approaches for Wellington to address these issues:

- 11a/1** Supporting new employment uses
- 11a/2** Maintaining Primary and Secondary Retail Frontages with a maximum proportion of non-A1 uses in Primary Retail Frontages
- 11a/3** Requiring a sequential test and an impact assessment for retail proposals falling outside of the Primary Shopping Area
- 11a/4** Allocating land of sufficient size and scale to enable the employers Relyon and Swallowfield to relocate, whilst remaining within Wellington as well as maintaining a Strategic Employment site near J26 and an employment at Longforth
- 11a/5** Supporting retail, employment or service retail development will be supported at Cornhill and White Hart Lane through a development brief and allocation of the land
- 11a/6** Protecting land and buildings at Tonedale Mill and Toneworks from inappropriate development through reassessment of the Conservation Area boundary, investigating article 4 directives and production of a development brief for the Tonedale Mill site
- 11a/7** Retaining the historic character and fabric of burgage patterns such as on High Street and Fore Street

Question 11a: *Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?*

5.12 Policies for our Places: The Coastal Strip

The seaside resort of Minehead, together with the smaller adjacent settlement of Alcombe, is the largest town along our coast and is the main service centre in the local area. It is the location of a Butlins holiday centre, which in the peak holiday season is home to up to c.6,000 visitors at a time and is an important gateway for visitors to Exmoor National Park. The Minehead Coastal Community Team created an Economic Plan to inform the development of future projects for the town. The Business Improvement District Business Plan 2018-23 aims to make Minehead a more prosperous and vibrant place to work, live and visit. Minehead residents have a good level of access to its services and facilities by a range of transport modes including walking and cycling.

The historic port of Watchet has a Community Strategic Plan from 2009 developed by volunteers. The Onion Collective, a Watchet regeneration social enterprise, formulated a plan for four interlinked regeneration schemes. Meanwhile, through a Coastal Communities Team, the town is collectively working towards developing a stronger future for the town with a thriving tourism economy which celebrates the rich heritage, increases jobs and provides better community facilities in Watchet. Williton provides some local services to the surrounding area. Both towns are gateway settlements for visitors to the Quantock and Brendon Hills.

What's been happening along the Coastal Strip

- Minehead Seafront has been re-developed to improve the public realm
- Watchet's East Quay Community, Cultural and Enterprise Development due to be completed in 2020
- The Council will be developing a Coastal Communities Strategy to bring together initiatives for the area.
- Hinkley Point C is under development with the first of its two reactors expected to be up and running in 2025

Key issues along the Coastal Strip for the Local Plan

- The A39 from Minehead to Bridgwater, and the A358 from Taunton to Williton are both relatively narrow A roads with points of restricted headroom and narrowing
- High reliance on tourism, food and retail sectors and lack of skilled jobs and the need to improve the prosperity of coastal towns particularly their role as gateway settlements to tourist areas

- Poor road, public transport, digital and mobile infrastructure networks and the need to improve self-containment and sustainability of the towns
- Seasonal pressures on local roads and car parking
- Enhanced risk of flooding and coastal change, eg at Blue Anchor and Minehead, from the sea due to the climate emergency
- Impact of Hinkley Point C construction on housing needs, affordability and traffic movements in the local area.
- A very high proportion of older people and low proportion of young people. A lack of affordable housing to enable younger people to stay in the area
- Ensuring an appropriate and well-designed redevelopment of Watchet Paper Mill site
- Maintaining connectivity of settlements where flooding poses risk

We propose these policy approaches for the Coastal Strip to address these issues:

- 12a/1** Supporting new employment sites and job generating activities in the key towns
- 12a/2** Support and enhance the role of our coastal towns as gateway settlements to tourist areas through policies that:
- support new tourism development to enhance Minehead, Watchet and Williton's role
 - ensure that sufficient car parking for local residents and seasonal visitors remains through protection or re-provision
- 12a/3** Support the enhancement of waterfront sites at Minehead and Watchet provided that safe harbour facilities are not inhibited, it enhances the local character, and may facilitate improved accessibility by sea to and from Bristol Channel Ports and beyond

Question 12a: *Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?*

6 References

¹ These are the [West Somerset Local Plan 2032 \(Nov 2016\)](#), [Taunton Deane Core Strategy 2011-29 \(2012\)](#), [Site Allocations and Development Management Plan \(Dec 2016\)](#), [Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan \(Oct 2008\)](#) and [saved policies from the Taunton Deane Local Plan \(2004\) and West Somerset District Local Plan 2006](#).

² Section 19 of the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#); [European Directive 2001/42/EC](#) and the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)

³ [Sustainability Appraisal Objectives and Alternatives Report](#) (Nov 2019)

⁴ [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)

⁵ [IPCC Special Report](#) (Oct 2018) UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

⁶ Section 19 of the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) (as amended by the Planning Act 2008)

⁷ [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Feb 2019) MHCLG

⁸ [Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: Mid-2017](#) (Jun 2018) Office for National Statistics

⁹ [2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation](#), DCLG

¹⁰ The ratio of house prices to earnings is one measure of how affordable it is to buy a property. 'Lower quartile' price provides an indication of the entry level house price in a local market, typically those purchased by first-time buyers. The higher the ratio, the less affordable it is for households to get onto the property ladder. [2019 ONS data](#)

¹¹ [Money Advice Service](#)

¹² [Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics - Model-based estimate for 2018](#)

¹³ [The Future Homes Standard](#) (1 Oct 2019) MHCLG

¹⁴ [Building Regulations Part L: Conservation of Fuel and Power](#)

¹⁵ [Topic Paper 1](#)

¹⁶ Table 13, [Topic Paper 1](#)

¹⁷ Options B, D and E of [Topic Paper 1](#). See section 8 of the Topic Paper for a summary

¹⁸ To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within 5 years ([NPPF glossary](#))

¹⁹ Housing Trajectories (Planning permissions); Table 4 (total capacity for deliverable sites) [Taunton Deane Housing and Employment Land Availability Report 2019 and West Somerset Housing Land Availability Report 2019](#)

²⁰ Section 4, [Sustainability Appraisal Objectives and Alternatives Report](#) (Nov 2019)

²¹ [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments 2019](#)

²² [Call for sites form](#)

²³ To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within 5 years ([NPPF glossary](#))

²⁴ Housing Trajectories (Planning permissions); Table 4 (total capacity for deliverable sites) [Taunton Deane Housing and Employment Land Availability Report 2019 and West Somerset Housing Land Availability Report 2019](#)

²⁵ To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged ([NPPF glossary](#))

²⁶ Tables 5 [Taunton Deane Housing and Employment Land Availability Report 2019 and West Somerset Housing Land Availability Report 2019](#)

²⁷ Paragraph 10, [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#) (Aug 2015) DCLG

²⁸ [Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: Mid-2017](#) (Jun 2018) Office for National Statistics

²⁹ Proportion of people with a long-term health problem or disability that limits a person's day to day activities where day-to-day activities are limited 'a lot' or 'a little': 18.3% Taunton Deane; 23.8% West Somerset; 21% Somerset West and Taunton (former Council's combined); 17.6% England. [Nomis Local Area Reports/Census 2011](#), Office for National Statistics

³⁰ [Technical Housing Standards: Nationally Described Space](#) Standards (May 2016) and as amended, MHCLG

³¹ [The Heart of the South West Productivity Strategy: Stepping Up to the Challenge](#) (2018) HoTSW Local Enterprise Partnership

³² Heart of the South West LEP [Productivity Strategy](#) and [Local Industrial Strategy \(LIS\) Command Paper](#)

³³ Section 5.5 [Employment, Retail and Leisure Study](#) (Oct 2018) Peter Brett Associates

³⁴ Paragraph 9.3.10 [Employment, Retail and Leisure Study](#) (Oct 2018) Peter Brett Associates

³⁵ [High Street 2030: Achieving Change](#) (Dec 2018) Institute of Place Management; Manchester Metropolitan University

³⁶ CIL can only be spent on items set out in the [Regulation 123 list](#)

³⁷ [Planning Practice Guidance: Viability](#) (July 2017) MHCLG

³⁸ [Young people's travel – what's changed and why?](#) (Jan 2018) Department for Transport

³⁹ [The Future of mobility: Urban Strategy](#) (Mar 2019) Department for Transport

⁴⁰ [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review](#) (July 2018) Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

⁴¹ [Active Design](#) (Oct 2015) Sport England

⁴² [Somerset Habitat Evaluation Procedure](#) (2017) Somerset County Council

⁴³ [Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024; Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024](#)

⁴⁴ [Somerset Habitat Evaluation Procedure](#) Somerset County Council

⁴⁵ Policy SC1, [West Somerset Local Plan to 2032](#) (2016) West Somerset Council

⁴⁶ Policy SP1, [Taunton Deane Core Strategy](#) (2012) Taunton Deane Borough Council

⁴⁷ [ONS Mid-2017 year estimates](#)

⁴⁸ [English Indices of Deprivation 2019](#)

⁴⁹ [A Vision for Wellington](#) (2008) Wellington Economic Partnership

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment: New district wide Local Plan

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Organisation prepared for | Somerset West & Taunton | | |
| Version | 2 | Date Completed | 31 st October 2019 |

Description of what is being impact assessed

As outlined in the Report, Somerset West and Taunton has a statutory duty to produce a new district wide Local Plan. The Issues and Options document is the first stage Local Plan process.

The current adopted Local Plans by Taunton Deane BC and West Somerset Council are somewhat dated. They conformed to government advice at that time they were adopted. They are available at : <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/>

A local plan sets out local planning policies and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where. As the new district wide local plan progresses through the various statutory stages, the impacts to be assessed are those from the policies proposed within in the new district wide Local Plan. In due course this is likely to involve considering the implications of both strategic planning policies (eg those which aim to secure a significant proportion of affordable housing) and development management policies (eg those associated with the design).

Within the “Customer” function, those within development management and enforcement are responsible for implementing the policies of the Local Plan. For example, when determining planning proposals from developers. Where the Local Plan contains relevant policies, applications for planning permission should be determined in line with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

A Local Plan must demonstrate it is based on a sound evidence and further Impact Assessments will be prepared in due course as part of the plan making process.

The evidence base associated with adopted local has been collected and developed since 2006. It includes: Equalities Information Reports and Annual Monitoring Reports and "Spatial Portraits" which include specific equalities data such as age, race and gender. It also includes Individual Evidence Base Documents such as Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments, Strategic Housing Market Assessments, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNE), Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment (SHMAA), Index of Multiple Deprivation and Health Impact Assessments. Previous Engagement and Consultation also contain information relating to protected characteristics. The documents which form the evidence base can be found within the related pages to the various adopted local plans on the Councils web site at: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/>

As the new district wide local plan progresses through the various statutory stages, new data will be collected by the Council, its stakeholder and partner organisations to identify and monitor equality issues. With the publication of the Issues and Options document, this process has commenced. The Council will also look to other local authorities EIA's to understand how they have identified and addressed Equality.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

The Strategy team within Somerset West and Taunton are responsible for drafting, adopting and monitoring new local planning policy. This process requires approval from Full Council informed by recommendations from officers.

All geographic areas of Somerset West and Taunton could potentially be affected because the new district wide Local Plan covers the whole of the district. However, some areas / parishes / businesses / residents / protected groups / environments have more potential for being affected. For example, communities abutting land allocated for residential development.

The new district wide Local Plan will have to include a revised “Spatial Portrait” that details demographic information relevant to the new district in relation to protected characteristics such as age, sex, disability, race and religion. As set out in the Issues and Options document data is being updated on such matters. For example, through good design the Local Plan should try to reduce inequalities in the built environment experienced by people with physical disabilities and mental health issues. It could also identify areas of the new district where there are inequalities in health and actively try to deliver improvements in those areas. The Council will also be producing a Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and the Local Plan will be developed alongside this.

As previously reported, the Council also has legal duty to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This sets out how Somerset West and Taunton will involve the community; stakeholders and protected groups in the preparation, alteration and review of local planning policy and the consideration of planning applications within the Local Planning Authority area).

At this stage of the local plan process, no groups have been consulted on this EIA. Consulting on the draft contents of the SCI was seen as being a mechanism to help the Council understand what communities actually want. Having considered a schedule of representation made on the draft SCI, the forthcoming public consultation on the Issues and Options document will be in line with our approved SCI (see Agenda of this Committee). It also keeps stakeholders, our communities and protected groups informed that a review of adopted local plan policies has commenced.

In due course extensive consultation on the Local Plan will take place at each stage of the plan making process. As required by the law, the economic, environmental, and social effects of a plan from the outset of the plan preparation process will be set out in Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA).

It should be noted that the Local Plan will assume that other regulatory authorities will regulate matters within their control effectively. For example, as the Minerals and Waste Authority for Somerset (excluding Exmoor National Park), Somerset County Council will prepare Minerals and Waste Local Plans.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

| Protected group | Summary of impact | Negative outcome | Neutral outcome | Positive outcome |
|-----------------|---|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Age | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage of the process. The Issues and Options document is the first stage Local Plan process. The consultation document presents thoughts and ideas and asks for views on the issues and options presented. For example, as set out in under Objective 9 “Improve Wellbeing” through good design the new district wide Local Plan should try to reduce inequalities in the built environment experienced by people with physical disabilities and mental health issues. The implementation of such measures should have a positive outcome. • Previously adopted Local Plans contained measures which improve access to facilities such as schools/hospitals/shops by other than the private car. The planning policies also have a focus on placing development in the most sustainable places which benefits all sectors of the community (especially the young and elderly). These Plans also seek education provision, ensuring that the young in society have access to schools. Furthermore, they mention green space and recreation which benefits all in society but particularly the young and reduces health inequalities. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Disability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage of the process. As advised above, the Issues and Options document is the first stage Local Plan process and consults on the issues and options presented. The implementation of such measures should have a positive outcome. • Previously adopted Local Plans have made provision for elderly members of the population. eg Sheltered Housing and there are policy references to Building for Life and Lifetime Homes criteria. | | | ☒ |
| Gender reassignment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage of the process. • No specific reference or mention in previously adopted Local Plans. | | ☒ | |
| Marriage and civil partnership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage of the process. • No specific reference or mention in previously adopted Local Plans. | | ☒ | |
| Pregnancy and maternity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage of the process. Within the Issues and Options document, as set out in under Objective 9 “Improve Wellbeing”, the Local Plan aims to provide opportunities to improve everybody’s physical and mental wellbeing. The implementation of such measures should have a positive outcome. • No specific reference or mention in previously adopted Local Plans. | | | ☒ |
| Race and ethnicity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage of the process. Issues and Options document seeks views on how should we proactively plan for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople pitches. The implementation of such policies should have a positive outcome. • Previously adopted Local Plans have included policies regarding Gypsy and Travellers eg provision for new residential and transit pitches. | | | ☒ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Religion or belief | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this stage of the process. Previously adopted Local Plans have included reference to such provision within District and Local Centres as part of wider community facility provision. | | ☒ | |
| Sex | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this stage of the process. No specific reference or mention in previously adopted Local Plans. | | ☒ | |
| Sexual orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this stage of the process. No specific reference or mention in previously adopted Local Plans. | | ☒ | |
| Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this stage of the process. Previously adopted Local Plans contain rural exception policies to address those in housing need in rural areas. The Council supports the Somerset Armed Forces Covenant to ensure veterans are treated fairly and not disadvantaged See https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/community-and-living/armed-forces-covenant/ | | ☒ | |
| Negative outcomes action plan | | | | |
| Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take. | | | | |
| Action taken/to be taken | Date | Person responsible | How will it be monitored? | Action complete |
| Initial EIA to be reviewed by Officer with Equalities knowledge and experience | 07/06/2019 | Nick Bryant | At this early stage of Local Plan process commitment to consult through | ☒ |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | | the SCI and Issues & Options document | |
| Informed by responses on the Issues and Options document, produce an updated “Spatial Portrait” that details the baseline demographic information relevant to the new district in relation to protected characteristics such as age, sex, disability, race and religion. | 31/12/2019 | Laura Higgins | Through Authorities Monitoring Report | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Revised EIA to be reviewed by Officer with Equalities knowledge and experience | 14/10/2019 | Mark Leeman | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below. | | | | |
| None at this stage of the process. | | | | |
| Completed by: | Paul Browning | | | |
| Date | 14 th October 2019 | | | |
| Signed off by: | Nick Bryant | | | |
| Date | | | | |
| Equality Lead/Manager sign off date: | n/a | | | |
| To be reviewed by: (officer name) | Paul Browning | | | |
| Review date: | Prior to publication of a “Draft Local Plan (Reg 19) in Q2 of 2020/21. | | | |

End

Report Number: SWT 96/19

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 20 November 2019

Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order – Approval for Public Consultation

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mike Rigby

Report Author: Sarah Povall, Strategy Specialist

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the public consultation of the Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order (LDO).

2 Recommendations

2.1 Recommendations are that Executive resolves to:

- 1) Approve the undertaking of a consultation exercise on the possible adoption of a Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order in the Somerset West and Taunton Area, with a further report to be brought to a subsequent meeting of the Executive once the consultation exercise has been completed.
- 2) Approve the contents of the draft consultation document for the consultation exercise on the possible adoption of a Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order.
- 3) Delegate authority to the Head of Strategy to agree any necessary final amendments prior to its publication in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation.

3 Risk Assessment

3.1 The potential risks that might impact on the timely delivery of the LDO, relate to: the availability of experienced personnel; and competing work priorities.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 This draft Local Development Order (LDO) seeks to enable the development of small scale B1 development within Somerset West and Taunton. The Council is looking to develop this LDO to de-risk the planning process, support and enable increased delivery of small-scale industrial space. As such, the LDO will grant planning permission for development which is found by Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) to be in compliance with the LDO, Technical Informative and Design Code.
- 4.2 Officers will work in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to agree any necessary final amendments of the LDO, which is made up of three separate documents:
- The **Development Order (Appendix A)**, which provides the purpose, procedure, context and legal conditions for all LDO development;
 - A **Technical Informative (Appendix B)** to help LDO users understand whether technical assessments will be required to support their submission dependent on an individual site's circumstances; and
 - The **Design Code (Appendix C)** sets the acceptable parameters and principles for development which should be evidenced within a compulsory Design and Access Statement submission.
- 4.3 In particular, officers will work in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to agree the final expected revisions to the Design Code, which include: the integration of the Technical Informative; alignment with the Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide; and the inclusion of further examples and definitions. Details of these expected revisions are set out in the draft Design Code (Appendix C), for ease of reference.
- 4.4 Somerset West and Taunton, (though especially Taunton and Wellington) has experienced significant housing growth over the last few years, and is expected to continue this growth trajectory for the foreseeable future as the remaining housing allocations of the Taunton Deane [Core Strategy](#), [Site Allocations and Development Management Plan](#), and [Town Centre Area Action Plan](#) and the [West Somerset Local Plan](#) are built out. However, employment development and the associated jobs the build out of these sites brings have not kept pace.
- 4.5 In 2018, Taunton Deane Borough Council adopted a new [Local Development Order \(LDO\) for the Nexus 25 strategic employment site](#). The development of this strategic employment site will see some of that balance redressed, primarily through provision of B1(a) Offices, B1(b) Research and Development and B1(c) Light Industry uses, with B2 General Industrial and B8 Distribution and Warehousing uses being secondary. However, the SWT [Employment, Retail and Leisure Study](#) completed later in 2018 identified latent demand for small flexible industrial units, with strongest demand for B1(c) uses. A lack of available, serviced plots and marginal viability issues make meeting demand difficult even in prime locations. De-risking the planning process and enabling easier development of such units could help realise this latent demand. The Taunton Deane [Scrutiny Task and Finish Group reported](#) to TDBC's Scrutiny Committee in November 2018 on the issue of affordable employment land and

recommended that:

“TDBC, and the subsequent Council, must identify the means by which the supply of affordable, starter-type employment units can be delivered. There are two suggested means by which this can be undertaken:

i. Planning-based approaches boosted through allocation, a streamlined Local Development Order identifying suitable sites or, a more criteria-based Local Development Order that sets the broader locations and parameters subject to which starter units can be delivered...”

4.6 This LDO covers the administrative boundary of Somerset West and Taunton District Council, but does not apply to any of the following site locations:

- Within Taunton’s adopted settlement boundary.
- Within Wellingtons adopted settlement boundary.
- Within a conservation area.
- Within the curtilage of a Listed Building.
- Within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Within a location judged as likely to affect environmental designations.
- Within a functioning flood plain (flood zone 3b).

4.7 It is a legal requirement that LDOs are the subject of proper consultation. Consultation will be in line with the LDO consultation procedures set out in article 38 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015. The LDO will be subject to a review 2 years after adoption; or the point at which 10 applications have been permitted (if sooner). This will allow the LPA to fully reflect on the continual suitability of the LDO in light of experiences had in the application of the LDO, as well as any changes to planning policy that might have occurred since its adoption.

4.8 The consultation is legally required to take place for a period of at least 28 days. Our intention is to consult alongside the Local Plan Issues and Options consultation, which is set to take place for 6 weeks early next year.

4.9 Following the consultation exercise, SWT will consider: what modifications need to be made to the draft LDO; whether such an order should be adopted; and take into account any other representations made in relation to the order.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

5.1 “Theme 1: Our Environment and Economy” of the Corporate Strategy sets out the objective to, “encourage wealth creation and economic growth throughout the District by attracting inward investment, enabling research and innovation, improving the skills of the local workforce and seeking to ensure the provision of adequate and affordable employment land to meet different business needs.”

5.2 The purpose of this LDO is to meet this objective, by helping to support the development of small scale B1 development within Somerset West and Taunton

6 Finance / Resource Implications

6.1 The costs associated with the LDO are met from existing budgets. There are no further financial implications.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The LDO is drafted in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015. The consultation process, which follows, will follow the requirements prescribed.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications

8.1 Underpinning this LDO is the need to encourage employment uses close to where people live. With this shift from a daily commuting pattern to working locally, the LDO hopes to have a positive impact on reducing traffic and associated issues across the District.

8.2 The Design Guide sets out sustainable approaches, which are encouraged within any new employment unit and surrounding landscaping works under this LDO.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 None at this stage.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 None at this stage.

11 Social Value Implications

11.1 This LDO is intended to have a high social value, by supporting the delivery of small-scale industrial and employment space by removing the need for a planning application by the developer. The LDO and accompanying Design Code will create a straightforward system for potential applicants to understand and interpret potential development opportunities.

12 Partnership Implications

12.1 As part of the Duty to Co-operate requirement (Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012), we will be expected to work with other public bodies, particularly neighbouring planning authorities and the County Council on any cross boundary issues.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

13.1 None at this stage.

14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 None at this stage.

15 Data Protection Implications

15.1 With permission from the consultee in line with the GDPR, personal data will be collected as part of the consultation on the Issues Document.

16 Consultation Implications

16.1 The consultation on this document will be in line with the emerging Statement of Community Involvement and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015. Following the consultation exercise, SWT will consider what modifications need to be made to the draft LDO or whether such an order should be adopted or take into account any other representations made in relation to the order.

17 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)

17.1 None at this stage

Democratic Path:

- Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No
- Cabinet/Executive – Yes
- Full Council – No

Reporting Frequency: Once only Ad-hoc Quarterly
 Twice-yearly Annually

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| Appendix A | Draft LDO |
| Appendix B | Draft Technical Informative |
| Appendix C | Draft Design Code |

Contact Officers

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Name | Sarah Povall |
| Direct Dial | 01823 219733 |
| Email | s.povall@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk |

Local Development Order

Local Development Order (LDO) for B1 Uses

Somerset West
and Taunton

DRAFT

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Appendices

- Appendix A Application for Compliance Form
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DRAFT

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 This draft Local Development Order (LDO) will, when adopted, enable the development of small scale B1 development within Somerset West and Taunton. The LDO will grant planning permission for development which is found by Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) to be in compliance with the LDO and Design Code.
- 1.1.2 Any grant of planning permission will be subject to the planning conditions contained within this document.

1.2 LDO Principles

- 1.2.1 The creation of this LDO will provide independent entrepreneurs and SMEs with a mechanism to create or expand their businesses outside of SWT's established centres for employment. There is a clear rationale for the use of an LDO to promote minor scale freehold employment units, as an LDO can provide clarity and certainty while reducing the administrative costs and burdens involved in a full planning application.

1.3 Legislative Framework Governing the LDO Process

- 1.3.1 LDOs are locally focussed planning tools that Local Planning Authorities (LPA) can use to grant planning permission for specific types of development within a defined geographical area. They are designed to help streamline the planning process by removing the need for preparing and submitting a planning application.
- 1.3.2 Detailed legislative provisions on LDOs are contained in sections 61A to 61D and Schedule 4A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and article 38 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, as amended (DMPO). Importantly:
- an LDO can be used by an LPA to grant planning permission for either a specific development or a particular specified use class and can cover all land within a local authority (61A);
 - an LDO can grant permission subject to planning conditions (61C); and
 - planning permission can be withdrawn if the order is revoked or the order is amended so that it ceases to grant planning permission in respect of the development or materially changes any condition or limitation to which the grant of permission is subject (61 D).

1.4 Scope

- 1.4.1 It is important to note that development proposals that do not fall within the prescribed criteria of the LDO may still be acceptable in planning terms. In such circumstances, proposals that do not conform to the LDO will need to secure planning permission through the normal planning process. Accordingly, such proposals would be considered in the context of local and national planning policies.
- 1.4.2 The criteria for development is provided in **Section 6** of this document and the accompanying Design Code.

1.5 Consents

- 1.5.1 The LDO only removes the requirement to obtain express planning permission. It does not remove the need to obtain other statutory consents such as Building Regulations approval,

consents under Highways legislation, licensing, and Health and Safety Executive consents. It remains the responsibility of the developer to ensure that all other statutory requirements are followed.

- 1.5.2 The conditions of this LDO prevent the use of permitted development rights to subsequently change, alter or extend any development delivered through this LDO.

1.6 Structure of this LDO

1.6.1 This LDO is made up of two separate documents:

- i. This **Development Order** provides the purpose, procedure, context and legal conditions for all LDO development; and
- ii. The **Design Code** sets the acceptable parameters and principles for development which should be evidenced within a compulsory Design and Access Statement submission.

1.6.2 Attached to the design code is also a Technical Informative to help those seeking permission through the LDO to understand whether any further technical assessments may be required to support their Design and Access Statement.

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2 Consultation Process

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 It is a legal requirement that LDOs are the subject of proper consultation. LDO consultation procedures are set out in article 38 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015.

2.2 Statutory Consultation

- 2.2.1 SWT will consult on the draft LDO for a period of at least 28 days and follow the requirements set out in the DMPO 2015 for consultation. SWT also has an emerging Statement of Community Involvement, which sets out when and how the Council will engage with and consult on planning matters.

- 2.2.2 As such, the methods SWT will use to consult and engage with the community on this LDO include, but are not limited to:

- **The Council's website** – consultation activities will be publicised through the Council's website, on the Planning Policy home page at: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/> Local plan evidence base studies and related information are also available to view and download.
- **Inspection Points** – hard copies of documents will be available for inspection at the Council's Offices (at Deane House, Taunton and West Somerset House, Williton) during consultation periods. In addition, we will also make them available at selected local libraries in the area. Copies of the evidence base studies are also be available to view on request in these locations.
- **E-mail** – notifications will be sent to statutory bodies, stakeholders, relevant groups and other individuals and organisations on our consultation database. The Council's Strategy team is contactable via the following generic e-mail address_- strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk
- **Letters** – postal notifications will be sent to statutory bodies, stakeholders, relevant groups and other individuals and organisations on our consultation database where we only have a postal address or they have specifically requested to be contacted by post.
- **Local News Media** – Public Notices will be placed in the Somerset Gazette Advertisements will include details on when and where planning documents can be inspected, how copies can be obtained, the closing date for representations and where to send them. We will also issue a press release to appropriate local news media.

- 2.2.3 Letters to statutory consultees will include links to the draft order and the Statement of reasons. A list of Statutory relevant consultees has been provided by SWT and is featured in appendix B of this document.

- 2.2.4 SWT will place the draft LDO and Statement of Reasons on the planning register when the draft is sent for consultation.

- 2.2.5 Following the consultation exercise, SWT will consider what modifications need to be made to the draft LDO or whether such an order should be adopted or take into account any other representations made in relation to the order.

3 LDO Boundary

3.1 LDO Boundary

- 3.1.1 This LDO covers the administrative boundary of Somerset West and Taunton District Council as shown in the boundary plan below.

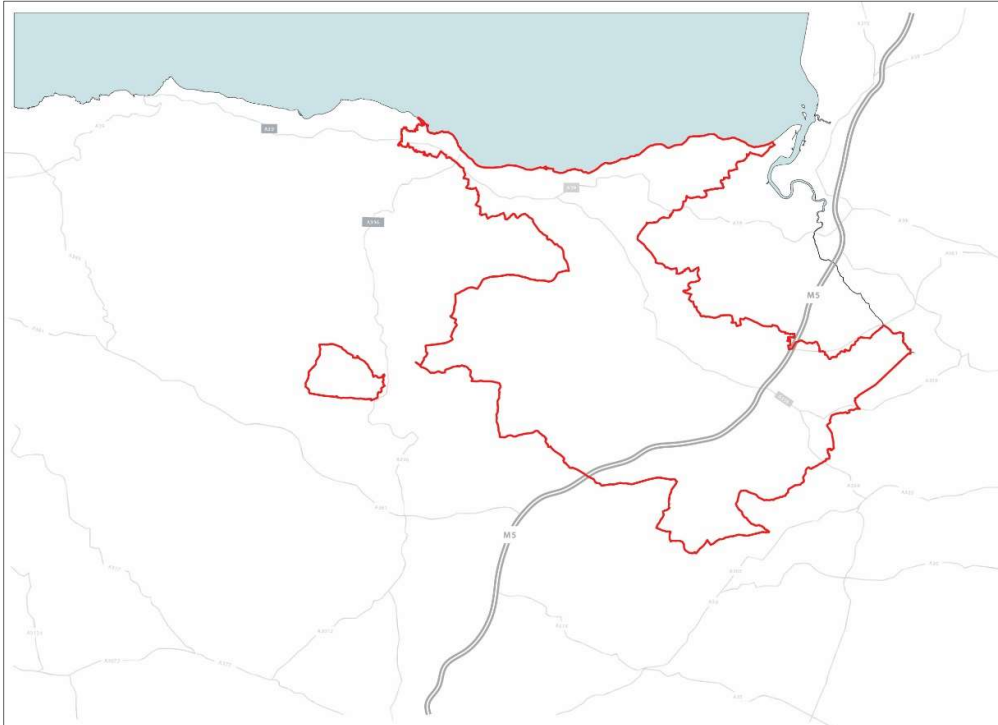


Figure 1. LDO Boundary Plan.

3.2 Area Exclusions

- 3.2.1 Chapter 1 of the Design Code specifies which areas of Somerset West and Taunton are excluded from this LDO, despite being within the LDO boundary.
- 3.2.2 For avoidance of doubt, this LDO does not apply to any of the below site locations:
- Within Taunton's adopted settlement boundary.
 - Within Wellington's adopted settlement boundary.
 - Within a Conservation Area.
 - Within the curtilage of a Listed Building.
 - Within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
 - Within a location where development could be judged as likely to affect environmental designations, including SSSI, SACs, SPAs and/or Ramsar Sites.
 - Within a functioning flood plain (flood zone 3b).

4 Development Considerations

4.1 Design Code

- 4.1.1 The Design Code is the principal mechanism for the consideration of LDO compliance. The Design Code provides the development parameters and general design principles which development proposals being delivered through this LDO will have to accord to. The Design Code includes a pro forma which enables LDO applicants to check their submissions against requirements.

4.2 LDO Application for Compliance Submissions

Design and Access Statement

- 4.2.1 Each Application for Compliance Form (appendix A) will need to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement – the requirements for which are set out in the Design Code.

- 4.2.2 Each Design and Access Statement should include:

- Site Location Plan/ Existing Site Plan;
- Proposed Site Plan;
- Proposed Building Plan;
- Details of Proposed Elevations;
- Landscape Plan and Details of Proposed Planting and Hard Surface Works;
- Materials Plan; and
- Details of Access for pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and modes of transport.

Further Technical Requirements

- 4.2.3 In some circumstances further technical evidence will be required in support of a compliance submission. Further information will be limited to:

- i. Highways and Access Requirements;
- ii. Flood Risk Assessment;
- iii. Ecological Assessment; and
- iv. Ground Contamination Assessment

- 4.2.4 Information on the circumstances of when further assessments will be required and how to undertake them is included in the Design Code which forms a part of this LDO.

5 Statement of Reasons

5.1 Purpose of the LDO

- 5.1.1 The purpose of creating this LDO is to enable the development of small-scale light industrial floor space in Somerset West and Taunton. This LDO provides a delivery mechanism to enable small scale business units which cater for the needs entrepreneurs to develop new or expanded workspace without having to apply for full planning permission.

5.2 Justification for Creating the LDO

- 5.2.1 The SWT Employment, Retail and Leisure Study undertaken in 2018 highlights economic trends which this LDO either seeks to help address as an intervention or has regard to as associated economic trend. These can be summarised as:
- Existing demand for industrial space across Somerset West and Taunton is typically for micro business and small and medium enterprise (SMEs).
 - There is a high, viable, deliverable and unmet demand for freehold light industrial units. Specifically, this is for smaller flexible units which could be used across the B1 use class, although highest demand would be expected for B1(c) use.
 - The supply of freehold business units is often undersupplied across Somerset West and Taunton. This is especially the case where employment sites have been promoted alongside housing sites.
 - It is recognised that potential owners of freehold plots rarely engage in the plan making process, however, have the need to react dynamically to changes in the market.
- 5.2.2 The objective of this LDO is therefore to provide a route for permitted development for small scale (B1) business units to provide a speed and certainty to business start ups and SMEs looking to expand their existing operations outside of Somerset West and Taunton's existing key settlements.

5.3 National and Regional Strategies

Towards a One Nation Economy: A 10 Point Plan for Boosting Productivity in Rural Areas - Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2015)

- 5.3.1 In 2015, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) released a strategy document aiming to harness the economic potential England's rural areas for the prosperity of those living in rural areas and for the benefit of the UK economy.
- 5.3.2 The document provides a framework of 10 broad areas considered by the Government to be reflective of the particular priorities for rural areas. These included the following measures to encourage a productive rural economy:
- better and improved planning regulations;
 - promoting enterprise zones in rural areas; and
 - providing opportunities for apprenticeships.

Heart of the South West Productivity Strategy (2018)

- 5.3.3 The Productivity Strategy is owned by a partnership that brings together the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), local authorities, National Parks and health service organisations. The 2018 Productivity Strategy set out to double the size of the Heart of the South West economy over the next twenty years, and to raise productivity levels which on average are currently lower than the UK. The Strategy focusses on three key themes i) business leadership and ideas, ii) improving housing, connectivity and infrastructure and iii) improving the skills of the work force.

Somerset Growth Plan 2017-30 (2017)

- 5.3.4 The purpose of the Growth Plan is to attract and guide investment, to overcome barriers and maximise sustainable growth from local opportunities.
- 5.3.5 The Growth Plan for Somerset aims to: create a shared ambition and vision for sustainable and productive growth; support the delivery of infrastructure and housing to enable growth to take place; increase the scale, quality and sustainability of economic opportunity in Somerset; and ensure participation and access to these opportunities for local residents.
- 5.3.6 The Growth Plan specifically supports growth in rural areas, stating that Somerset will have a business community that is growing because of its use of digital technology and infrastructure, particularly to drive productivity and growth in rural areas. The Plan goes on to identify in its vision that Somerset seeks to be a successful small business economy.

5.4 Planning Policy Context

- 5.4.1 The LDO supports the implementation of existing planning policies and economic strategies at the national and local level.

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

- 5.4.2 Paragraph 51 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages LDOs to be prepared for particular areas and categories of development, where the impacts would be acceptable, and where this would promote economic, social or environmental gains (paragraph 51).
- 5.4.3 The NPPF makes it clear that the planning system has an important role in supporting a prosperous rural economy through the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses (paragraph 83-84).
- 5.4.4 The NPPF acknowledges that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In such circumstances the NPPF states it is important that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads, and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (paragraph 84).
- 5.4.5 The NPPF states that when considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, the sequential approach outlined in Section 7 of the document, should not be applied to applications for small scale rural offices or other small-scale rural employment (paragraph 88).

The Development Plan

- 5.4.6 The relevant adopted Development Plan documents to this LDO are:
- The Taunton Deane Core Strategy 2011–2028.
 - Site Allocations and Development Management Plan 2028.

- West Somerset Local Plan to 2032.
- Saved policies from the West Somerset District Local Plan 2006.
- Made Neighbourhood Plans at:
 - Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone;
 - Stogumber;
 - Trull and Staplehay; and
 - West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine.

5.4.7 Work has commenced on the new SWT Local Plan. At time of writing, the plan is estimated to be adopted in the Autumn of 2021.

Taunton Deane Core Strategy

5.4.8 The Taunton Deane Core Strategy (TDCS) was adopted in 2012 and sets the long-term strategic vision for the future of the Borough to 2028. The Core Strategy together with the adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) formed the Development Plan for Taunton Deane Borough Council prior to the creation of the new Somerset West and Taunton Council in April 2019.

5.4.9 Vision 1 of the TDCS acknowledges the importance of employment led growth to facilitate economic diversification and increased self-containment within the borough. Objective 2 of the TDCS recognises that achieve this vision, there must be the right conditions and sufficient land in appropriate locations.

5.4.10 The TDCS does not allocate land for employment, instead identifying the broad strategic locations for employment growth. The TDCS (SP1) focuses on strategic scale provision at Taunton and Wellington. The justification of this approach to promote the most sustainable pattern for growth, by linking housing and employment growth in areas with existing major infrastructure connections. The proposed employment locations of the TDCS do not account for minor employment opportunities and potential for sustainable small-scale linkages to major and minor rural centres and villages. This LDO promotes the opportunity for such smaller linkages outside of the SWT district's main centres.

5.4.11 The Core Strategy sets out a number of broad development management policies that will be applied at the strategic level across the Borough. Policies relevant to the LDO are summarised in the table 1.

| Policy | Summary |
|--|--|
| DM1: General Requirements | Sets out the criteria for development which includes making the most effective and efficient use of land. |
| DM4: Design | Aims to encourage a sense of place by addressing design at a range of spatial scales using planning documents that relate to each scale. |
| DM5: Use of Resources and Sustainable Development | States that the Council will require all development to incorporate sustainable design features to reduce their impact on the environment. |

Table 1. TDCS Development Management Policies

Site Allocation and Development Management Plan 2028 (2018)

- 5.4.12 The SADMP sets out a range of allocations across the Borough consistent with the Core Strategy. The SADMP also provides a set of detailed development management policies for new development in Taunton Deane. These policies are listed in table 2.

| Policy | Summary |
|---|--|
| A1 Parking Requirements | New development will normally be required to make provision for car parking in accordance with the standards in Appendix F of the SADMP. |
| ENV1 Protection of trees, woodland, orchard and hedgerows | Development which would harm trees, woodlands, orchards, historic parklands and hedgerows of value to the area's landscape, character or wildlife will not be permitted. |
| ENV3 Special Landscape Features | Development which would specifically harm the appearance, character and contribution of landscape quality within a Special Landscape Feature will not be permitted unless appropriate mitigation measures would reduce such harm to an acceptable level. |
| D7 Design Quality | New development shall create a high standard of design quality and a sense of place. |
| D9 A co-ordinated approach to development and highway planning | A co-ordinated approach shall be adopted to the design of development and associated highways. |

Table 2. SADMP Development Management Policies.

West Somerset Local Plan

- 5.4.13 The West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 (WSLP) was adopted in November 2016 and sets planning policies for the parts of the area outside of Exmoor National Park.
- 5.4.14 Policy SC1 of the WSLP provides a settlement hierarchy for new development in West Somerset. The policy states that new development will be concentrated in the district's main centre of Minehead/Alcombe, however, recognises the potential for small scale development at primary and secondary villages.
- 5.4.15 Policy EC1 of the WSLP states that proposals which make West Somerset's economy stronger and more diverse and which are likely to increase the proportion of higher paid jobs locally will be supported. This includes the new development on existing employment sites, or which are have compatible uses where the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of existing neighbouring uses.
- 5.4.16 Policy SC5 of the WSLP states that development which improves the balance of land uses within a settlement in terms of minimising overall transport use will be encouraged. This LDO such an opportunity for mixed uses while minimising and potentially reducing the vehicle trips to larger centres.
- 5.4.17 Policy EC4 of the WSLP states that the development of home-based business activities within residential properties will be permitted providing there are limitations places on the hours of

work and deliveries and proposals are consistent with the residential amenity of the area and do not lead to harmful intensification.

- 5.4.18 The WSLP also includes development management policies affecting the design of new minor scale development. These policies are listed in Table 2 alongside the saved policies of the previous district Local Plan.

| Policy | Summary | Plan Year |
|--|---|-----------|
| CC5 Water Efficiency | The design of development schemes which include measures to economise on the use of water supplies will be encouraged. | 2016 |
| NH5 Landscape Character Protection | Development within identified landscape character areas should be designed in such a way as to minimise adverse impact on the quality and integrity of that local landscape character area. | 2016 |
| Policy TW/1 Trees and Woodland Protection | Development proposals that would adversely affect woodlands, groups of trees or individual trees of significant landscape, wildlife or amenity value will only be permitted where conditions can be attached. | 2006 |
| Policy TW/2 Hedgerows | Development management proposals will be required to show that an allowance has been made of for the retention and protection of existing hedgerows unless they are not considered to be of value to the area's landscape, character or wildlife. | 2006 |
| Policy BD/6 Agricultural Buildings | Proposals for new agricultural buildings should have regard to the existing landscape. | 2006 |

Table 3. Relevant WSLP (2016) and WSDL (2006) Development Management Policies.

Made Neighbourhood Plans

- 5.4.19 The following Neighbourhood Plans have been made in the Somerset West and Taunton.

Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.4.20 The plan emphasises the importance of the conservation area and surrounding landscape to residents of the village while setting an objective to increase the range, extent, and scale of commercial and light industrial premises (objective 3).

- 5.4.21 The employment policies of the plan seek to increase the opportunity for local employment and thereby support potential for sustainable patterns of travel.

Stogumber Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.4.22 The plan emphasises the important use of materials in and around the settlement and the high value of views of the surrounding landscape and supports economic development which accords to the plan's overall objectives for development (EC1 and O1).

Trull and Staplehay Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.4.23 The plan recognises that the majority of the parish travel to work by public transport and recognises the opportunity for start-ups and microbusinesses (employing 1-9 people) within the parish to further encourage sustainable growth. Policy EE1 suggests small business units of 50 sqm will be supported on existing employment and mixed-use sites. The plan also supports opportunities to create live work units.

West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.4.24 The plan emphasises the two villages rural setting and importance of the existing conservation areas with reference to national and local environmental policies.
- 5.4.25 The plan also sets an employment objective to minimise commuting and encourage employment opportunities through either the expansion and relocation of existing local businesses or new start-ups which allow residents to work near to where they live (p27).

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6 Local Development Order

6.1 Description of Development Permitted by the LDO

- 6.1.1 The table below sets out the permitted uses as prescribed by the Use Classes Order or in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and /or re-enacting that order with or without modification).
- 6.1.2 The uses in table 4 are permitted through this LDO subject to the parameters specified in the Design Code.

| Use Class | Definition | Limitations |
|-----------|---|--------------------|
| B1 (a) | Offices - other than those within class A2 (Professional and Financial Services). | Up to 50 sq m net |
| B1 (b) | Research and development of products or processes | Up to 200 sq m net |
| B1(c) | Light Industry – use for any industrial process which can be carried out in a residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of that area. | Up to 200 sq m net |

Table 4. Development Uses Permitted by the LDO.

- 6.1.3 This does not prevent office floorspace being included as an ancillary use within Research and Light Industrial premises providing it covers an area of no more than 50 sq m.

7 Conditions

7.1.1 The following Conditions are necessary to ensure that development is acceptable in planning terms.

| No. | Condition | Reason |
|-----|--|---|
| 1. | <p>The LDO and the terms within it will be active for a period of 15 years following the day of its adoption and will expire following this period.</p> <p>The LPA will review progress with the LDO on either the 2nd anniversary of its adoption; or at the point of 10 applications having been permitted (if sooner) to be able to fully reflect on the continual suitability of the LDO. The review will be completed with 28 days and at the end of the review the LPA will determine whether to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Retain the LDO as it stands for the remaining 13 years of its life or an otherwise specified review date; b) Retain but revise some elements of the LDO; or c) Revoke and cancel the LDO, thereby removing any unimplemented LDO permissions. | <p>In order that the benefits of the LDO can be secured.</p> |
| 2. | <p>The development permitted by this Order shall not be carried out other than in complete accordance with the permitted Design and Access Statement (including any technical assessments) and conditions set out within this LDO and the accompanying Design Code with the exception of material amendments submitted to and approved in writing by Somerset West and Taunton Council.</p> | <p>To ensure development in line with the aspirations for the LDO.</p> |
| 3. | <p>No development shall commence until an Application for Compliance with the LDO and a supporting Design and Access Statement has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority. A submission shall include the following information;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A Site Location Plan b) A Proposed Site Layout Plan c) Proposed Building Plan d) Proposed Elevations Plans e) Landscaping Plan and Details f) Materials Plan g) Arrangements of access for pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and other modes of transport | <p>To enable the impact of the development to be fully assessed in line with the aims of the LDO.</p> |

| No. | Condition | Reason |
|-----|---|--|
| | <p>h) Demonstration of compliance with the LDO Design Code</p> <p>i) LDO Planning fee</p> <p>Where deemed necessary by this LDO or otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority, any of the following details may also be required:</p> <p>j) A flood risk assessment including details of a flooding and drainage management strategy</p> <p>k) Environmental and ecological assessments including details of enhancement, avoidance, and mitigation measures</p> <p>l) A scheme of remediation.</p> | |
| 4. | No development shall commence until a Notice of Compliance has been issued by the Local Planning Authority. | In order that progress and compliance can be monitored. |
| 5. | Development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the information submitted by the applicant to which the Notice of Compliance has been granted, and to any additional conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority forming part of the Notice of Compliance. | To ensure compliance with the LDO. |
| 6. | This LDO can only be used for a single development within an ownership plot. Once development has commenced, any building permitted will not qualify for further permitted development, either through the use of this LDO or other national permitted development rights. | To avoid the potential cumulative impacts of development on the environment and to avoid the LDO being used for enabling uses that do not conform with the purpose of this LDO. |
| 7. | Not less than 14 days prior to the commencement of development, a Commencement Notice shall be submitted to Somerset West and Taunton Council. | To enable the monitoring of development and the effective implementation of the Order. |
| 8. | No construction work shall be carried out on the site on any Sunday, Christmas Day or Bank Holiday or other than between the hours of 0730 and 1900 hours on weekdays. | To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the amenities of neighbouring properties. |
| 9. | <p>If contamination is found at the site, no further development shall be carried out until:</p> <p>a) a scheme of remediation has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority;</p> | To ensure the risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised and to protect the environment from contamination and to ensure that the site will |

| No. | Condition | Reason |
|-----|--|--|
| | <p>b) the applicant has received written approval of their proposed scheme of remediation; and</p> <p>c) Remediation has been carried out in accordance with its terms.</p> | not qualify as contaminated land under part 2A for the Environmental Protection Act 1990. |
| 10. | Prior to occupation of the building, space shall be laid out, drained and surfaced within the site in accordance with the approved plans for the parking and turning of vehicles, and such areas shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking and turning of vehicles associated with the development. | To ensure suitable access to the site is provided and retained, in the interests of highway safety. |
| 11. | Prior to the buildings being occupied visibility splays shall be provided in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. There shall be no obstruction to visibility greater than 300 mm above the adjoining carriageway level within the visibility splays approved by this condition. The visibility splays shall thereafter be maintained in the approved form. | To ensure suitable visibility is provided and retained at the site access, in the interests of highway safety. |
| 12. | <p>Noise emissions from development which this permission refers shall not exceed background levels by more than 3 decibels expressed in terms of an A-Weighted, 2 Min Leq, at any time during the days and times indicated when measured at any point at the facade of any residential or other noise sensitive boundary.</p> <p>Mon-Fri 0800 hrs to 1800 hrs Sat 0800 hrs to 1300 hrs</p> <p>At all other times including Sundays and Bank Holidays, noise emissions shall not be audible when so measured.</p> <p>Noise emissions having tonal characteristics, e.g. hum, drone, whine etc, shall not exceed background levels at any time, when measured as above.</p> | To ensure the development is not detrimental to the amenity of the area. |

8 Process and Procedures

8.1 LDO Process

8.1.1 Figure 2 illustrates the process by which the Local Planning Authority will determine conformity with the LDO.

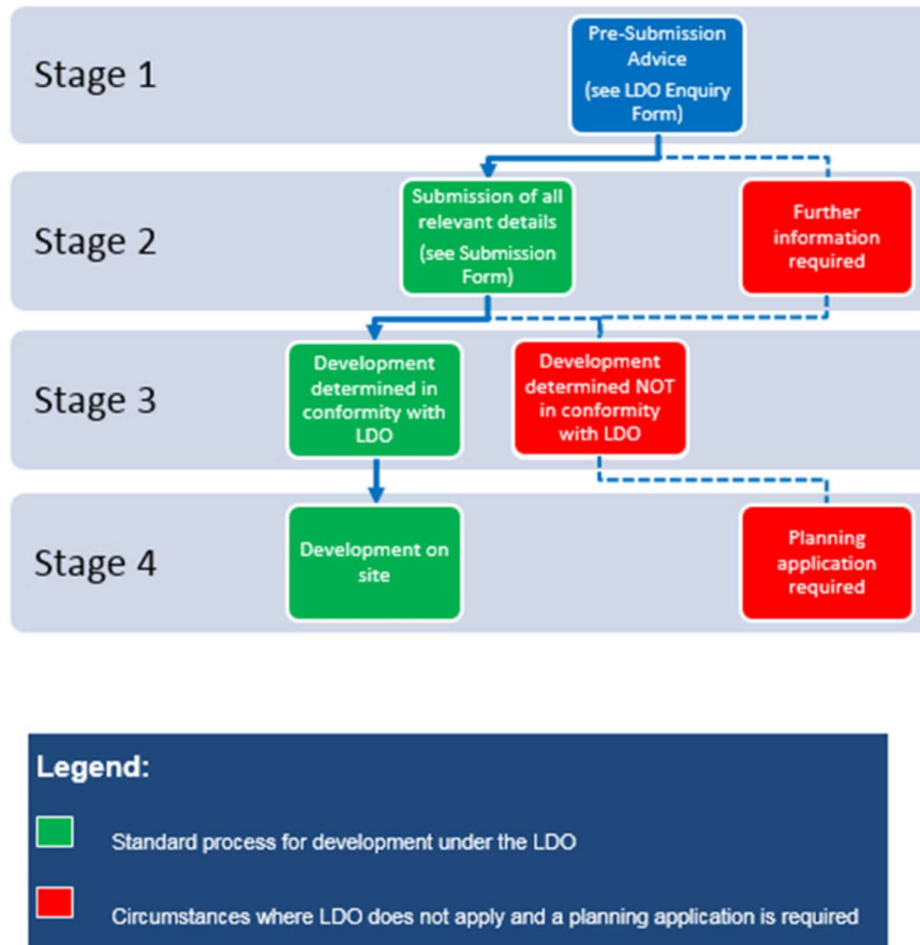


Figure 2. The LDO Process

Stage 1 - Pre-Submission Advice

8.1.2 Pre-submission advice is available to applicants at xxxx (SWT to confirm – we assume an LDO enquiry form will be available via website).

Stage 2 - Submission of Design and Access Statement and Other Required Technical Reports

8.1.3 The Local Planning Authority should be provided with prior notification of any development proposed under the provisions of the LDO. This should be done by completing the Application for Compliance Form attached at Appendix A to this LDO. The form, together with the required supporting documents, should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Stage 3 - Determination

- 8.1.4 The Local Planning Authority will provide a response with 28 days, which will comprise one of the following;
- A letter of conformity to confirm that the proposed development satisfies the terms of the LDO;
 - A request for further information; or
 - A letter stating that the proposed development does not meet the terms of the LDO and that an application for planning permission should therefore be made.

Stage 4 – Notice of Development Commencement

- 8.1.5 Commencement Notice must be submitted to the council no less than 14 days prior to the commencement of development. For avoidance of doubt commencement includes any preparation works. This is to inform the LPA that development is due to start on site and is required for monitoring purposes.
- 8.1.6 Development must be undertaken in full accordance with submitted details and the conditions of this LDO.

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Appendix B List of Statutory Consultees

B.1.1 Statutory consultees who will be consulted on this LDO include:

- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
- Blackdown Hills and Quantocks AONB's
- British Telecom PLC
- British Transco
- Commpro Telecommunications
- Devon County Council
- East Devon District Council
- EDF Energy
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Exmoor National Park Authority
- Heart of South West LEP.
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Local Nature Partnership (LNP)
- Marine Management Organisation
- Mid Devon District Council
- Mobile Operators Association (MOA)
- Mono Consultants Ltd.
- National Grid
- National Grid UK Transmission
- Natural England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Commissioning Board
- North Devon District Council
- O2 (UK) Ltd
- Orange Personal Communications
- Parrett Internal Drainage Board
- RWE npower renewables
- Sedgemoor District Council
- Homes England
- Local Nature Partnership (LNP)
- Marine Management Organisation
- Mid Devon District Council
- Mobile Operators Association (MOA)
- Mono Consultants Ltd.
- National Grid
- National Grid UK Transmission
- Natural England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Commissioning Board
- North Devon District Council
- O2 (UK) Ltd
- Orange Personal Communications
- Parrett Internal Drainage Board
- RWE npower renewables
- Sedgemoor District Council
- Somerset County Council
- Somerset Health & Wellbeing Board
- Somerset Supporting People Partnership
- South Somerset District Council
- South West Water
- The Highways Agency
- T-Mobile (UK) Ltd
- Vodafone Ltd
- Wales and West Utilities

Technical Informative

Local Development Order (LDO) for B1 Uses

Somerset West
and Taunton

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1 Highway and Access Requirements

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Access to the site should be achievable via a route which is safe and appropriate for the increase in traffic and size of vehicle that the proposals will attract to protect the safety of those travelling to the site and the existing users of the road. Furthermore, the site itself should be laid out in such a way that vehicles do not have to stop or park on the public highway in a location that may result in the safety of other road users being compromised.
- 1.1.2 It is therefore necessary to check certain aspects of the proposals such as the standard of the existing access point and the route to the site from main roads as well as the provision of onsite parking and distance of the proposed building from the highway to determine if they are of a suitable standard to support the proposals via the LDO process or whether a further detailed check with the highway authority (SCC) is necessary. The Highways and Access section within the Technical Informative at the end of this document sets out the process for determining how approval for the proposals should be sought and what evidence is required to be submitted alongside an application.
- 1.1.3 The following assessment process determines:
- whether your proposals are suitable for approval via an application for compliance through this LDO
 - the level of further evidence required to be included with (or within) your Design and Access Statement submission, or
 - whether a planning application is required

1.2 Level 1 Assessment

- 1.2.1 If the Level 1 assessment set out in the table below confirms that no further assessment is required, then it is appropriate to submit the compliance application without further evidence to support the site in terms of access.

Table 1. Is further evidence required?

| Parameter | No further assessment or evidence required | Step 2 assessment required |
|--|--|----------------------------|
| Proposals are for sole B1(a) use with a GFA less than 50m ² with an existing access | ✓ | |
| Proposals are for any combination of B1(a)/B1(b)/B1(c) uses off an existing access with a total GFA of less than 200m ² | | ✓ |
| Proposals are for sole B1(b) or B1(c) use off an existing access with a total GFA of less than 200m ² | | ✓ |

- 1.2.2 If the Level 1 assessment suggests further assessment is required, then progress to the Level 2 assessment to determine if the proposals are suitable for approval via the compliance application route or whether you would be required to submit a planning application for the Site.

1.3 Level 2 Assessment

1.3.1 The table below sets out the parameters which would allow approval to be sought via application for compliance through this LDO. For each parameter in table 2, evidence should be provided in plan form to show that the requirement is met. All parameters in Table 2 should be checked and if any parameter suggests that the proposals are not eligible for consideration through the LDO process, then further advice should be sought from the LPA.

Table 2. Site eligibility and access evidence required

| Parameter | Evidence of Required through D&A Statement | Is the site eligible for consideration through this LDO? |
|--|--|--|
| Route to Main Site Access – to ensure employees and service vehicles can access the site via a safe and appropriate route | | |
| Main site access is located on a classified road (A, B or C) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Main site access is located on an unclassified road but within 100m of a classified road | ✓ | ✓ |
| Main site access is located on an unclassified road but within 100m of a site with existing consented industrial or commercial use | ✓ | ✓ |
| Main site access is located on an unclassified road, without access within 100m to a classified road or existing industrial/commercial site | X | X |
| Main site access - to ensure vehicles can enter/exit highway safely | | |
| Existing access of standard set out in line with parameters detailed in Section 1.4 below | ✓ | ✓ |
| Existing access which does not meet standard set out under Section 1.4 below | X | X |
| A new access is required | X | X |
| Internal Layout – to ensure that site layout is appropriate for access to the proposals | | |
| Proposed building frontage is within 50m of adopted highway | ✓ | ✓ |
| Servicing is possible from the highway or site can accommodate turning of the largest anticipated vehicle (large refuse truck as a minimum) such that vehicles can leave the site in forward gear. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Parking is provided in accordance with the standard set out in Section 1.5 below. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Layout does not meet one or more of the other requirements under internal layout heading | X | X |

1.4 Main Access Specification

1.4.1 Main site access must meet the specification set out below:

- Visibility must be provided looking both directions out of the site in accordance with the requirements set out below. This must be achievable using only land within the client's control or highway verge/footway. Key parameters for showing visibility splays for this can be seen in figure 7.18 of Manual for Streets. For all speeds an 'x' distance of 2.4 metres is applicable. The 'y' lengths are listed below:
 - If the speed limit is 20mph, 25 metres visibility must be provided
 - If the speed limit is 30mph (indicated by speed limit signs or street lighting in a built-up area), 43 metres visibility must be provided
 - If the speed limit is 40mph, 90 metres visibility must be provided
 - If the speed limit is greater than 40mph and the access is onto a classified road, the 'y' distance should be provided in line with the length given for Stopping Sight Distance in Tables 2 and 3 ([DMRB](#))
- Minimum width of 6 metres over a length of 15 metres
- Surface water should not drain onto the public highway.
- Gradient of access should not exceed 1 in 10, for at least the first 15 metres from the edge of the adopted highway
- Access should be consolidated or surfaced for at least the first 15 metres, as measured from the edge of the adjoining carriageway, (not loose stone or gravel).
- Entrance gates should be hung to open inwards and should be set back a minimum distance of 5.0 metres from the carriageway edge.

1.5 Parking Specification

1.5.1 The parking provision for the new development should be as set out below. This should not compromise parking for the existing building:

Table 3. Extract from SCC Adopted Parking Strategy - Zones defined by Accessibility

| Type | Town/Village Centres and Peripheries | Rural Areas |
|------------|---|---|
| Cycle | 1 per 50m ² of gross floor area | 1 per 200m ² of floorspace |
| Vehicle | 1 per 40m ² of gross floor area | 1 per 30m ² of gross floor area |
| Disabled | 1 of the vehicle spaces provided should be sized for disabled use | 1 of the vehicle spaces provided should be sized for disabled use |
| Motorcycle | 1 space | 1 space |

1.5.2 Parking bays should be sized as follows:

- Perpendicular - 2.4 x 5m
- Parallel - 2.4 x 6m
- Disabled – as above with a 1.2m buffer on the offside and rear of the space

- 1.5.3 Bays should have a minimum of 6m perpendicular distance to the rear of the space to allow adequate manoeuvring area for vehicles entering/exiting spaces.

DRAFT

2 Other Potential Technical Requirements

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 For some sites technical information may be required to be supplied alongside your Design and Access Statement. The nature of this technical information depends on the individual circumstances of your site's location.
- 2.1.2 The information in this informative relates to:
- the circumstances when further information is needed to be submitted alongside your submission;
 - how to find out if your site is affected by such circumstances;
 - how to find what information should be submitted in such circumstances; and
 - clarifications on the interpretation on standing advice where relevant.

2.2 Flood Risk Assessment

- 2.2.1 It is possible to find out which Flood Zone your submission area sits in by using the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>
- 2.2.2 A Flood Risk Assessment is required to support this submission if:
- your site is in an area within flood zone 1, but has critical drainage problems as notified by the Environment Agency; or
 - your site is in flood zone 2 or 3a; or
 - your site could be affected by sources of flooding other than rivers and the sea.
- 2.2.3 Advice can be found on what should be included within a Flood Risk Assessment is available through the Somerset West and Taunton Website. Standing advice for the production of an Flood Risk Assessment and examples of Flood Resilience Measures can also be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-standing-advice>.
- The development uses included within this LDO are considered as 'less vulnerable' to flooding and is therefore appropriate for consideration through this process.
 - Development will provide less than 200m of new floorspace and be set within an overall site coverage of less than 1Ha (see drawing a site boundary guidance). This means proposed development through this LDO is minor in nature and therefore **will not require a sequential or exception test**.
 - You do not need to submit your Flood Risk Assessment as a separate submission.** This information should be submitted alongside the rest of your Design and Access Statement.

2.3 Ecological Assessment

2.3.1 Development within this LDO has the potential to impact environmental designations and local habitats. To understand whether your proposal would qualify for the use of this LDO and whether further ecological information will be required to be submitted alongside your application, please follow the following two steps.

Step 1

2.3.2 Firstly, you must check the central government database for nearby environmental designations. To do this, simply:

1. Open Magic Maps, available from: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk>
2. Type in your postcode.
3. Tick the 'Designations' box on the 'Table of Contents' tab.
4. Tick the 'Land-Based Designations' subcategory box.
5. Click the information button on the toolbar and then click on your site.
6. Read the criteria for 'SSSI Impact Zones' to understand whether development is likely to impact any protected habitats (SSSI, SACs, SPAs and Ramsar Sites);
7. If your proposal fulfils any of the stated criteria or states "ALL APPLICATIONS", it is judged as likely to affect a protected designation or species. It therefore does not qualify for development through this LDO.
8. If your proposal does not fulfil any of the criteria, proceed to Step 2.

Step 2

2.3.3 There is potential for wildlife to be found in and around occupied properties and affected by works covered by this LDO. Please complete the table 1.

| Are any of the following buildings or features present at your Site? | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Veteran (historical or important) trees, cellars, ice houses, old mines and caves? | | |
| 2. Buildings with features suitable for bats , or large gardens in suburban and rural areas? | | |
| 3. Traditional timber-framed building (such as a barn)? | | |
| 4. Lakes, rivers and streams (on the land or nearby)? | | |
| 5. Heathland on, nearby or linked to the site (by similar habitat)? | | |
| 6. Meadows, grassland, parkland and pasture on the land or linked to the site (by similar habitat)? | | |
| 7. Ponds or slow-flowing water bodies (like ditches) on the site, or within 500m and linked by semi-natural habitat such as parks or heaths? | | |
| 8. Rough grassland and previously developed land (brownfield sites), on or next to the site? | | |
| 9. Woodland, scrub and hedgerows on, or next to the site? | | |
| 10. Coastal habitats? | | |

Table 1. Habitat Checklist

- 2.3.4 If you have answered yes to any criteria in table 1, there is an increased chance of protected species being present at your site. An ecology survey (extended stage 1 survey) will therefore be required to be undertaken and findings submitted alongside your Design Access Statement.
- 2.3.5 If evidence of habitation is found at your site during the ecological survey, you must also include a summary of acceptable mitigation measures alongside your Design and Access Statement.
- 2.3.6 Any ecology survey must be undertaken by a qualified ecologist at the appropriate time of year in accordance with Natural England Standing Advice, available from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-species-how-to-review-planning-applications#standing-advice-for-protected-species>. The chosen ecologist will be able to advise on necessary avoidance, enhancement and mitigation measures.
- 2.3.7 To find a suitably qualified ecologist to complete a survey and suggest mitigation measures, you can search: <https://events.cieem.net/RegisteredPracticeDirectory/Registered-Practice-Directory.aspx>.
- 2.3.8 If species are discovered following the commencement of development must stop immediately and consult your chosen ecologist.

2.4 Ground Contamination Assessment

- 2.4.1 If there is a reason to believe contamination could be an issue, applicants should provide proportionate but sufficient site investigation information (a risk assessment) prepared by a competent person to determine the existence or otherwise of contamination, its nature and extent, the risks it may pose and to whom/what (the 'receptors') so that these risks can be assessed and satisfactorily reduced to an acceptable level.



Somerset West and Taunton Council

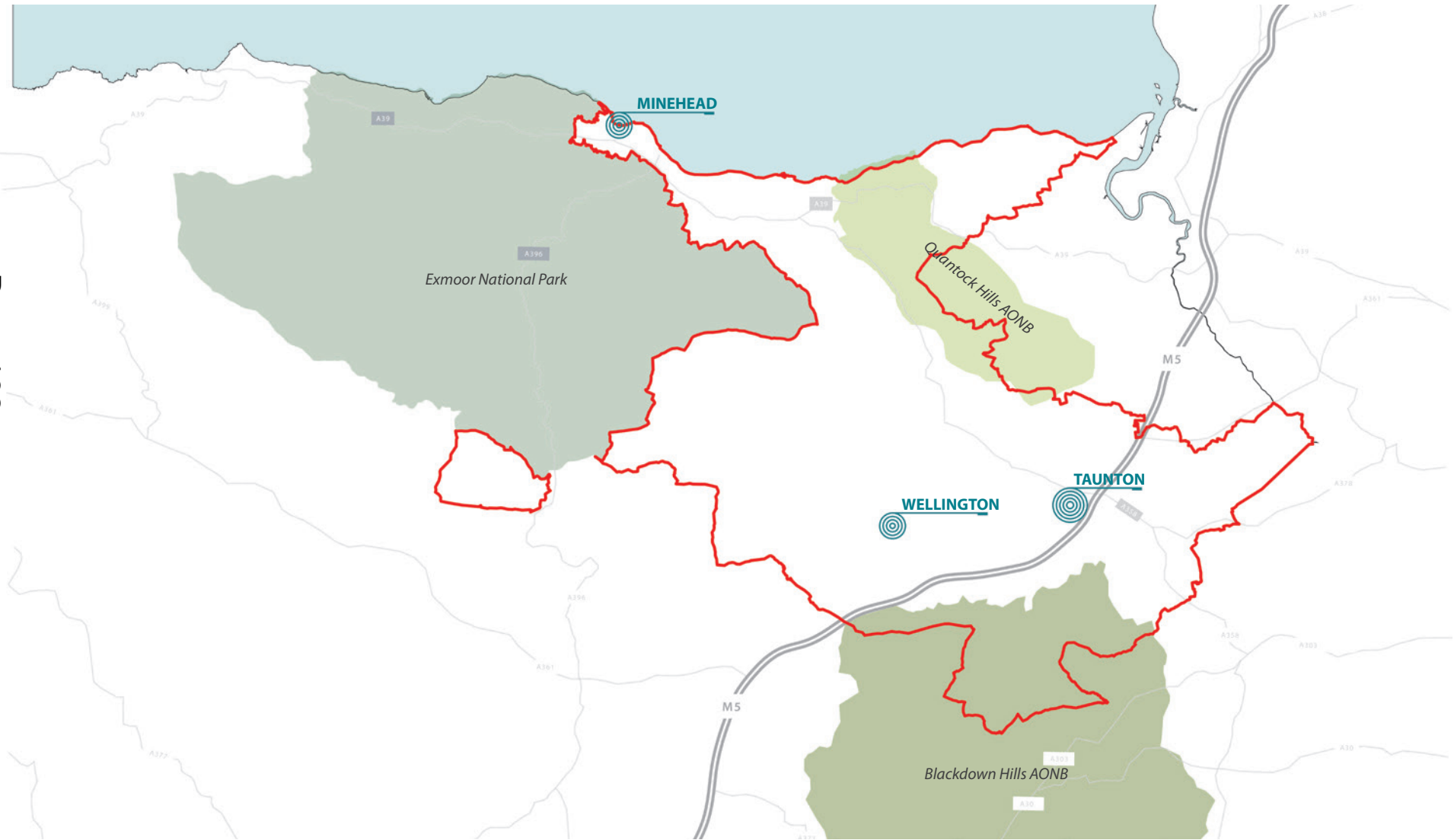
Design Code for Small Scale Employment Space

Local Development Order for B1 uses

November 2019 | www.lhc.net

18036 - Issue: 04

[DRAFT]



Above: Site Plan of Somerset West and Taunton District

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- Table Checklist
- LDO Exclusion Map

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Appendix A - Technical Informative

1 Highway & Access Requirements

2 Other Potential Technical Requirements

| | | |
|--------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Date: | 20/09/2019 | |
| Project: | Somerset West and Taunton Council Employment LDO 18036 | |
| Produced by: | AS / KS | Date: 11 th November 2019 |
| Checked by: | PO | Date: 11 th November 2019 |

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Introduction

The purpose of this LDO is to assist in the delivery of small scale office, research and light industrial space. Through the LDO the delivery of such employment space will be easier and faster. The LDO and accompanying Design Code will create a straightforward system for potential applicants to understand and interpret potential development opportunities.

The Design Code element sets out design parameters to be applied to any development. Its purpose is to ensure that a high and consistent standard of design is delivered, and to provide sustainable and stimulating working environments whilst at the same time enabling the diverse requirements of individual occupiers to be met.

Development must accord with all aspects of the Design Code in order to benefit from the permitted development rights confirmed by the LDO. This Design Code should be considered alongside the accompanying Local Development Order (LDO) which addresses planning and procedures in respect of the site.

What does this LDO cover?

The LDO permits the following uses:

| Use Class | Definition | Limitations |
|-----------|---|-------------------|
| B1 (a) | Offices - other than those within class A2. | Up to 50 sqm net |
| B1 (b) | Research and development of products or processes | Up to 200 sqm net |
| B1 (c) | Light Industry – use for any industrial process which can be carried out in a residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of that area. | Up to 200 sqm net |

This does not prevent office floorspace being included as an ancillary use within Research and Light Industrial premises and providing it covers a floor space area of no more than 50 square metres.

The design guide will inform applicants of proposed building size allowances/restrictions which relates to individual plot parameters and site location.

The total site area including external areas, landscaping and access, must not exceed 1 hectare in size.

Why a Design Code

A Design Code is a proactive method of securing high quality new development, giving the developer clear guidance on delivering high quality light industrial space within the given context. The Design Code provides clear guidance to the developer and certainty to the community and local authority regarding the quality of the proposed development.

This Design Code is intended to be a benchmark and reference manual for a range of architectural, urban and landscape design issues that will inform the detailed design of the scheme. The Design Code responds to the LDO framework, identifying appropriate approaches for delivering small scale employment space within a range of contexts and locations across Somerset West and Taunton. The Design Code responds to national and local design policies by clearly setting out design principles that are appropriate to their context and provides the required small-scale industrial space whilst contributing positively to the site and landscape/townscape.

This Design Code sets out plot parameters for height, scale and massing, proximity to adjacent buildings (existing and proposed), corners and end plots, building materials, colour palettes, roofs, doors and windows and landscape works, all of which draw precedent from the local character of the district.

Sustainability Context

Underpinning this LDO is the need to encourage employment uses close to where people live. With this shift from a daily commuting pattern to working locally, the LDO hopes to have a positive impact on reducing traffic and associated issues across the District.

The following sustainable approaches are encouraged within any new employment unit and surrounding landscape works under this LDO:

- Low energy use
- High levels of insulation
- Appropriate levels of natural lighting
- Reuse of building materials where possible
- Use of building materials which can be recycled in the future
- Sustainable drainage systems
- Use of native plant species characteristic of the local landscape
- Retention of existing trees and hedgerows
- Measures to support biodiversity
- Appropriate waste management and recycling strategies
- Cycle storage to encourage sustainable travel
- Installation of bird and bat boxes or nesting provisions within new buildings



1.2 Can your Development be Considered?

The matrix on page 9 should be used to determine whether your proposed development can be considered through this LDO submission process.

The matrix will highlight:

1. Whether the site is eligible to be considered through this LDO, or whether you should instead operate through the standard planning application process.
2. Whether further information may be required to ensure that your site is eligible to be considered through this LDO.

Supporting Technical Information

To support your application, you are required to demonstrate that you have considered a range of technical matters including:

Highways and Access Requirements - To ensure your proposed development has safe and appropriate access and appropriate provision for vehicular/cycle parking.

Flood Risk Requirements – To ensure your proposed development would not be affected by future flooding or increase the chances of flooding elsewhere. Note that sites in a functional flood plain (flood zone 3b) will not be considered through this LDO.

Ecological Requirements – To manage the potential impact of your proposed development on local habitats.

Ground Contamination Requirements – To manage the potential impact of any contamination on your proposed development site.

Advice on what assessments are required to be undertaken, and when, is included in the Technical Informative within this document (appendix A)

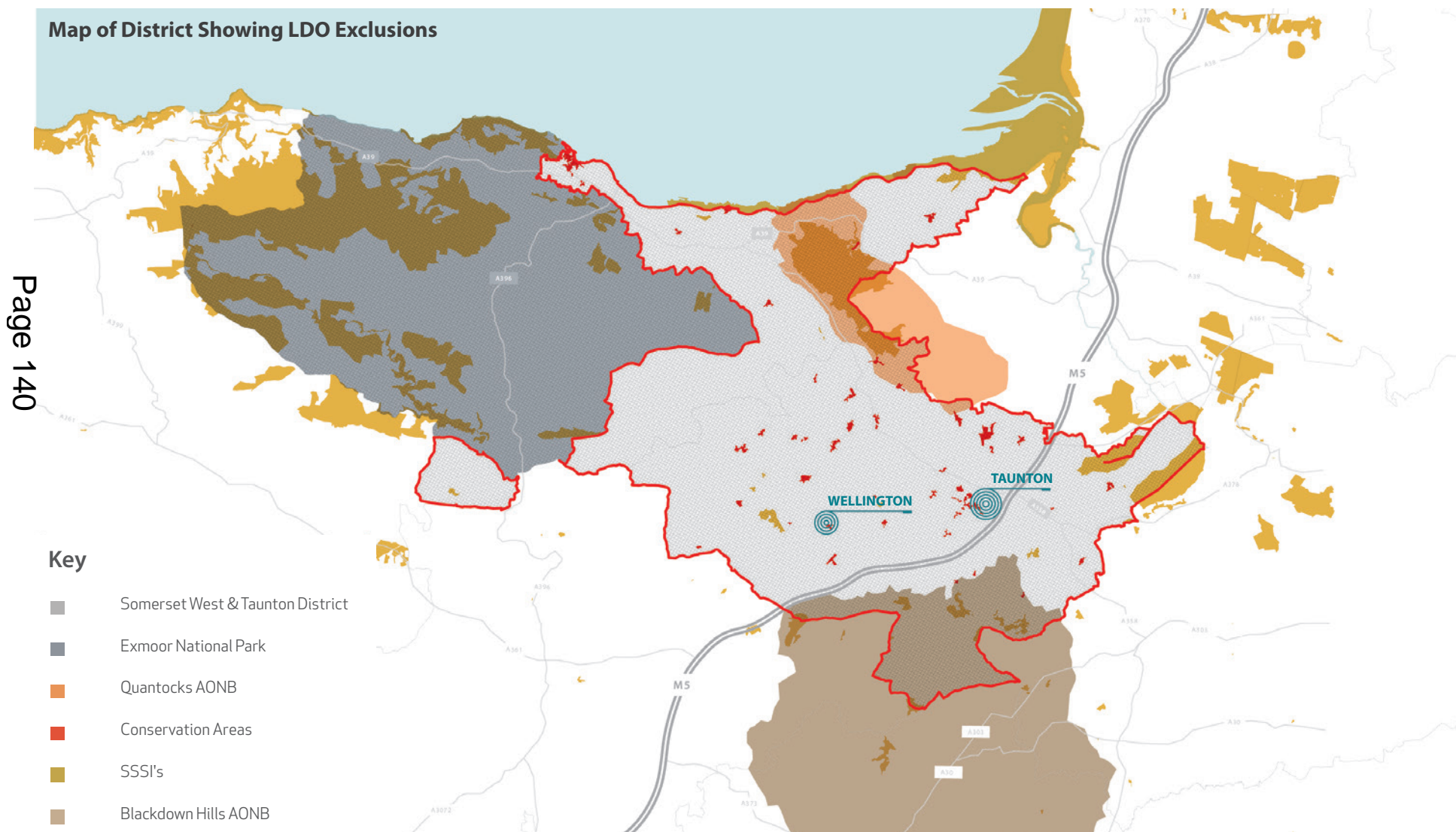
Please note that where Somerset West and Taunton judge there is insufficient information provided to make a decision, they may make request for further information on this basis.

**(Tables to be reworked into full flow diagram
integrating technical informative where possible)**

| | Your proposal is eligible for consideration through this LDO | Check Technical Informative Section for further Details (informative to be integrated into Design Code body text to aid reader and this column removed) | A planning application is required |
|--|--|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Process | | | |
| This is your first LDO submission at this address. | ✓ | | |
| You have previously received an LDO certificate of conformity at this address. | ✗ | | ✓ |
| You intend to demolish buildings to enable the development of new buildings. | ✗ | | ✓ |
| You have completed the DAS proforma checklist. | ✓ | | |
| 2. Site Location | | | |
| Your site is located in Taunton. | ✗ | | ✓ |
| Your site is located in Wellington. | ✗ | | ✓ |
| Your site is located in a Conservation Area. | ✗ | | ✓ |
| Your site is within the curtilage of Listed Building | ✗ | | ✓ |
| Your site is located in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or National Park. | ✗ | | ✓ |
| Your site is located within a character area identified within this Design Code. | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 3. Site Size (see measurement guidance page - to be added) | | | |
| Less than 1 Hectare | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 1 Hectare or More | ✗ | | ✓ |
| 4. Flooding | | | |
| Any part of your site is in Flood Zone 1 | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Any part of your site is in Flood Zone 2 | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Any part of your site is in Flood Zone 3a | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Any part of your site is in Flood Zone 3b | ✗ | | ✓ |

| | Your proposal is eligible for consideration through this LDO | Check Technical Informative Section for further Details (informative to be integrated into Design Code body text to aid reader and this column removed) | A planning application is required |
|---|--|---|------------------------------------|
| 5. Access | | | |
| Your Site has vehicle access to an A or B class road (awaiting confirmation that SCC mapping to be added as available as an extra resource to assist applicants) | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Your Site does not have an existing vehicular access from a classified road (A, B or C) and is not within 100 metres of a classified road or an existing industrial or commercial site. | ✗ | | ✓ |
| Your proposed building frontage is within 50 metres of the adopted highway. | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Your proposed building frontage is more than 50 metres from the adopted highway. | ✗ | | |
| Your development proposal includes light industrial uses and has an existing vehicular access has a width of at least 5 metres for a length of at least 15 metres. | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Your development proposal includes light industrial uses and does not have an existing vehicular access width of at least 5 metres for a length of at least 15 metres. | ✗ | | ✓ |
| 6. Ecology | | | |
| Your development is not judged as likely to affect nearby environmental designations. | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Your proposed development is judged as likely to affect nearby environmental designations. | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Your proposal site may affect any potential local habitats. | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 7. Design | | | |
| Your proposal is in accordance with the design parameters of this LDO. | ✓ | | |
| Your proposal is for development that differs in scale, design or materials to those proposed in this Design Code. | ✗ | | ✓ |

1.2 Can your Development be Considered?



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1.3 How to Use the Design Code

How to use the Code

Please refer to the flow diagram opposite which illustrates how to use the Design Code.

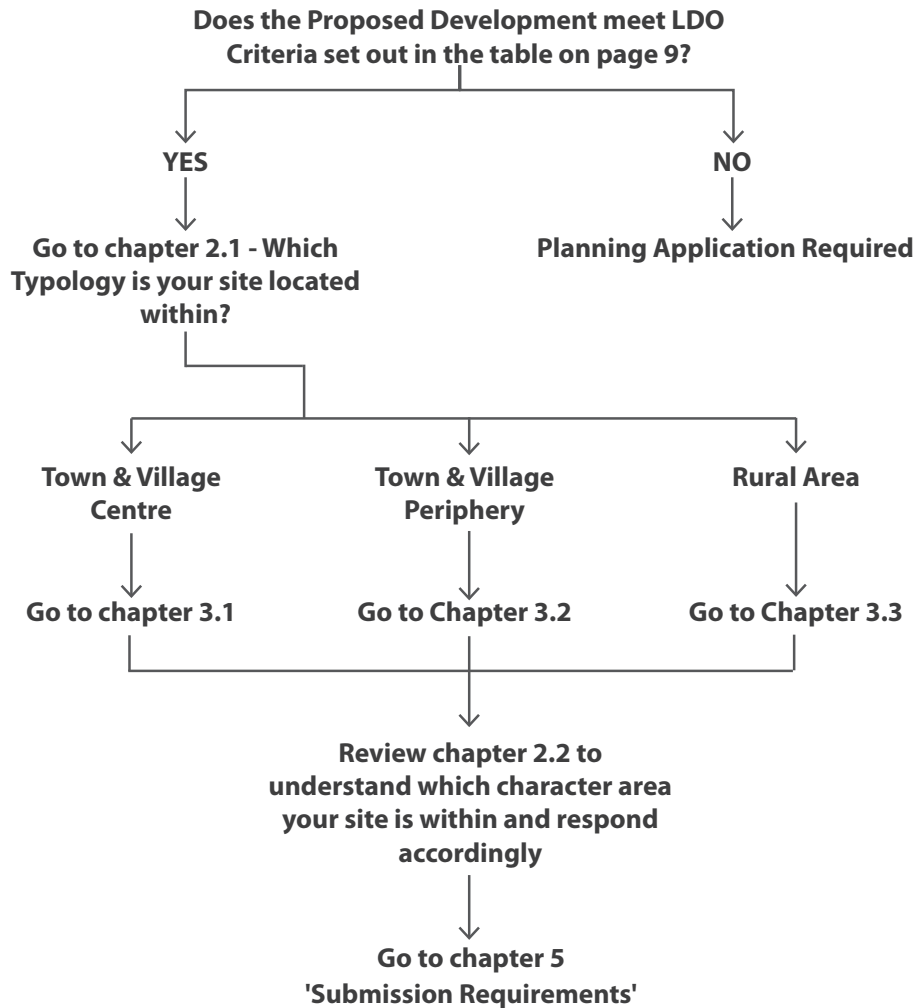
The Code is divided into sections, starting with the site and context, before focusing in on blocks and buildings, edges (plot boundaries) and details. Within each section individual 'Codes' are highlighted, covering specific design requirements and parameters.

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All designs submitted for the LDO must be compliant with:

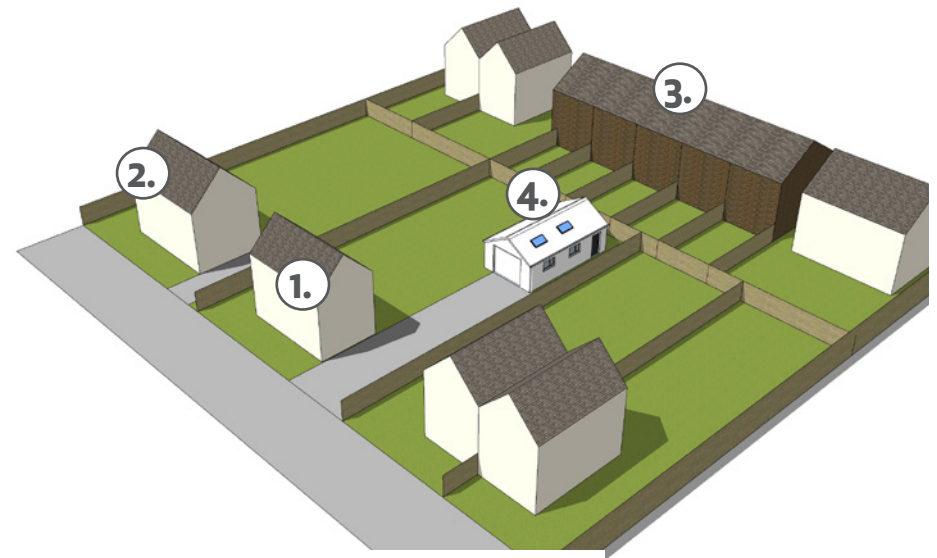
- The LDO document
- The requirements set out within this Design Code
- The UK Building Regulation requirements in effect at the time of submission for approval
- Ecological legislation

How to Use the Design Code Flow Diagram:



**INCLUDE PLAN WHICH
DETAILS LANGUAGE &
DEFINITIONS**

Block and Building Design Code Diagram:



- 1. Your dwelling
- 2. Neighbouring Properties
- 3. Neighbouring Properties
- 4. Proposed LDO Unit

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2.0 Understanding the Site

2.1 Site Location

Site Typologies

This Design Code covers a number of area Typologies which are seen throughout the district. The Code is divided into 3 sections, which covers each Typology: Town and Village Centres, Town and Village Peripheries and Rural Areas. Prospective applicants should use this guide to locate their site.

Any proposed site should be considered in relation to the appropriate section of this document. Each section will set out the simple parameters by which the proposed development should conform with.

The 3 Typologies are:

- 1. Town and Village Centres
- 2. Town & Village Peripheries
- 3. Rural Areas

Further information for each of these can be found in Section 3.0 of this report.



Town & Village Centres

The site:

- Is bordered on all sides by neighbouring development
- Would have limited impact on wider landscape views due to proposed buildings being seen within the existing context
- Could be adjacent to but not within a Conservation Area

1.



Above: Town & Village Centre

Town & Village Peripheries

The site:

- Is bordered on 2 or more sides by existing development
- Has views to the open countryside
- Could be adjacent to but not within a Conservation Area

2.



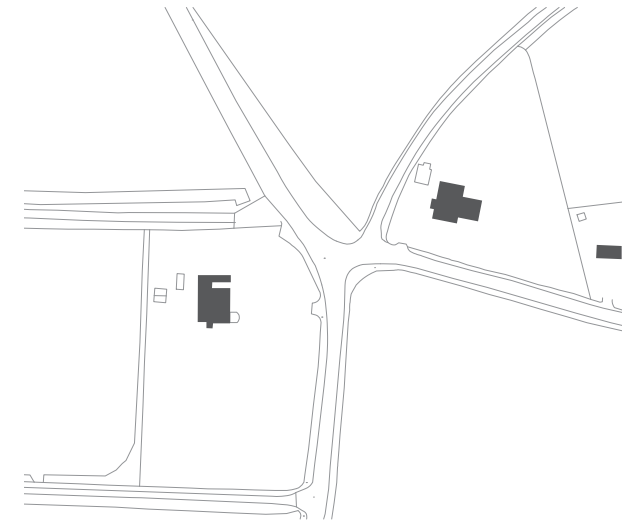
Above: Town & Village Periphery

Rural Areas

The site:

- Is an isolated cluster of buildings made up of a dwelling and existing agricultural buildings
- OR
- Is an isolated dwelling or within a small group of isolated dwellings in the open countryside

3.



Above: Rural

2.2 Landscape Setting

Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Areas (each to include landscape / architectural / material / palette information)

1. Minehead Environs
2. Central West Somerset
3. Quantocks
4. Quantock Vale
5. Exmoor Fringes
6. Vale of Taunton Deane
7. Taunton (urban)
8. Clay Plateau (Churchinford)
9. Fivehead Vale
10. Sandstone Ridge

The proposed development should respond positively to the surrounding landscape (its setting) in order that any change does not adversely affect local character.

The Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide sets out principles for each Landscape Character Area. The relevant parameters for each area, relating to landscape, architectural design and materials are summarised below:

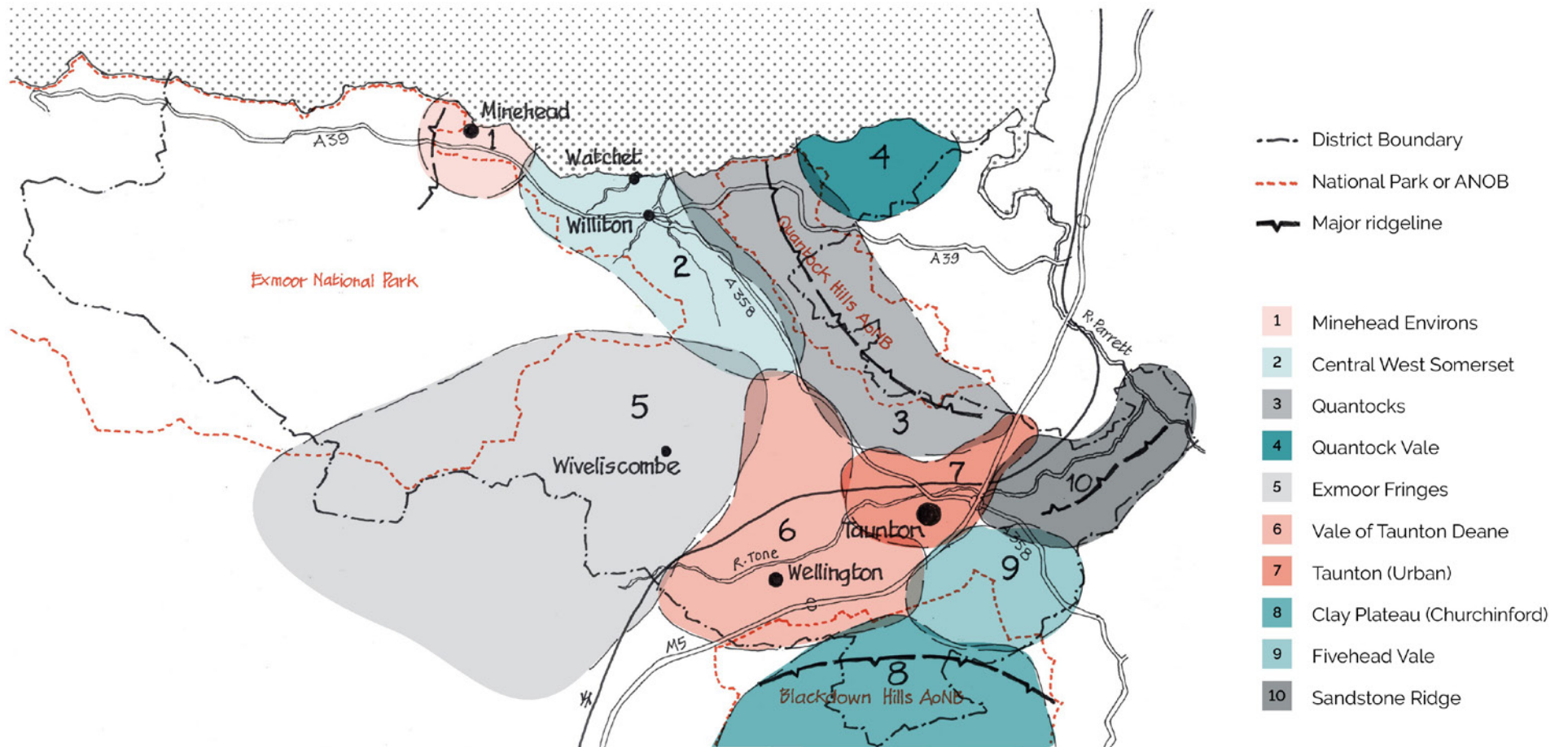
**CO-ORDINATE WITH DESIGN
SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON
DESIGN GUIDE INFORMATION**

Further Information can be found in the Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide.

Character Area Map extracted from Taunton and West Somerset Design Guide written by Richard Guise

Character areas

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3.0 Design Code

3.1 Proposed Developments in Town & Village Centres

Urban Design/Landscape Parameters

Access & Parking Requirements:

- The site **must** have existing vehicular access to the proposed employment unit - if a new access is required then planning permission will need to be obtained.
- The **existing** access arrangements must comply with the requirements set out in Technical Informative section of this document (page 62-3). Please note, access requirements will differ dependent on proposed building use.
- The parking provision for the proposed employment unit should be as set out in the table below. This should not compromise parking for the existing building:

| Type | Town and Village Centres |
|------------|---|
| Cycle | 1 per 250m ² of gross floor area |
| Vehicle | 1 per 40m ² of gross floor area |
| Disabled | 1 of the vehicles spaces provided should be sized for disabled use. |
| Motorcycle | 1 space |

Parking bays should be sized as follows:

- Perpendicular - 2.4 x 5m
- Parallel - 2.4 x 6m
- Disabled - as above with a 1.2m buffer on the offside and rear of the space

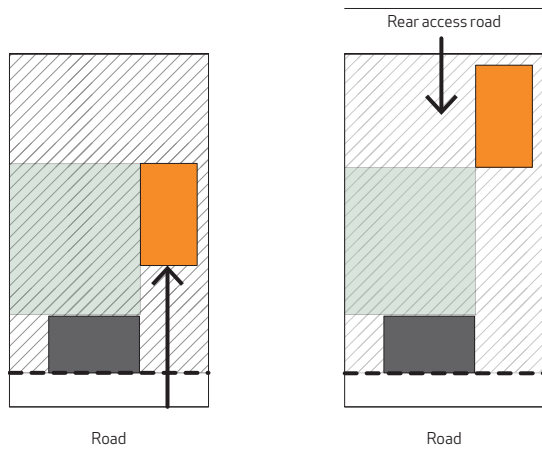
- Bays should have a minimum of 6m perpendicular distance to the rear of the space to allow adequate manoeuvring area for vehicles entering/exiting spaces.

Where the building is located on the plot:

- No proposed building to protrude in front of existing dwelling building line
- Proposed building to be no larger than 10% of rear garden area (curtilage behind existing building line minus the existing dwelling area and any outbuilding areas) up to a maximum of 50m² for office (B1a) and 200m² for light industrial (B1 b and c)
- Remaining garden must not be less than 50m²
- The remaining garden must relate to the existing dwelling and its layout and living spaces – location of proposed building on the plot must not cause detriment to amenity of existing dwelling.

Landscape structure & Potential Visual Impact:

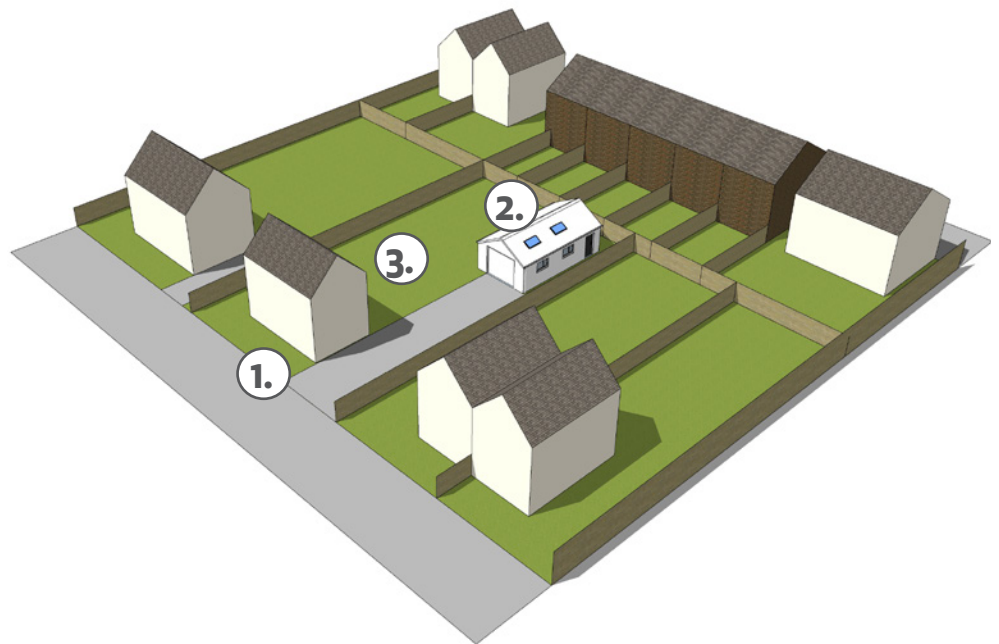
- Landscape proposals should be submitted that illustrate how appropriate planting (and/or other landscape works) could help integrate the development in its setting.



Above: Proposed unit off existing access at the front & Rear

Key

- Proposed Unit
- Existing Dwelling
- Building Line
- Existing Access
- Garden Area Behind Building Line
- Retained Existing Garden (50m2 minimum)



1. Existing Access
2. Proposed Unit set behind the building line
3. Usable amenity space which relates well to existing dwelling

Above: Axo showing proposed unit in a town or village centre setting

3.1 Proposed Developments in Town & Village Centres

Urban Design/Landscape Details

Surfacing Materials

Any new paving or surfacing material is to be permeable to allow sufficient drainage. This includes materials such as:

- Gravel
- Permeable concrete block paving
- Porous asphalt

External Lighting

- Private external lighting must be designed to minimise light pollution on neighbouring properties (i.e. directional light spread)
- All external lighting (space and security lighting) must be provided by energy efficient fittings with appropriate control systems and daylight cut-off sensors.

Townscape/ Landscape Character Areas

Refer back to Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide Principles in Chapter 2.2

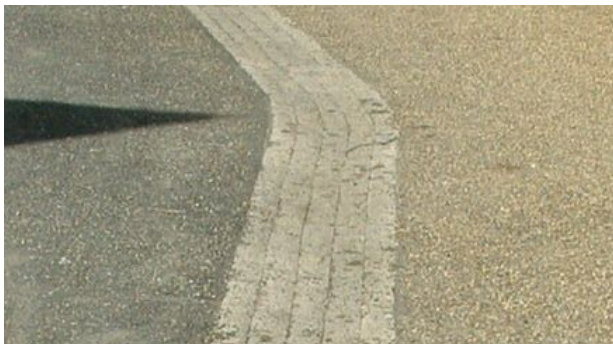
Boundary Treatment & details

- Where appropriate planting (and/or other landscape works) are required to integrate the development into its setting, applicants should use a mix of native and non-native species that supports wildlife, including insects and birds.
- Tree planting should include native species (or varieties of native species)

EXAMPLE SPECIES/DETAILS TO BE INCLUDED

Refuse & Cycle Storage

- Secure covered bike storage must be provided unless they are provided internally (1 space per 50m², minimum 2 spaces)
- External bin storage will be provided on plot at the rear of the proposed dwelling (unless provided internally). Bins must not be stored at the front of buildings, facing onto the street

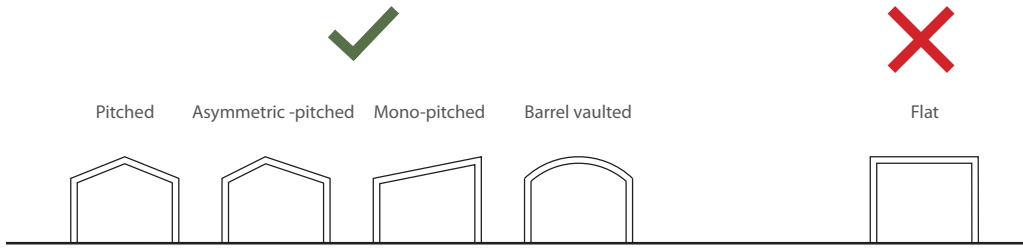


Above: Precedent images for details

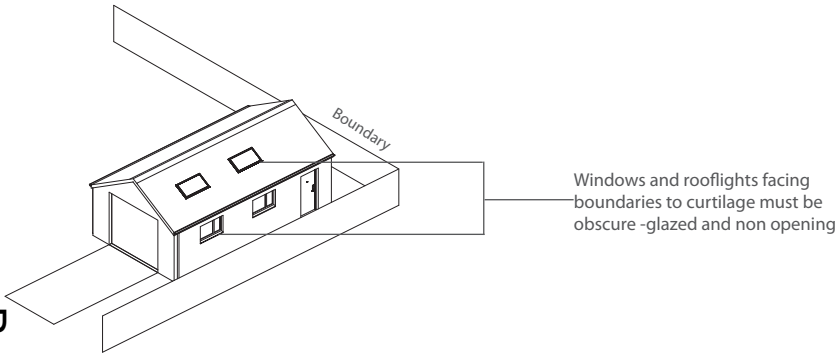
3.1 Proposed Developments in Town & Village Centres

Building Parameters

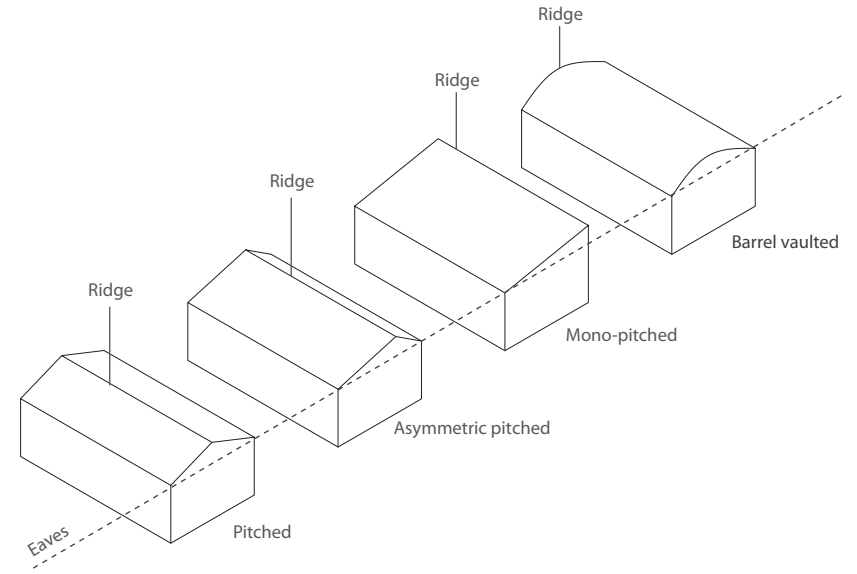
- Only single storey buildings are permitted
- Mezzanine structures are not permitted
- Flat roofs are not permitted
- Maximum ridge height of a building = 4 metres
- UNLESS within 2 metres of the boundary of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse where the maximum ridge height for any roof form = 2.5 metres
- Maximum eaves height for any roof form = 2.5 metres



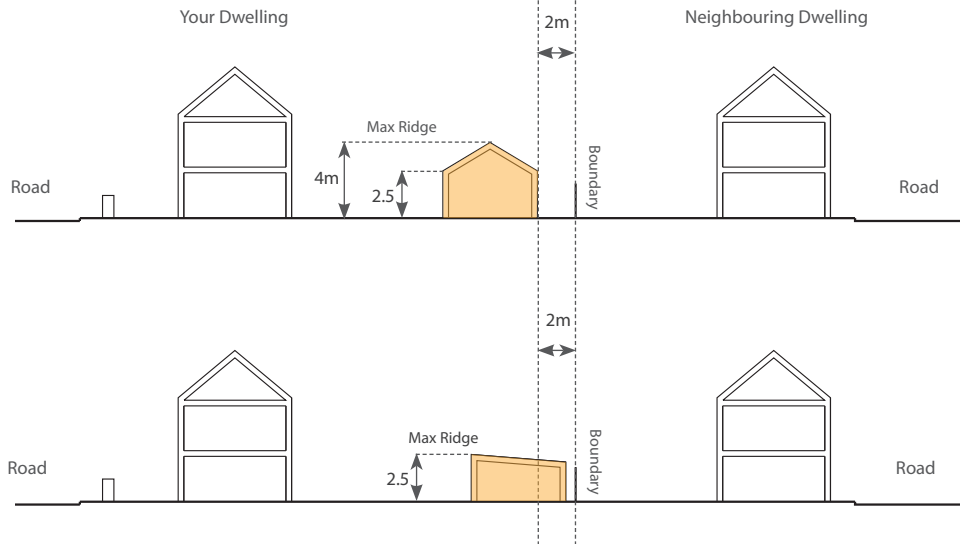
Above: Potential Roof Forms



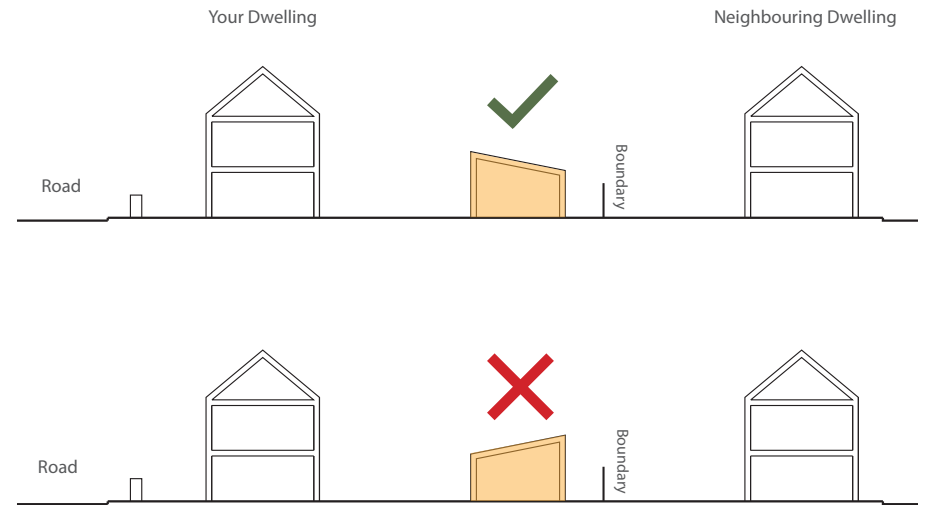
Above: Obscure Glazing requirement



Above: Roof Forms Explained



Above: Maximum Ridge and Eaves Heights



Above: Mono-pitched roof form requirement

3.1 Proposed Developments in Town & Village Centres

Building Elements

The building should appear subservient to the main dwelling and demonstrate its B1(c) function through its form, façades and detailing. The building should use a subdued palette of contextual materials which are simple and fit for purpose.

Wall Materials

Wall materials should be either:

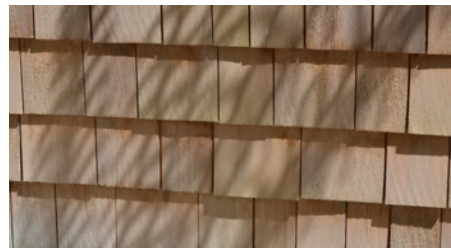
- Of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse
- If predominantly brick then a matching brick should be used for new building
- If predominantly local stone then matching stone should be used for new building
- If predominantly render then a similar tone of render should be used for new building
- The reuse of local stone or brick is encouraged to reduce the use of new materials, increasing the sustainability of the building.

OR

- Of a contemporary appearance to complement those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

Permitted contemporary wall materials include:

- Good quality timber cladding detailed to a high standard. Timber should have a natural appearance and should not be unnaturally stained or varnished
- Profiled metal cladding in a natural, subdued colour detailed to a high standard



Roof Materials

The chosen roof material should be appropriate to the designed roof pitch. Roof materials must not be reflective or cause any glare throughout the day.

Roof materials should be either:

- Of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

E.g.

- If slate then a matching slate should be used for new building
- If tile local tile then a matching tile should be used for new building
- The reuse of roof materials is encouraged to reduce the use of new materials, increasing the sustainability of the building.

OR

- Of a contemporary appearance to complement those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

Permitted contemporary roof materials include:

- Grey metal standing seam roof
- Profiled metal roofing in a natural, subdued colour detailed to a high standard

- Green roof detailed to a high standard

Rooflights

Rooflights should be positioned so as not to cause any adverse glint/glare and light pollution when it is dark outside.

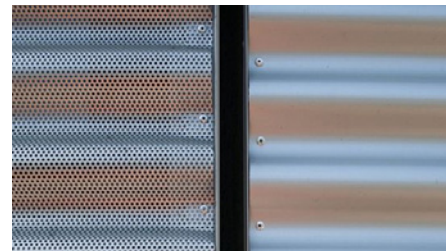
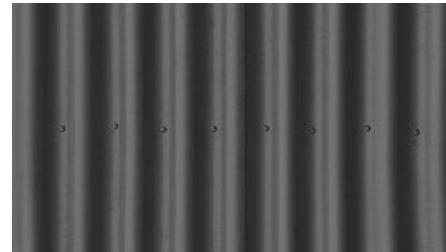
Windows and Doors

- Windows and doors should be simple, well-proportioned and suit the function of the building.
- Domestic proportioned openings should be avoided.
- Where large format doors are required, they should be in a complimentary material and colour tone to the material palette of the wider building.
- Windows and doors should be recessed within the walls and not flush with the external face.

Windows and doors of a standard size should be of a similar material and colour tone to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse.

OR

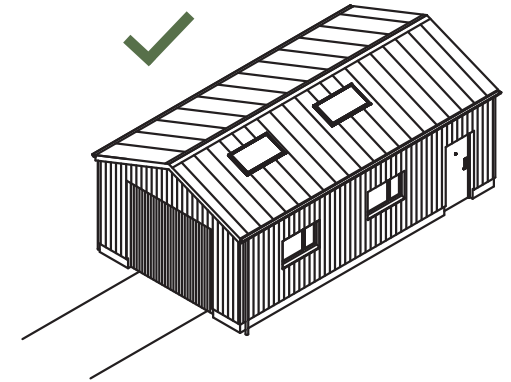
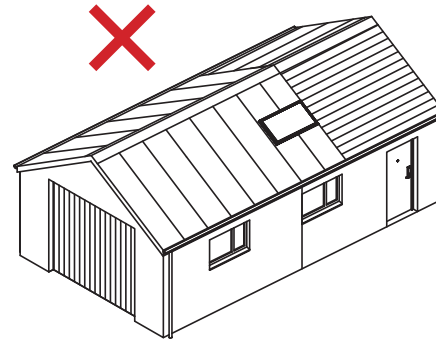
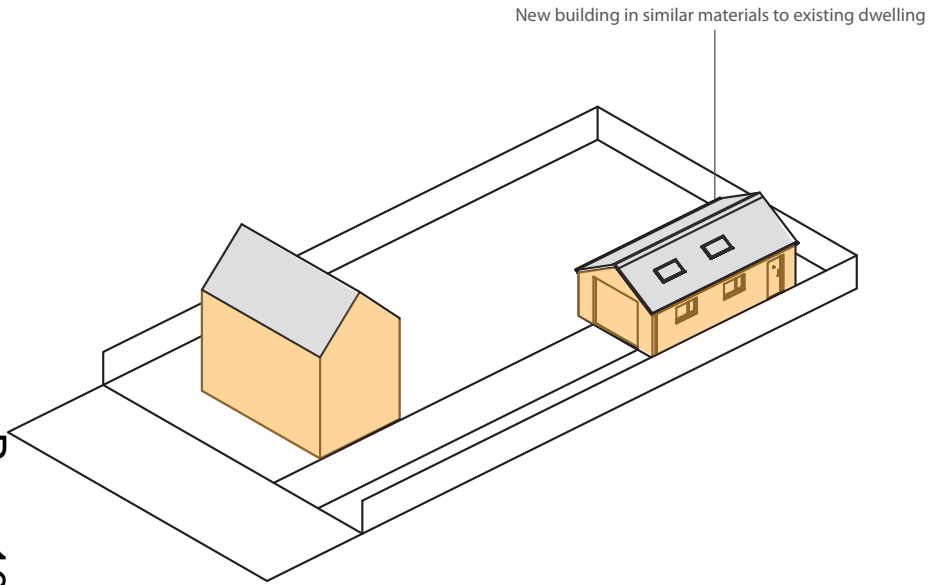
If a contemporary approach is taken to the building, window and standard sized doors should be simple and crisp in profile and be of a colour tone which complements the contemporary material palette of the wider building.



3.1 Proposed Developments in Town & Village Centres

Building Details

- Buildings should generally have one material used on the walls and one material used on the roof to ensure a clean, simple building and avoid ad-hoc pepper-potting of materials, or stark contrasts of material.
- Where a cladding material is used on the walls a visible masonry 'plinth' may be used in which must be of a similar appearance to masonry used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse, or of a complementary contemporary appearance to the cladding material above.
- Eaves and verges should be tight and simple to suit the simple form and of the building and its function.
- Simple trim details should be used to produce uninterrupted eaves lines.
- The use of standard box shape eaves and projecting fascia and bargeboards should be avoided unless already on the existing dwelling.
- Downpipes should be integrated into the design of the roof and façades of the building to minimise impact of pipes on the overall design.
- Rooflights should be used sparingly and purposefully and have a maximum upstand of 150mm from the roof plane. Rooflights should match the colour of the roof finish.
- Simple roof forms that express the building form should be used (e.g. pitched, asymmetric pitch, mono-pitch or barrel vaulted)
- A roof form and pitch angle which matches the 'host' dwelling is preferable, providing it complies with the maximum ridge and eaves heights, and permitted roof forms, as stated above.
- The ridge of a mono-pitched structure should not face the boundary of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.
- The height of the building, enclosure or container should be measured from the highest ground level immediately adjacent to the building
- Any window (or rooflight) inserted on a wall or roof slope forming a side elevation of the building must be obscure-glazed, and non-opening.



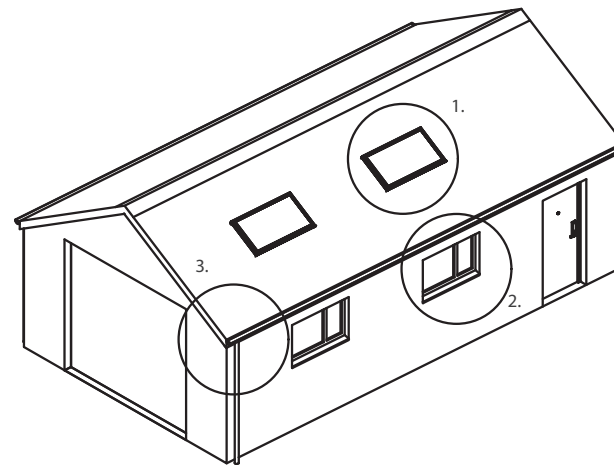
Above: Buildings should generally have one material for the walls and one material for the roof

Above: Building materials should either:

Be of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

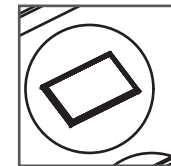
OR

Be of a contemporary appearance to complement those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

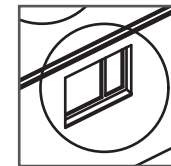


Above: Building Details

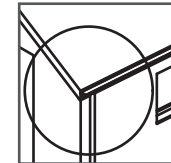
Below: Building Details



1. Text on rooflights



2. Text on openings



3. Text on rainwater and roof details

3.2 Proposed Developments in Town & Village Peripheries

Urban Design/Landscape Parameters

Access & Parking Requirements:

- The site **must** have existing vehicular access to the proposed employment unit - if a new access is required then planning permission will need to be obtained.
- The **existing** access arrangements must comply with the requirements set out in Technical Informative section of this document (page 62-3). Please note, access requirements will differ dependent on proposed building use.
- The parking provision for the proposed employment unit should be as set out in the table below. This should not compromise parking for the existing building:

| Type | Town and Village Centres |
|------------|---|
| Cycle | 1 per 250m2 of gross floor area |
| Vehicle | 1 per 40m2 of gross floor area |
| Disabled | 1 of the vehicles spaces provided should be sized for disabled use. |
| Motorcycle | 1 space |

Parking bays should be sized as follows:

- Perpendicular - 2.4 x 5m
- Parallel - 2.4 x 6m
- Disabled - as above with a 1.2m buffer on the offside and rear of the space

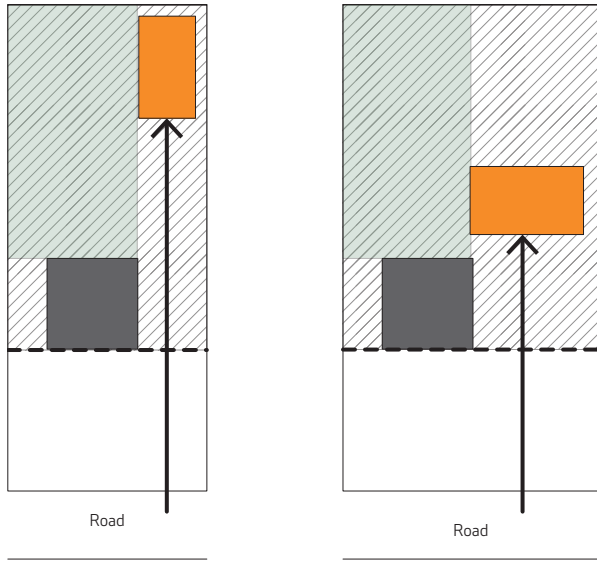
- Bays should have a minimum of 6m perpendicular distance to the rear of the space to allow adequate manoeuvring area for vehicles entering/exiting spaces.

Where the building is located on the plot

- No proposed building to protrude in front of existing dwelling building line
- Proposed building to be no larger than 10% of rear garden area (curtilage behind existing building line minus the existing dwelling area and any outbuilding areas) up to a maximum of 50m2 for office (B1a) and 200m2 for light industrial (B1 b and c)
- The primary entrance to the proposed building to be no further than 15m from the edge of an existing dwelling/outbuilding
- Remaining garden must not be less than 50m2.
- The remaining garden must relate to the existing dwelling and its layout and living spaces – location of proposed building on the plot must not cause detriment to amenity of existing dwelling.

Landscape structure & Potential Visual Impact

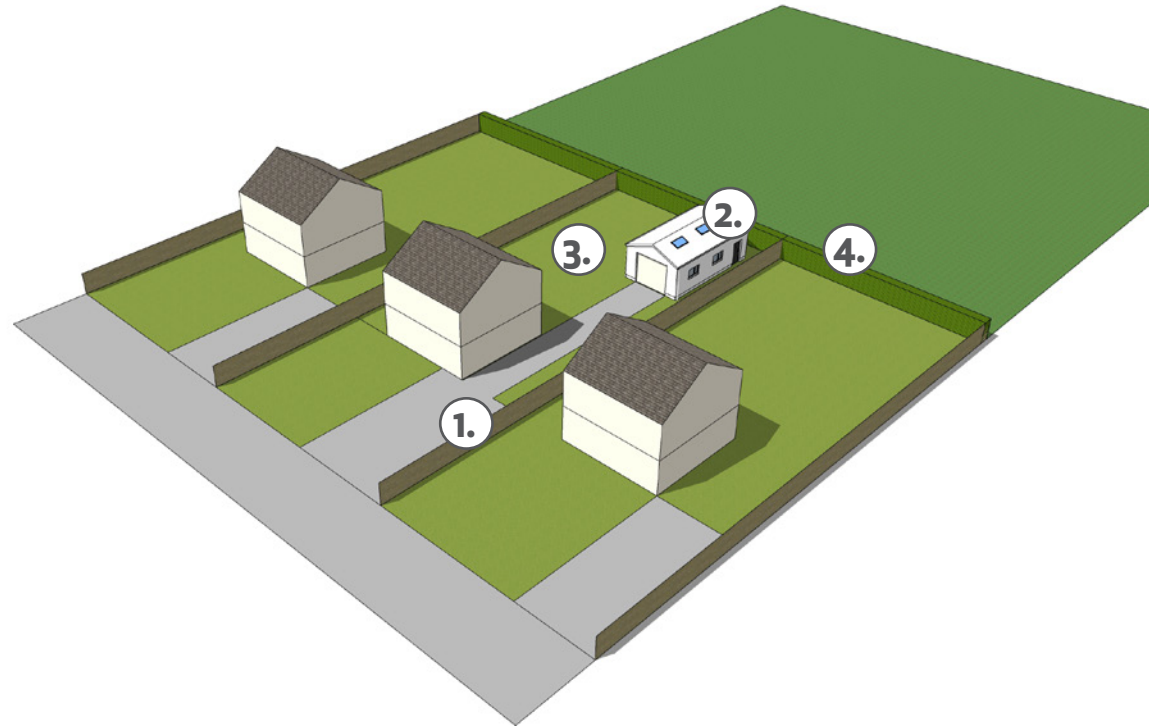
- Where the site lacks existing mature boundaries around the proposed new building the submission should include a strategy to illustrate how appropriate planting (and/or other landscape works) could help integrate the development in its setting.
- New buildings not to protrude outside of the defined built up area/landscape features which define the edge of a town or village



Above: Proposed unit off existing access

Key

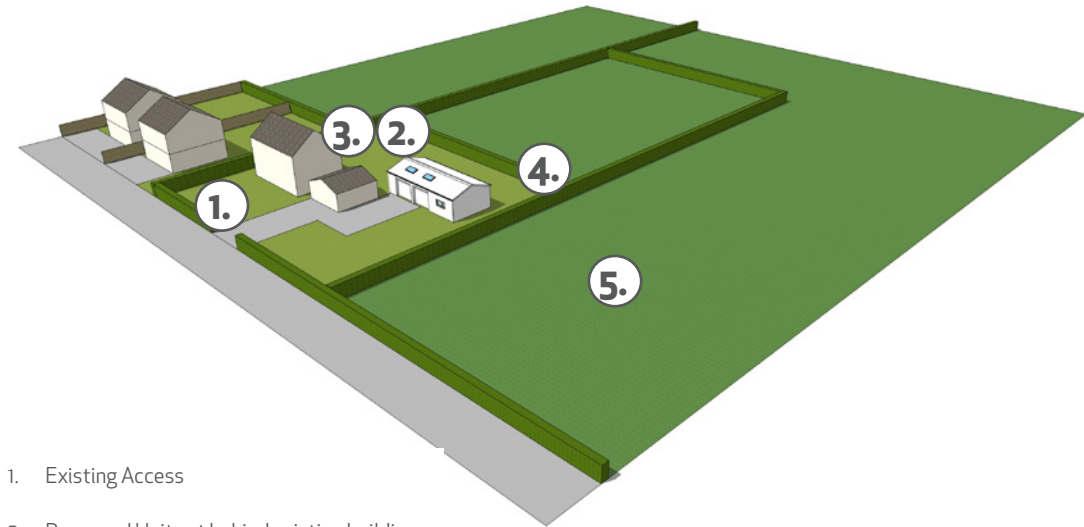
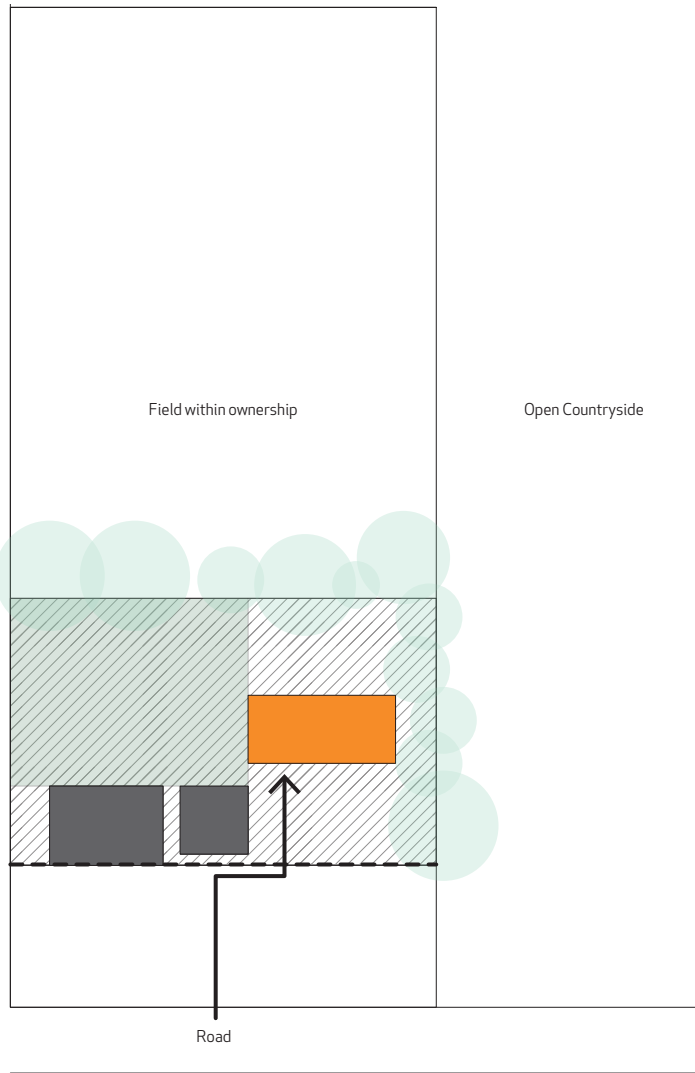
- Proposed Unit
- Existing Dwelling
- Building Line
- Existing Access
- Garden Area Behind Building Line
- Retained Existing Garden (50m² minimum)



1. Existing Access
2. Proposed Unit set behind existing building line
3. Usable amenity space which relates well to existing dwelling
4. Settlement edge (not necessarily owner's boundary)

Above: Axo showing proposed unit in a town or village periphery setting

3.2 Proposed Developments in Town & Village Peripheries



1. Existing Access
2. Proposed Unit set behind existing building line
3. Usable amenity space which relates well to existing dwelling
4. Settlement edge (not necessarily owner's boundary)
5. Open Countryside

Above: Proposed unit off existing access

Above: Axo showing proposed unit in a town or village periphery setting

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3.2 Proposed Developments in Town & Village Peripheries

Urban Design/Landscape Details

Surfacing Materials

Any new paving or surfacing material is to be permeable to allow sufficient drainage. This includes materials such as:

- Gravel
- Permeable concrete block paving
- Porous asphalt

External Lighting

- Private external lighting must be designed to minimise light pollution on neighbouring properties (i.e. directional light spread)
- All external lighting (space and security lighting) must be provided by energy efficient fittings with appropriate control systems and daylight cut-off sensors.

Boundary Treatment & details

- Where appropriate planting (and/or other landscape works) are required to integrate the development into its setting, applicants should use a mix of native and non-native species that supports wildlife, including insects and birds.
- Tree planting should include native species (or varieties of native species)

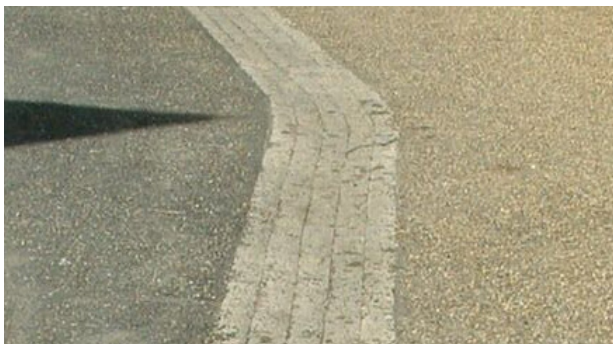
EXAMPLE SPECIES/DETAILS TO BE INCLUDED

Refuse & Cycle Storage

- Secure covered bike storage must be provided unless they are provided internally (1 space per 50m², minimum 2 spaces)
- External bin storage will be provided on plot at the rear of the proposed dwelling (unless provided internally). Bins must not be stored at the front of buildings, facing onto the street

Townscape/ Landscape Character Areas

Refer back to Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide Principles in Chapter 2.2

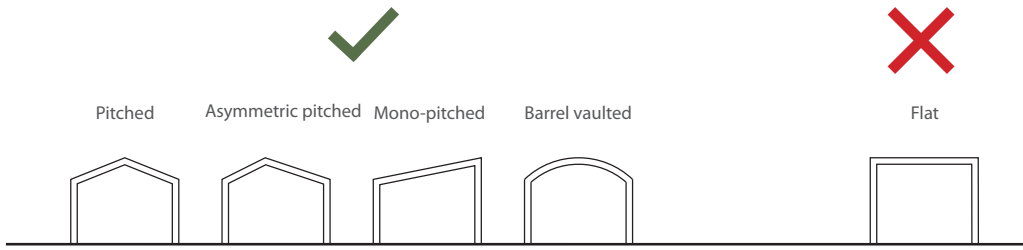


Above: Precedent images for details

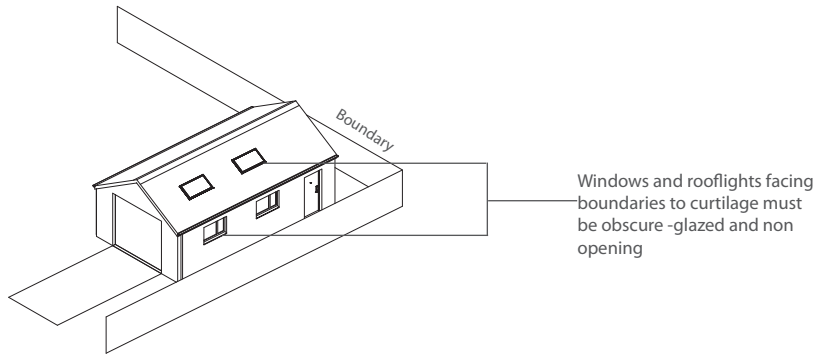
3.2 Proposed Developments in Town & Village Peripheries

Building Parameters

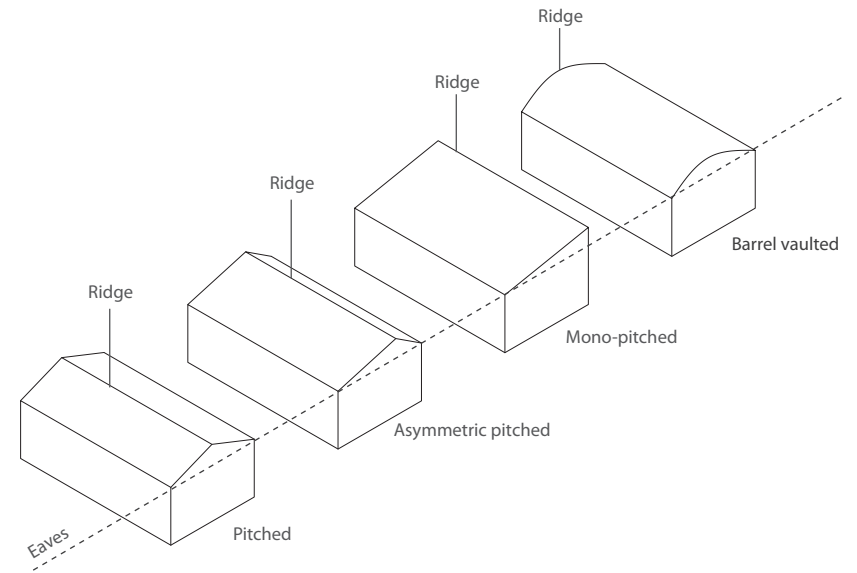
- Only single storey buildings are permitted
- Mezzanine structures are not permitted
- Flat roofs are not permitted
- Maximum ridge height of a building = 4 metres
- UNLESS within 2 metres of the boundary of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse where the maximum ridge height for any roof form = 2.5 metres
- Maximum eaves height for any roof form = 3 metres
- Simple roof forms that express the building form should be used (e.g. pitched, asymmetric pitch, mono-pitch or barrel vaulted)
- A roof form and pitch angle which matches the 'host' dwelling is preferable, providing it complies with the maximum ridge and eaves heights, and permitted roof forms, as stated above.
- The ridge of a mono-pitched structure should not face the boundary of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.
- The height of the building, enclosure or container should be measured from the highest ground level immediately adjacent to the building
- Any window (or rooflight) inserted on a wall or roof slope forming a side elevation of the building must be obscure-glazed, and non-opening.



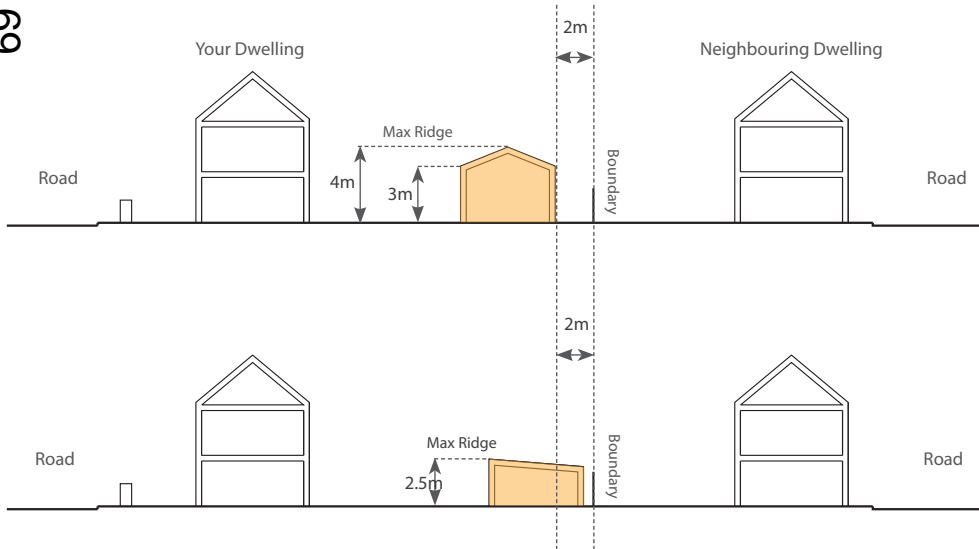
Above: Potential Roof Forms



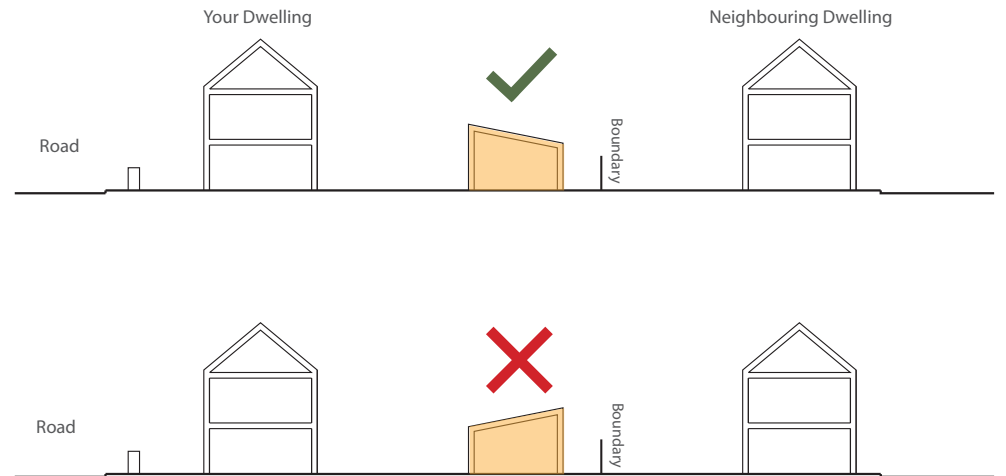
Above: Obscure Glazing requirement



Above: Roof Forms Explained



Above: Maximum Ridge and Eaves Heights



Above: Mono-pitched roof form requirement

3.2 Proposed Developments in Town & Village Peripheries

Building Elements

The building should appear subservient to the main dwelling and demonstrate its B1(c) function through its form, façades and detailing. The building should use a subdued palette of contextual materials which are simple and fit for purpose.

Wall Materials

Wall materials should be either:

- Of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse
- E.g.
 - If predominantly brick then a matching brick should be used for new building
 - If predominantly local stone then matching stone should be used for new building
 - If predominantly render then a similar tone of render should be used for new building
- The reuse of local stone or brick is encouraged to reduce the use of new materials, increasing the sustainability of the building.

OR

- Of a contemporary appearance to complement those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

Permitted contemporary wall materials include:

- Good quality timber cladding detailed to a high standard. Timber should have a natural appearance and should not be unnaturally stained or varnished
- Profiled metal cladding in a natural, subdued colour detailed to a high standard



Roof Materials

The chosen roof material should be appropriate to the designed roof pitch. Roof materials must not be reflective or cause any glare throughout the day.

Roof materials should be either:

- Of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

E.g.

- If slate then a matching slate should be used for new building
- If tile local tile then a matching tile should be used for new building
- The reuse of roof materials is encouraged to reduce the use of new materials, increasing the sustainability of the building.

OR

- Of a contemporary appearance to complement those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

Permitted contemporary roof materials include:

- Grey metal standing seam roof
- Profiled metal roofing in a natural, subdued colour detailed to a high standard

- Green roof detailed to a high standard

Rooflights

Rooflights should be positioned so as not to cause any adverse glint/glare and light pollution when it is dark outside.

Windows and Doors

- Windows and doors should be simple, well-proportioned and suit the function of the building.
- Domestic proportioned openings should be avoided.
- Where large format doors are required, they should be in a complimentary material and colour tone to the material palette of the wider building.
- Windows and doors should be recessed within the walls and not flush with the external face.

Windows and doors of a standard size should be of a similar material and colour tone to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse.

OR

If a contemporary approach is taken to the building, window and standard sized doors should be simple and crisp in profile and be of a colour tone which complements the contemporary material palette of the wider building.

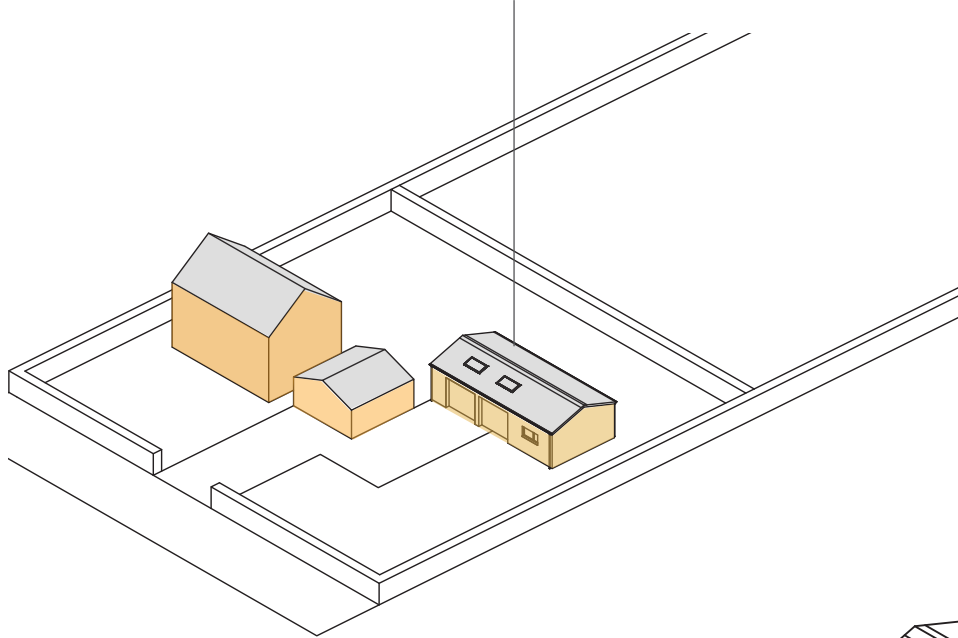


3.2 Proposed Developments in Town & Village Peripheries

Building Details

- Buildings should generally have one material used on the walls and one material used on the roof to ensure a clean, simple building and avoid ad-hoc pepper-potting of materials, or stark contrasts of material.
- Where a cladding material is used on the walls a visible masonry 'plinth' may be used in which must be of a similar appearance to masonry used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse, or of a complementary contemporary appearance to the cladding material above.
- Eaves and verges should be tight and simple to suit the simple form and of the building and its function.
Simple trim details should be used to produce uninterrupted eaves lines.
- The use of standard box shape eaves and projecting fascia and bargeboards should be avoided unless already on the existing dwelling.
- Downpipes should be integrated into the design of the roof and façades of the building to minimise impact of pipes on the overall design.
- Rooflights should be used sparingly and purposefully and be set flush within the roof plane. Rooflights should match the colour of the roof finish.

New building in similar materials to existing dwelling

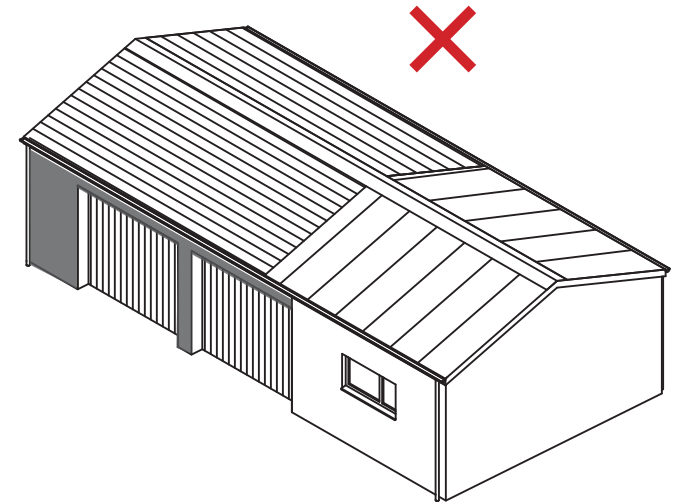


Above: Building materials should either:

Be of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

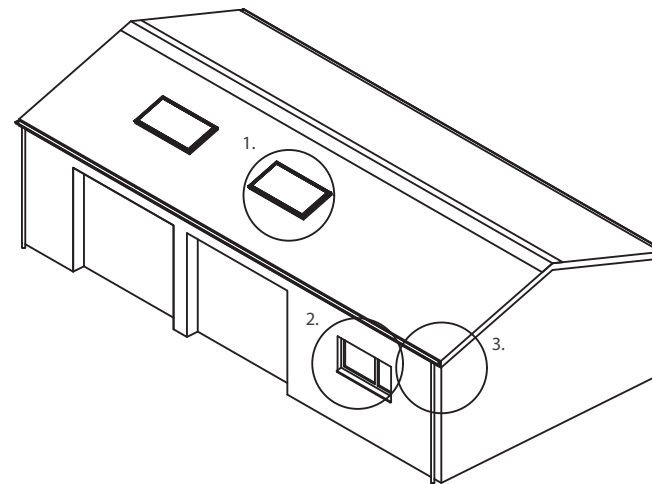
OR

Be of a contemporary appearance to complement those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

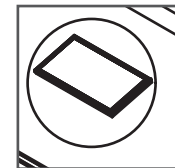


Above: Buildings should generally have one material for the walls and one material for the roof

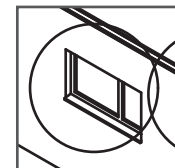
Below: Building Details



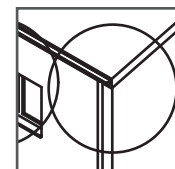
Above: Building Details



1. Text on rooflights



2. Text on openings



3. Text on rainwater and roof details

3.3 Proposed Development in Rural Areas

Urban Design/Landscape Parameters

Access & Parking Requirements:

- The site **must** have existing vehicular access to the proposed employment unit - if a new access is required then planning permission will need to be obtained.
- The **existing** access arrangements must comply with the requirements set out in Technical Informative section of this document (page 62-3). Please note, access requirements will differ dependent on proposed building use.
- The parking provision for the proposed employment unit should be as set out in the table below. This should not compromise parking for the existing building:

| Type | Town and Village Centres |
|------------|---|
| Cycle | 1 per 250m2 of gross floor area |
| Vehicle | 1 per 40m2 of gross floor area |
| Disabled | 1 of the vehicles spaces provided should be sized for disabled use. |
| Motorcycle | 1 space |

Parking bays should be sized as follows:

- Perpendicular - 2.4 x 5m
- Parallel - 2.4 x 6m
- Disabled - as above with a 1.2m buffer on the offside and rear of the space

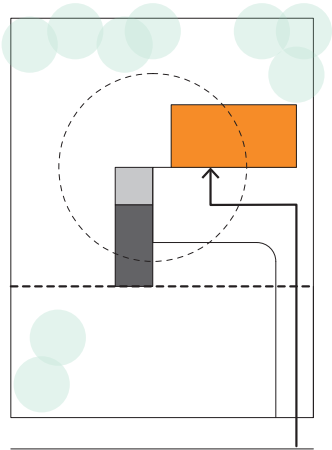
- Bays should have a minimum of 6m perpendicular distance to the rear of the space to allow adequate manoeuvring area for vehicles entering/exiting spaces.

Where the building is located on the plot

- Proposed building to be no larger than 10% of rear garden area (curtilage behind existing building line minus the existing dwelling area and any outbuilding areas) up to a maximum of 50m2 for office (B1a) and 200m2 for light industrial (B1 b and c)
- The primary entrance to the proposed building to be no further than 15m from the edge of an existing dwelling/outbuilding
- Remaining garden must not be less than 50m2.
- The remaining garden must relate to the existing dwelling and its layout and living spaces – location of proposed building on the plot must not cause detriment to amenity of existing dwelling.
- Where existing farm buildings already protrude in front of the main dwelling building line, no proposed building shall protrude in front of these.
- Proposed buildings not to obscure main dwelling's principal elevation
- Where possible, proposed buildings should aim to create a courtyard feel as is common within rural development, whilst utilising existing access areas/ areas of w

Landscape structure & Potential Visual Impact

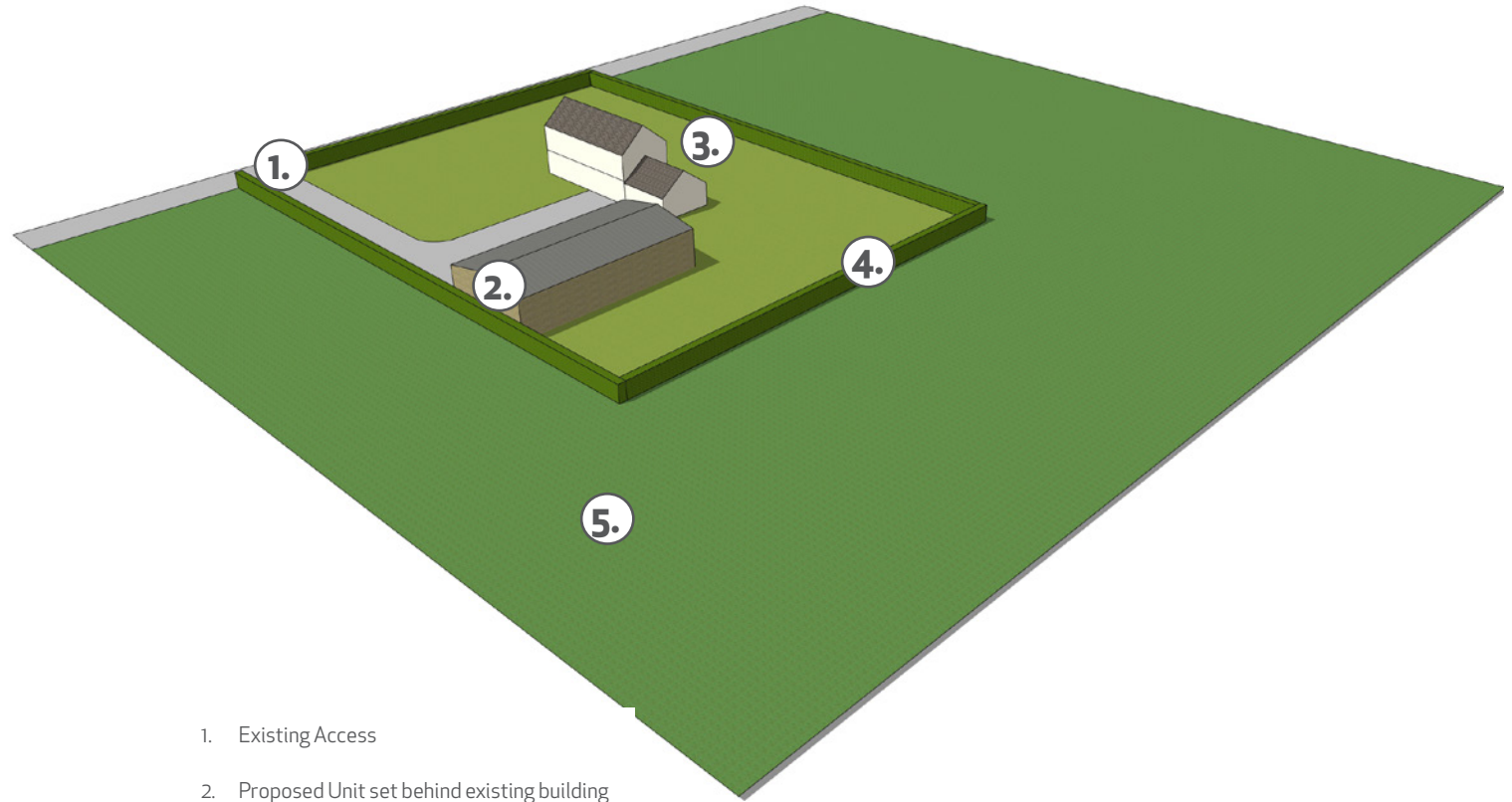
- Where the site lacks existing mature boundaries around the proposed new building the submission should include a strategy to illustrate how appropriate planting (and/or other landscape works) could help integrate the development in its setting.
- New buildings not to protrude outside of the defined built up area/landscape features i.e. existing hedgerows or tree belts.



Above: Proposed unit off existing access

Key

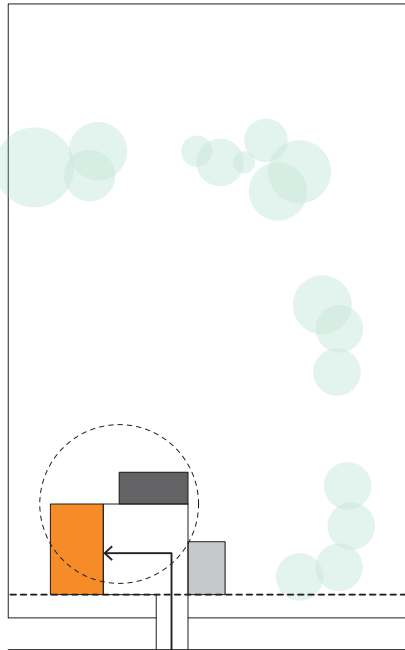
- Proposed Unit
- Existing Dwelling
- Building Line
- Existing Access
- Garden Area Behind Building Line
- Retained Existing Garden
- 15m offset



1. Existing Access
2. Proposed Unit set behind existing building line, creating a courtyard feel
3. Usable amenity space which relates well to existing dwelling
4. Settlement edge (not necessarily owner's boundary)
5. Open Countryside

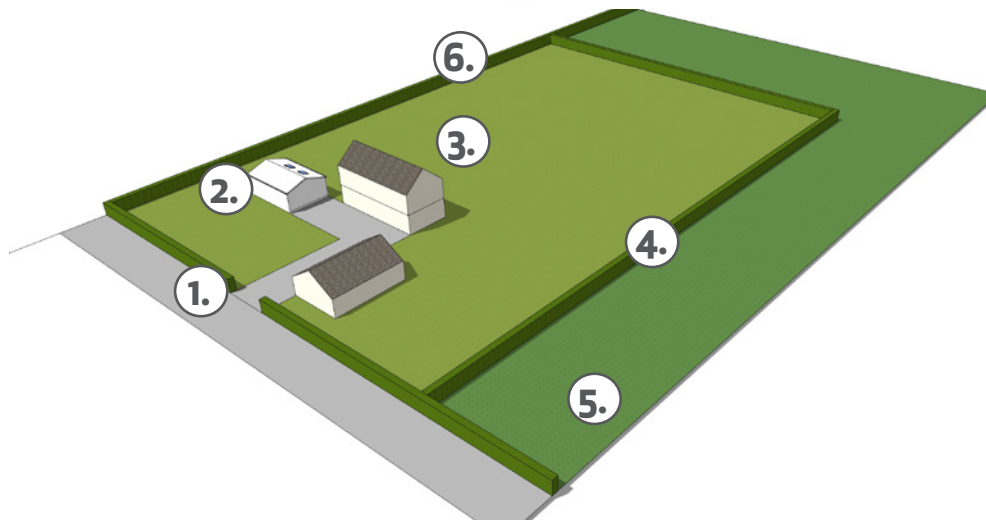
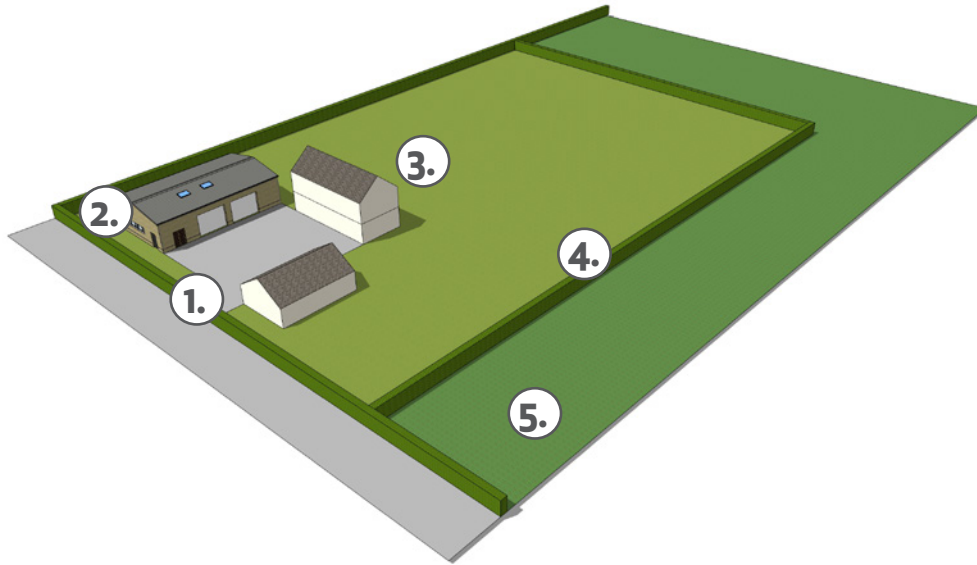
Above: Axo showing proposed unit in a rural residential setting

3.3 Proposed Development in Rural Areas

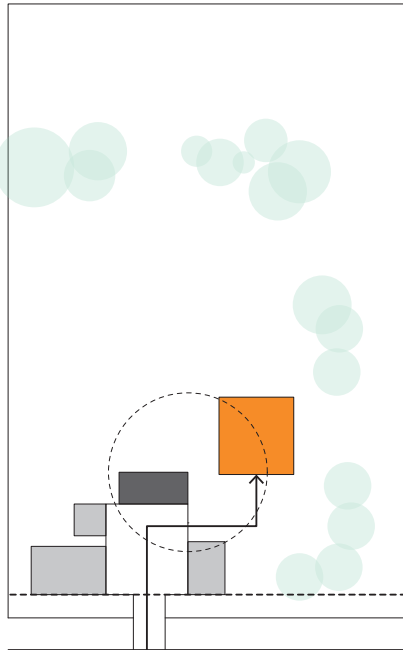


Above: Proposed unit off existing access

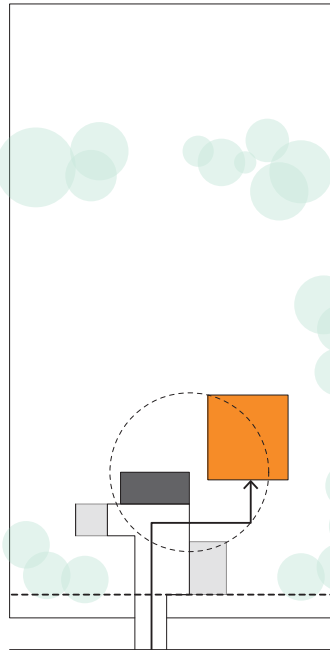
1. Existing Access
2. Proposed Unit set behind existing building line, creating a courtyard feel
3. Usable amenity space which relates well to existing dwelling
4. Settlement edge (not necessarily owner's boundary)
5. Open Countryside



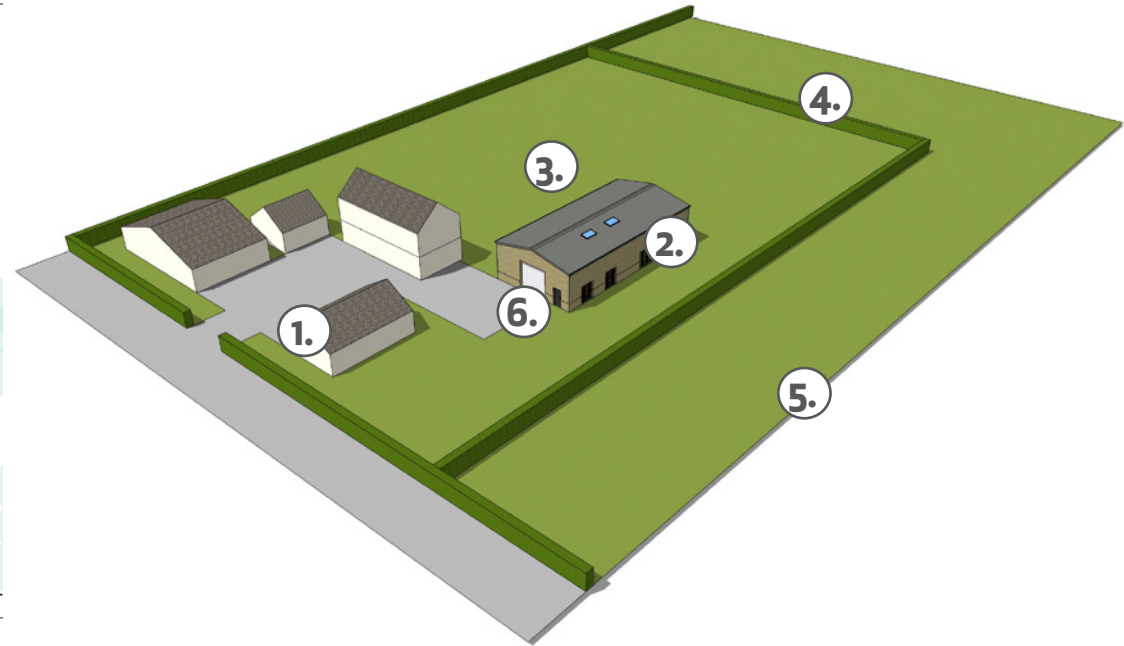
Above: Axo showing proposed unit in a rural residential setting



Above: Proposed unit off existing access



Above: Proposed unit off existing access



Above: Axo showing proposed unit in a rural agricultural setting

Key

- Proposed Unit
- Existing Dwelling
- Building Line
- Existing Access
- Garden Area Behind Building Line
- Retained Existing Garden
- 15m offset

1. Existing Access
2. Proposed Unit set behind existing building line, subservient to existing dwelling
3. Usable amenity space which relates well to existing dwelling
4. Settlement edge (not necessarily owner's boundary)
5. Open Countryside
6. New 'courtyard' created, utilising existing access and minimising additional hardstanding

3.3 Proposed Development in Rural Areas

Urban Design/Landscape Details

Surfacing Materials

Any new paving or surfacing material is to be permeable to allow sufficient drainage. This includes materials such as:

- Gravel
- Permeable concrete block paving
- Porous asphalt

External Lighting

- Private external lighting must be designed to minimise light pollution on neighbouring properties (i.e. directional light spread).
- All external lighting (space and security lighting) must be provided by energy efficient fittings with appropriate control systems and daylight cut-off sensors.

Townscape/ Landscape Character Areas

Refer back to Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide Principles in Chapter 2.2

Boundary Treatment & details

- Where appropriate planting (and/or other landscape works) are required to integrate the development into its setting, applicants should use a mix of native and non-native species that supports wildlife, including insects and birds.
- Tree planting should include native species (or varieties of native species)

EXAMPLE SPECIES/DETAILS TO BE INCLUDED

Refuse & Cycle Storage

- Secure covered bike storage must be provided unless they are provided internally (1 space per 50m2, minimum 2 spaces)
- External bin storage will be provided on plot at the rear of the proposed dwelling (unless provided internally). Bins must not be stored at the front of buildings, facing onto the street



Above: Precedent images for details

3.3 Proposed Development in Rural Areas

Building Parameters

- Flat roofs are not permitted
- Simple roof forms that express the building form should be used (e.g. pitched, asymmetric pitch, mono-pitch or barrel vaulted)
- A roof form and pitch angle which matches the 'host' dwelling is preferable, providing it complies with the maximum ridge and eaves heights, and permitted roof forms, as stated above.

Mezzanine structures are permitted but their area shall be included as part of the permitted overall area.

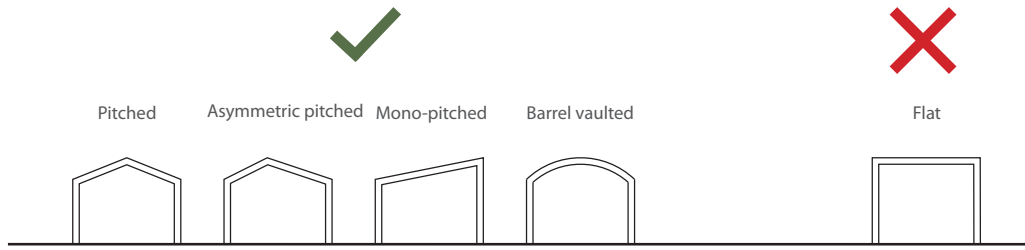
Any window inserted on a wall or roof slope forming a side elevation of the building must be obscure-glazed, and non-opening.

Ridge

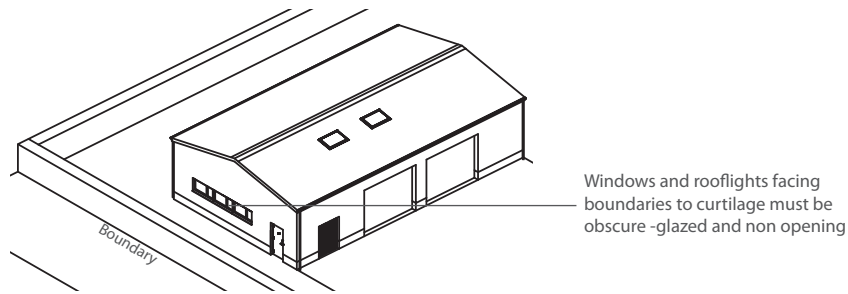
- Maximum ridge height of a building = 5.5 metres
- UNLESS within 10 metres of the boundary of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse where the maximum ridge height for any roof form = 5 metres
- The ridge of mono-pitch structure should not face the boundary of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.

Eaves

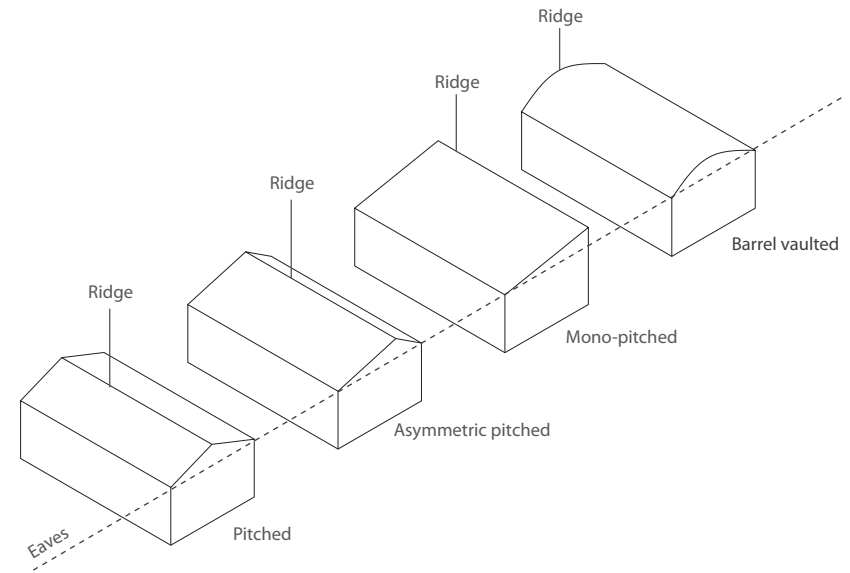
- Maximum eaves height for any roof form = 4.5 metres
- UNLESS within 10 metres of the boundary of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse where the maximum eaves height for any roof form = 4 metres
- The height of the building, enclosure or container should be measured from the highest ground level immediately adjacent to the building



Above: Potential Roof Forms

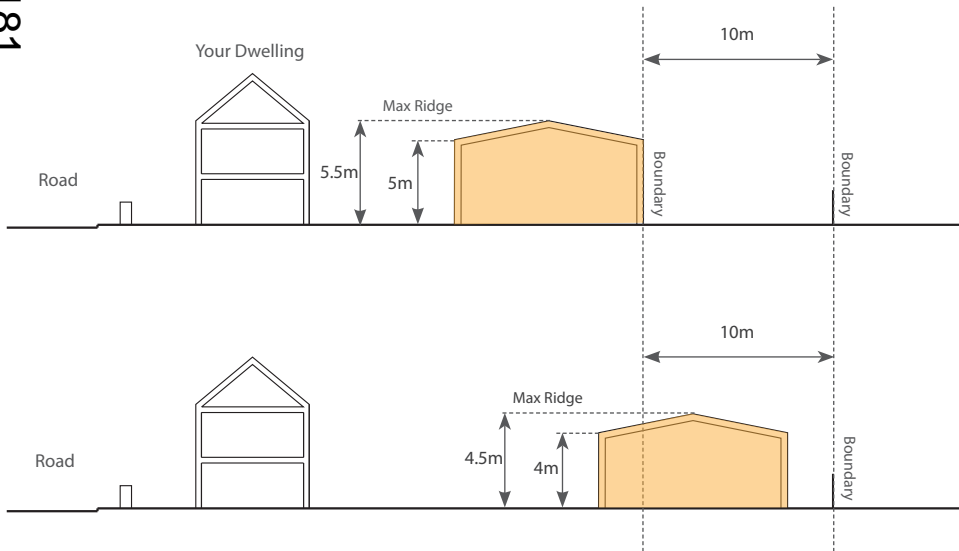


Above: Obscure Glazing requirement

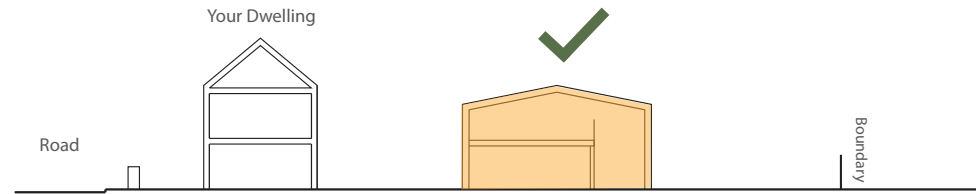


Above: Roof Forms Explained

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Above: Maximum Ridge and Eaves Heights



Above: Mezzanine permitted as part of total floor area

Note: If a neighbouring dwelling is within 10m of the proposed new building then the maximum ridge and eaves height must adhere to the building parameters set out in section 3.1

3.3 Proposed Development in Rural Areas

Building Elements

The building should appear subservient to the main dwelling and demonstrate its B1(c) function through its form, façades and detailing. The building should use a subdued pallet of contextual materials which are simple and fit for purpose.

Wall Materials

Wall materials should be either:

- Of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

E.g.

- If predominantly brick then a matching brick should be used for new building
- If predominantly local stone then matching stone should be used for new building

- If predominantly render then a similar tone of render should be used for new building
- The reuse of local stone or brick is encouraged to reduce the use of new materials, increasing the sustainability of the building.

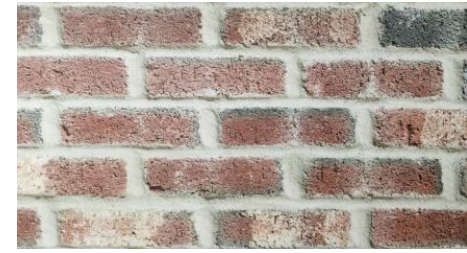
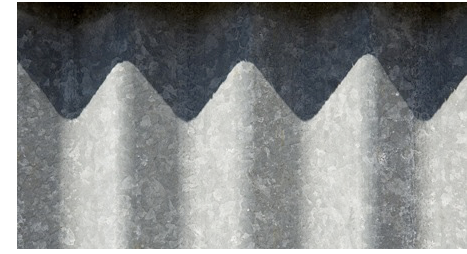
OR

- Of a contemporary appearance to complement those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

Permitted contemporary wall materials include:

- Good quality timber cladding detailed to a high standard. Timber should have a natural appearance and should not be unnaturally stained or varnished

- Profiled metal cladding in a natural, subdued colour detailed to a high standard



Roof Materials

The chosen roof material should be appropriate to the designed roof pitch. Roof materials must not be reflective or cause any glare throughout the day.

Roof materials should be either:

- Of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

E.g.

- If slate then a matching slate should be used for new building
- If tile local tile then a matching tile should be used for new building
- The reuse of roof materials is encouraged to reduce the use of new materials, increasing the sustainability of the building.

OR

- Of a contemporary appearance to complement those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

Permitted contemporary roof materials include:

- Grey metal standing seam roof
- Profiled metal roofing in a natural, subdued colour detailed to a high standard

- Green roof detailed to a high standard

Rooflights

Rooflights should be positioned so as not to cause any adverse glint/glare and light pollution when it is dark outside.

Windows and Doors

- Windows and doors should be simple, well-proportioned and suit the function of the building.
- Domestic proportioned openings should be avoided.
- Where large format doors are required, they should be in a complimentary material and colour tone to the material palette of the wider building.
- Windows and doors should be recessed within the walls and not flush with the external face.

Windows and doors of a standard size should be of a similar material and colour tone to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse.

OR

If a contemporary approach is taken to the building, window and standard sized doors should be simple and crisp in profile and be of a colour tone which complements the contemporary material palette of the wider building.

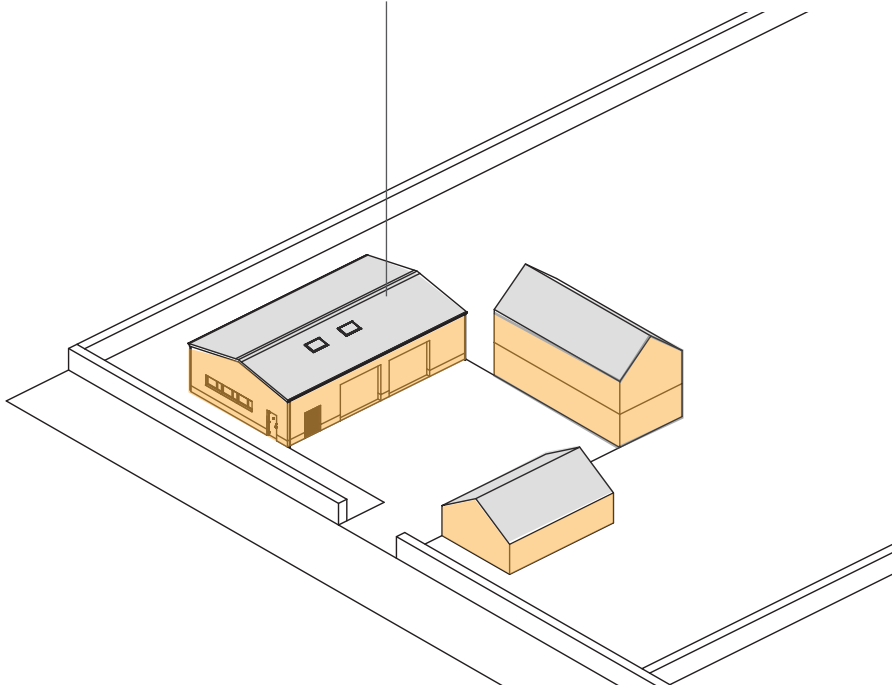


3.3 Proposed Development in Rural Areas

Building Details

- Buildings should generally have one material used on the walls and one material used on the roof to ensure a clean, simple building and avoid ad-hoc pepper-potting of materials, or stark contrasts of material.
- Where a cladding material is used on the walls a visible masonry 'plinth' may be used in which must be of a similar appearance to masonry used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse, or of a complementary contemporary appearance to the cladding material above.
- Eaves and verges should be tight and simple to suit the simple form and of the building and its function.
- Simple trim details should be used to produce uninterrupted eaves lines.
- The use of standard box shape eaves and projecting fascia and bargeboards should be avoided unless already on the existing dwelling.
- Downpipes should be integrated into the design of the roof and façades of the building to minimise impact of pipes on the overall design.
- Rooflights should be used sparingly and purposefully and be set flush within the roof plane. Rooflights should match the colour of the roof finish.

New building in similar materials to existing dwelling or outbuildings

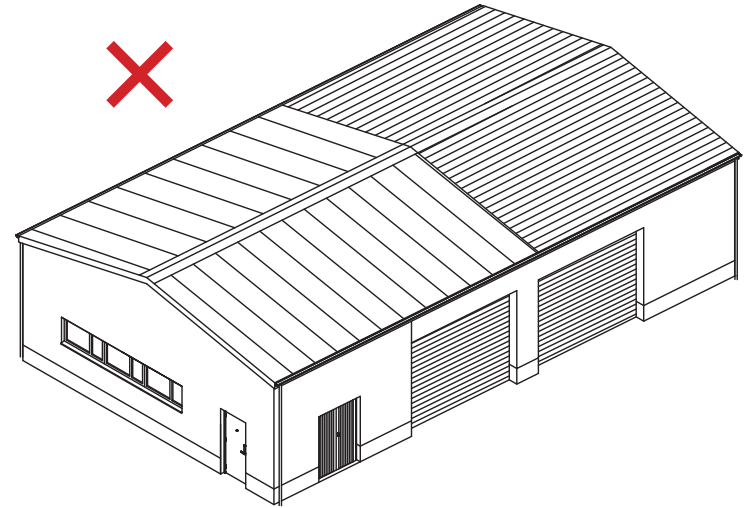


Above: Building materials should either:

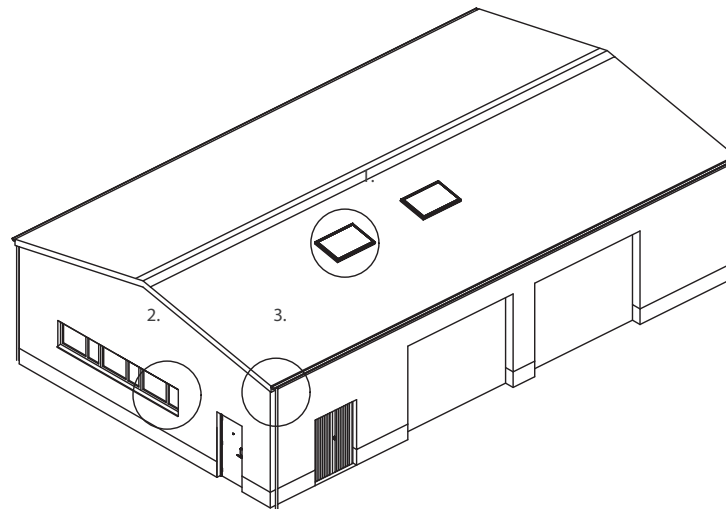
Be of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse or outbuildings

OR

Be of a contemporary appearance to complement those used in the construction of the existing dwellinghouse

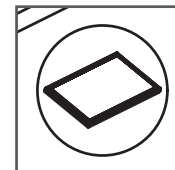


Above: Buildings should generally have one material for the walls and one material for the roof

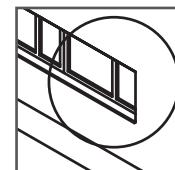


Above: Building Details

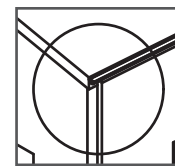
Below: Building Details



1. Text on rooflights



2. Text on openings



3. Text on rainwater and roof details

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4.0 Submission Requirements

4.1 DAS Pro Forma

A design and access statement is a short report to explain and justify your proposal and gives you an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to achieving good design and ensuring accessibility.

The supporting Design and Access Statement shall include the following information;

a) **Site Location Plan / Existing Site Plan (1:1250 @ A4)**

b) **Proposed Site Plan**

The drawing should show the layout of your proposed development in relation to other buildings and open spaces on the site.

Explain and justify the proposed layout.

Proposed Building Plan

This drawing should show the amount of floor space proposed and the uses which will be undertaken within the building

Explain and justify the amount of your proposal and how this amount relates to the site's surroundings.

d) **Proposed Elevations**

These drawings should show the scale of the proposed building, i.e. it's height, width and length in relation to its surroundings.

Detailed measurements will be required including volume, height, width, length and distance to boundaries

e) **Landscaping (Plan and Details)**

Landscaping is the way in which the site is enhanced

or protected through hard and soft landscaping.

A schedule of planting and proposed hard landscaping materials to be used is recommended.

Please also explain how the implemented landscaping scheme will be maintained.

For smaller developments where there is to be no change to the existing landscaping please confirm this.

f) **Materials Plan**

Appearance is the visual impression the proposed development makes, including the external built form, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.

Explain and justify the appearance of the place or buildings proposed including how this will relate to the appearance and character of the development's surroundings.

g) **Arrangements of access for pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and other modes of transport**

The access section of the design and access statement refers only to access to the development and not to the inside of individual buildings.

This needs to describe how the proposed building will be accessed. If the access is via an existing route please confirm this below or describe any alterations that will be made to gain access to the new development.

The information and drawings within the Design and Access Statement should all demonstrate compliance with this LDO Design Code

4.2 Example Drawings

WORKED EXAMPLE TO BE PROVIDED

Appendix A - Technical Informative

Contents

1 Highway and Access Requirements

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Level 1 Assessment
- 1.3 Level 2 Assessment
- 1.4 Main Access Specification
- 1.5 Parking Specification

2 Other Potential Technical Requirements

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Flood Risk Assessment
- 2.3 Ecological Assessment
- 2.4 Ground Contamination Assessment

1 Highway and Access Requirements

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Access to the site should be achievable via a route which is safe and appropriate for the increase in traffic and size of vehicle that the proposals will attract to protect the safety of those travelling to the site and the existing users of the road. Furthermore, the site itself should be laid out in such a way that vehicles do not have to stop or park on the public highway in a location that may result in the safety of other road users being compromised.

1.1.2 It is therefore necessary to check certain aspects of the proposals such as the standard of the existing access point and the route to the site from main roads as well as the provision of onsite parking and distance of the proposed building from the highway to determine if they are of a suitable standard to support the proposals via the LDO process or whether a further detailed check with the highway authority (SCC) is necessary. The Highways and Access section within the Technical Informative at the end of this document sets out the process for determining how approval for the proposals should be sought and what evidence is required to be submitted alongside an application.

1.1.3 The following assessment process determines:

- whether your proposals are suitable for approval via an application for compliance through this LDO
- the level of further evidence required to be included with (or within) your Design and Access Statement submission, or
- whether a planning application is required

1.2 Level 1 Assessment

1.2.1 If the Level 1 assessment set out in the table below confirms that no further assessment is required, then it is appropriate to submit the compliance application without further evidence to support the site in terms of access

Table 1. Is further evidence required?

| Parameter | No further assessment or evidence required | Step 2 assessment required |
|--|--|----------------------------|
| Proposals are for sole B1(a) use with a GFA less than 50m ² with an existing access | ✓ | |
| Proposals are for any combination of B1(a)/B1(b)/B1(c) uses off an existing access with a total GFA of less than 200m ² | | ✓ |
| Proposals are for sole B1(b) or B1(c) use off an existing access with a total GFA of less than 200m ² | | ✓ |

1.2.2 If the Level 1 assessment suggests further assessment is required, then progress to the Level 2 assessment to determine if the proposals are suitable for approval via the compliance application route or whether you would be required to submit a planning application for the Site.

1.3 Level 2 Assessment

1.3.1 The table below sets out the parameters which would allow approval to be sought via application for compliance through this LDO. For each parameter in table 2, evidence should be provided in plan form to show that the requirement is met. All parameters in Table 2 should be checked and if any parameter suggests that the proposals are not eligible for consideration through the LDO process, then further advice should be sought from the LPA.

Table 2. Site eligibility and access evidence required

| Parameter | Evidence of Required through D&A statement | Is the site eligible through this LDO? |
|---|--|--|
| <i>Route to Main Site Access – to ensure employees and service vehicles can access the site via a safe and appropriate route</i> | | |
| Main site access is located on a classified road (A, B or C) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Main site access is located on an unclassified road but within 100m of a classified road | ✓ | ✓ |
| Main site access is located on an unclassified road but within 100m of a site with existing consented industrial or commercial use | ✓ | ✓ |
| Main site access is located on an unclassified road, without access within 100m to a classified road or existing industrial/commercial site | ✗ | ✗ |
| <i>Main site access - to ensure vehicles can enter/exit highway safely</i> | | |
| Existing access of standard set out in line with parameters detailed in Section 1.4 below | ✓ | ✓ |
| Existing access which does not meet standard set out under Section 1.4 below | ✗ | ✗ |
| A new access is required | ✗ | ✗ |
| <i>Internal Layout – to ensure that site layout is appropriate for access to the proposals</i> | | |
| Proposed building frontage is within 50m of adopted highway | ✓ | ✓ |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Servicing is possible from the highway or site can accommodate turning of the largest anticipated vehicle (large refuse truck as a minimum) such that vehicles can leave the site in forward gear. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Parking is provided in accordance with the standard set out in Section 1.5. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Layout does not meet one or more of the other requirements under internal layout heading | ✗ | ✗ |

1.4 Main Access Specification

1.4.1 Main site access must meet the specification set out below:

- Visibility must be provided looking both directions out of the site in accordance with the requirements set out below. This must be achievable using only land within the client's control or highway verge/footway. Key parameters for showing visibility splays for this can be seen in figure 7.18 of Manual for Streets. For all speeds an 'x' distance of 2.4 metres is applicable. The 'y' lengths are listed below:
 - If the speed limit is 20mph, 25 metres visibility must be provided
 - If the speed limit is 30mph (indicated by speed limit signs or street lighting in a built-up area), 43 metres visibility must be provided
 - If the speed limit is 40mph, 90 metres visibility must be provided
 - If the speed limit is greater than 40mph and the access is onto a classified road, the 'y' distance should be provided in line with the length given for Stopping Sight Distance in Tables 2 and 3 (DMRB)
- Minimum width of 6 metres over a length of 15 metres
- Surface water should not drain onto the public highway.
- Gradient of access should not exceed 1 in 10, for at least the first 15 metres from the edge of the adopted highway

- Access should be consolidated or surfaced for at least the first 15 metres, as measured from the edge of the adjoining carriageway, (not loose stone or gravel).
- Entrance gates should be hung to open inwards and should be set back a minimum distance of 5.0 metres from the carriageway edge.

1.5 Parking Specification

1.5.1 The parking provision for the new development should be as set out below. This should not compromise parking for the existing building:

Table 3. Extract from SCC Adopted Parking Strategy - Zones defined by Accessibility

| Type | Town/Village Centres and Peripheries | Rural Areas |
|------------|---|---|
| Cycle | 1 per 50m ² of gross floor area | 1 per 200m ² of floorspace |
| Vehicle | 1 per 40m ² of gross floor area | 1 per 30m ² of gross floor area |
| Disabled | 1 of the vehicle spaces provided should be sized for disabled use | 1 of the vehicle spaces provided should be sized for disabled use |
| Motorcycle | 1 space | 1 space |

1.5.2 Parking bays should be sized as follows:

- Perpendicular - 2.4 x 5m
- Parallel - 2.4 x 6m
- Disabled – as above with a 1.2m buffer on the offside and rear of the space
- Bays should have a minimum of 6m perpendicular distance to the rear of the space to allow adequate manoeuvring area for vehicles entering/exiting spaces.

2 Other Potential Technical Requirements

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 For some sites technical information may be required to be supplied alongside your Design and Access Statement. The nature of this technical information depends on the individual circumstances of your site's location.

2.1.2 The information in this informative relates to:

- a) the circumstances when further information is needed to be submitted alongside your submission;
- b) how to find out if your site is affected by such circumstances;
- c) how to find what information should be submitted in such circumstances; and
- d) clarifications on the interpretation on standing advice where relevant.

2.2 Flood Risk Assessment

2.2.1 It is possible to find out which Flood Zone your submission area sits in by using the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

2.2.2 A Flood Risk Assessment is required to support this submission if:

- a) your site is in an area within flood zone 1, but has critical drainage problems as notified by the Environment Agency; or
- b) your site is in flood zone 2 or 3a; or
- c) your site could be affected by sources of flooding other than rivers and the sea.

- 2.2.3** Advice can be found on what should be included within a Flood Risk Assessment is available through the Somerset West and Taunton Website. Standing advice for the production of an Flood Risk Assessment and examples of Flood Resilience Measures can also be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-standing-advice>.
- The development uses included within this LDO are considered as 'less vulnerable' to flooding and is therefore appropriate for consideration through this process.
 - Development will provide less than 200m of new floorspace and be set within an overall site coverage of less than 1Ha (see drawing a site boundary guidance). This means proposed development through this LDO is minor in nature and therefore will not require a sequential or exception test.
 - You do not need to submit your Flood Risk

Assessment as a separate submission. This information should be submitted alongside the rest of your Design and Access Statement.

2.3 Ecological Assessment

2.3.1 Development within this LDO has the potential to impact environmental designations and local habitats. To understand whether your proposal would qualify for the use of this LDO and whether further ecological information will be required to be submitted alongside your application, please follow the following two steps.

Step 1

2.3.2 Firstly, you must check the central government database for nearby environmental designations. To do this, simply:

1. Open Magic Maps, available from: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk>
2. Type in your postcode.
3. Tick the 'Designations' box on the 'Table of Contents' tab.
4. Tick the 'Land-Based Designations' subcategory box.
5. Click the information button on the toolbar and then click on your site.
6. Read the criteria for 'SSSI Impact Zones' to understand whether development is likely to impact any protected habitats (SSSI, SACs, SPAs and Ramsar Sites);
7. If your proposal fulfils any of the stated criteria or states "ALL APPLICATIONS", it is judged as likely to affect a protected designation or species. It therefore does not qualify for development through this LDO.

8. If your proposal does not fulfil any of the criteria, proceed to Step 2.

Step 2

2.3.3 There is potential for wildlife to be found in and around occupied properties and affected by works covered by this LDO. Please complete the table 1.

Table 1. Habitat Checklist

| Are any of the following buildings or features present at your site? | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| Veteran (historical or important) trees, cellars, ice houses, old mines and caves? | | |
| Buildings with features suitable for bats, or large gardens in suburban and rural areas? | | |
| Traditional timber-framed building (such as a barn)? | | |
| Lakes, rivers and streams (on the land or nearby)? | | |
| Heathland on, nearby or linked to the site (by similar habitat)? | | |
| Meadows, grassland, parkland and pasture on the land or linked to the site (by similar habitat)? | | |
| Ponds or slow-flowing water bodies (like ditches) on the site, or within 500m and linked by semi-natural habitat such as parks or heaths? | | |
| Rough grassland and previously developed land (brownfield sites), on or next to the site? | | |
| Woodland, scrub and hedgerows on, or next to the site? | | |
| Coastal habitats? | | |

2.3.4 If you have answered yes to any criteria in table 1, there is an increased chance of protected species being present at your site. An ecology survey (extended stage 1 survey) will therefore be required to be undertaken and findings submitted alongside your Design Access Statement.

2.3.5 If evidence of habitation is found at your site during the ecological survey, you must also include a summary of acceptable mitigation measures alongside your Design and Access Statement.

2.3.6 Any ecology survey must be undertaken by a qualified ecologist at the appropriate time of year in accordance with Natural England Standing Advice, available from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-species-how-to-review-planning-applications#standing-advice-for-protected-species>. The chosen ecologist will be able to advise on necessary avoidance, enhancement and mitigation measures.

2.3.7 To find a suitably qualified ecologist to complete a survey and suggest mitigation measures, you can search: <https://events.cieem.net/RegisteredPracticeDirectory/Registered-Practice-Directory.aspx>.

2.3.8 If species are discovered following the commencement of development must stop immediately and consult your chosen ecologist.

2.4 Ground Contamination Assessment

2.4.1 If there is a reason to believe contamination could be an issue, applicants should provide proportionate but sufficient site investigation information (a risk assessment) prepared by a competent person to determine the existence or otherwise of contamination, its nature and extent, the risks it may pose and to whom/what (the 'receptors') so that these risks can be assessed and satisfactorily reduced to an acceptable level.

Report Number: SWT 97/19

Somerset West and Taunton Council

SWT Executive - 20 November 2019

North Taunton Woolaway Project

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Francesca Smith

**Report Author: Jane Windebank – Development Manager
Richard Wiseman – Programme Manager**

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The regeneration of the North Taunton Woolaway Project is an essential part of the Council's commitment to offer a choice of good quality homes for our residents, whatever their age and income, in communities where support is available for those in need. The proposals identified in this Report will assist the progression of vacant possession of Phases B – E in a timely manner.
- 1.2 This Project is the most substantial regeneration scheme of the Council's stock in many years. Not only is this scheme land led by us (rather than a partnering HA), it is larger in scale (number of homes, m² of land) and tackles some of our worst performing stock in one of the most socially deprived areas in our County. It is the flagship housing project of our entire housing development programme.
- 1.3 The estimated proposed funding of the regeneration of the North Taunton Woolaway Project is in the region of £45 million and was approved by Shadow Council in February 2019. This was based on a number of assumptions and indicative costs. These assumptions include:
 - 1.3.1 Development Programme of 5 phases over 10-12 years to support the decant of existing residents and enable each phase to be assessed against housing need, affordability and mitigate any future changes which may affect the scheme proposal and financing;
 - 1.3.2 Estimate for Price Inflation and other market factors such as construction costs, rental income, interest rates, rise in house prices etc.
 - 1.3.3 Costs of indicative designs subject to planning approval;
 - 1.3.4 No allowance for contamination or remediation works

- 1.3.5 Indicative housing type and tenure mix, estimated budget including provision of a range of affordable housing tenures including social rent, affordable rent and options for residents who aspire to home ownership.
- 1.4 A supplementary budget of £7.2 million was approved by Shadow Cabinet in February 2019 for Phase A based on estimated and indicative costs. Phase A is completely social rented tenure type properties, providing new homes to existing residents within the regeneration area. It also includes the Community Centre; a shared facility for tenants to meet and a space for community activity.
- 1.5 The Project is providing a prudent and proactive approach to addressing the stock condition issues of the Councils' poorest performing assets.
- 1.6 This Report seeks approval for a further supplementary budget drawn down from the £45 million to:
 - 1.6.1 Acquire the remaining private owned homes in the Project area to achieve vacant possession of the scheme, thus alleviating the requirement for timely and costly Compulsory Purchase Orders;
 - 1.6.2 Progress the enabling works and Reserved Matters planning submission for the remaining phases to decrease the time in which it takes to complete the regeneration, and;
 - 1.6.3 To fund the additional costs in Phase A which are explained further in this Report.

2 Recommendations

The Executive recommends to Council to:

- 2.1 Delegate the decisions to progress the enabling works for the remaining Phases to the future Director of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing;
- 2.2 Delegates authority to the future Director of Housing to negotiate and agree the purchase of the 19 private owned homes within Phases B – E of the North Taunton Woolaway Project area;
- 2.3 Approve a supplementary budget of £5.7 million for Phases B – E of the North Taunton Woolaway Project;
- 2.4 Approve an additional supplementary budget of £1.5 million for Phase A of the North Taunton Woolaway Project increasing the budget for Phase A from £7.2 million to £8.7 million.
- 2.5 The budgets will be funded utilising a combination of capital receipts, Social Housing Development Fund revenue contribution, and capital borrowing. Council delegates the final funding arrangement to be determined by the S151 Officer in line with the Council's capital and treasury strategies, prioritising affordability for the Housing Revenue Account set out in Table 2 below.

3 Risk Assessment

Phase A

- 3.1 Additional funding is required to cover the higher than originally estimated costs associated with gaining vacant possession of the site, additional professional services to provide expert reports required to clear planning conditions and likely increase (compared with original cost consultant estimates) in build costs for Phase A. If the additional funding is not provided, there will be insufficient funds to complete this phase of the project. Cost estimates will continue to be professionally verified by our appointed cost consultant. Value engineering is not preferred but would be undertaken as part of the contractors duties with client approval, and any underspend would be carried forward to future phases.

Phases B – E

- 3.2 Should the Council not wish to purchase the private properties now but insist home owners wait until their home is required under the phasing programme, this would increase the risk of not being able to provide a vacant site. The home owners would be subject to the conditions of the housing market at that time which could include changes in interest rates, availability of mortgage finance, open market value of homes, choice of homes on the market etc. By providing a longer period of time to find their new home, home owners are able to purchase a home of their choice and take advantage of market conditions. This could also reduce the risk of having to apply for a Compulsory Purchase Order and will provide vacant possession of these properties in a timelier manner.
- 3.3 The viability and success of a development site depends on major issues such as planning permission, highways agreements and environmental investigations and other issues that may cause significant delay, or even preclude successful development, such as obtaining vacant possession of the site. Failure to provide vacant possession could leave the Council open to a contractor seeking specific performance, litigation, damages, and rescission of the build contract or significantly delays in the build programme.
- 3.4 A home loss payment is a statutory payment made to compensate tenants for having to permanently move out of their home. Tenants must submit a claim to the Council for their home loss payment within 6 years of their move. The Decant Policy states that home loss payments will be paid within 3 months of an eligible tenant making a claim, in line with good practice. Tenants are likely to submit their claim immediately after they have moved home and the Council would not be able to meet their statutory obligations for payment.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 Background

- 4.2 The Shadow Council in February 2019, approved the redevelopment of the North Taunton Woolaway Project (the Project) following the Structural Engineering report carried out in 2013 and the Report Addendum dated 2016. The 2013 report highlighted

that the Woolaway units were showing signs of deterioration. The Addendum Report, following further investigations during the demolition of the Woolaway units at Rockwell Green, confirmed the units were in a worse condition than identified in the 2013 report.

- 4.3 Woolaway homes were Designated Defective under the Housing Defect Act 1984. This does not mean Woolaway units are unsafe, it just prevents any more of this house type being built.
- 4.4 The existing site comprises of 212 Woolaway homes of which the Council retain ownership of 167 and 45 have been purchased through the Right to Buy. A breakdown of the properties is set out below in Table 1:

Table 1: Tenure of North Taunton Woolaway Project Area

| | In TDBC Ownership | In private ownership | Total |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Existing Woolaway Homes | 167 | 45 | 212 |
| (Acquire) & Demolish | 140 | 22 | 162 |
| Refurb | 27 | * See note | 27 |
| Newbuilds | 226 | | 226 |
| Total Proposed | 253 | 23 | 276 |
| Net Increase in SWT stock | | | 86 |

*23 homes in private ownership excluded from planned works

- 4.5 The aim of the Project is to work with the community to bring forward a phased regeneration scheme, reducing the time to final completion of all phases. Detailed planning permission for Phase A and outline planning permission for Phases B – E was approved by the Planning Committee in March 2019.
- 4.6 Phase A will deliver 47 new homes and the outline planning permission will deliver up to 230 new build Council homes and refurbish 27 existing Council homes. The indicative scheme will provide a net increase of 86 Council homes.
- 4.7 The mix of homes is indicative at this stage for Phases B - D and will be reviewed prior to submitting Reserved Matters applications for subsequent phases. The intention is to undertake the Project in five phases (Phases A – E), to support the decant requirements of existing residents and enable each phase to be assessed against changes in housing need, affordability to mitigate against any future changes which may affect the scheme. Phase E is the refurbishment of Councils' Woolaway properties rather than new build.
- 4.8 The total cost of the whole North Taunton Woolaway project as presented in the February Report is estimated to be in the region of £45m. This was based on a number of assumptions and indicative costs which are explained in 1.3 above.
- 4.9 A budget of £7.2M to deliver Phase A was approved in February 2019.

4.10 Owing to the complexities and size of the scheme the build period was estimated at around a 10 – 12 year programme. However this is currently being reviewed and a further report will be presented to the Council next year setting out options to accelerate the delivery of the development for consideration.

4.11 **Key Achievements**

North Taunton Woolaway Project Masterplan (Phases B – E) Update

4.12 Outline planning permission with all matters reserved was granted unanimously by Planning Committee on 27th March 2019 for the replacement and refurbishment of 186 Woolaway homes and the erection of additional dwellings to provide up to 230 dwellings within Phases B - E.

4.13 The proposed scheme has been based on extensive consultation with the community, involving every household as far as possible. A Design Group was formed consisting of 20 residents comprised of home owners and tenants to review the design of the scheme and house types.

4.14 The indicative housing mix includes a range of property sizes and types in line with the results of the consultation. The inclusion of 1 bedroom and 5 bed roomed properties, along with an appropriate level of fully adapted disabled units, provides a broader mix than the current housing types to meet the current and future local need.

4.15 The Design Group has now evolved into the Implementation Working Group which used to meet monthly but since October 2019 meets bi-monthly with the Project Team. This was at members' request due to the increased trust that the members had in the project team to deliver the Phase A project. Terms of Reference have been agreed with the purpose of the Group being to review the implementation of the Project and to provide feedback to the Project team, helping to shape the way that the Project is delivered and maximising the positive impact upon the community.

4.16 The Project has been shortlisted by the Royal Town Planning Institute for a regional award in planning excellence for Community Involvement. These awards celebrate projects and people who have helped create exceptional places and improved the lives of those who live and work there; highlighting how planning and planners work to create a safe, healthy and sustainable future. Just to be nominated for this prestigious award is a clear demonstration of the quality of the Project. A site visit and presentation took place in September 2019 where three members of the Implementation Working Group attending and supporting the Project.

4.17 Various skip days have been arranged for residents to be able to prepare for their decant to another property and to assist vulnerable tenants who are unable to remove their rubbish by themselves. The last skip day was in August 2019 where 2 x industrial sized Viridor skips were filled and removed; 3 x van loads of metal was recycled and the DLO cleared 3 x van loads for vulnerable tenants.

Phase A Update

4.18 Planning permission was granted for Phase A unanimously by Planning Committee on

27th March 2019. The scheme was presented to the Design Review Panel and received very positive comments. The Panel considered that the design and community consultation process undertaken had been extremely rigorous and is considered to be outstanding and the design has the full potential to be exceptional.

- 4.19 Vacant possession of Phase A has almost been secured. This has involved decanting 23 council tenants and purchasing 3 privately owned properties. Only one privately owned property remains but acquisition of this home is almost complete.
- 4.20 As part of the decant process, 10 tenants have downsized and 2 tenants to have moved to more accessible accommodation whether it has been a move to a bungalow or a property with better level access. This has improved their quality of life as they were previously only able to enjoy part of their home or unable to easily access their community due to stepped access to their home.
- 4.21 Procurement for the demolition and construction of the homes and community centre build of Phase A is well advanced. We have completed our specification, employers' requirements, detailed drawings and procurement strategy. We are now in the process of appointing a main contractor and demolition contractor through competitive procurement exercises.
- 4.22 **North Taunton Woolaway Masterplan Budget Details**

Private Homes

- 4.23 There are 22 homes in private ownership requiring acquisition to achieve vacant possession of the Project Scheme area. Table 2 below sets out the number of private owners in each Phase.

Table 2: Number of Private Home requiring Acquisition within each Phase of the North Taunton Woolaway Project

| Phase | No of Private Homes |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Phase A | 3 |
| Phase B | 1 |
| Phase C | 7 |
| Phase D | 11 |
| Phase E (Refurbishment Phase) | 0 |

- 4.24 The Phase A private homes are in the process of being purchased. The Council has also purchased 7 additional private homes in future phases of the Project together with

purchasing additional homes from the open market in the North Taunton area to assist with the decant process. These additional purchases have been secured via the buy backs programme funded by the Social Housing Development Fund (SHDF) to ensure the Council could benefit from these opportunities as they presented themselves within an approved Council process.

- 4.25 The benefit of the Council purchasing these additional private properties and the remaining private homes within the Project, prior to them being required under the phasing programme, reduces the risk of not achieving vacant possession of the site and identifies early within the process whether a Compulsory Purchase Order may be required. It will also reduce the financial risk for the Council should property prices increase in the future or as a result of the earlier phases of the regeneration.
- 4.26 Home owners in later phases (B – D) wish to sell their homes once they have found a suitable property to take advantage of the current market conditions. If they wait until their phase is being developed, there may not be suitable properties on the market which they can afford. Funding is requested to reimburse the SHDF for the 7 private home purchases already completed (these costs were included within the £45M agreed estimated scheme budget) and enable the purchase of the 12 remaining homes together with the statutory home loss, disturbance allowance and relevant legal and professional fees which have been set out in Appendix B attached to this Report.
- 4.27 Once purchased the vacant homes can be used either as decant homes for North Taunton Woolaway Project tenants or temporary short lets. This will enable the Council to progress the regeneration of North Taunton sooner, enabling tenants to remain in the area during the development of the scheme and reduce security costs. The Council is currently working with voluntary agencies and the Customer Function who could make use of short term lets for individuals in housing need providing care packages to support their tenants' needs.
- 4.28 Council Tenants
- 4.29 A home loss payment is a statutory payment made to compensate tenants for having to permanently move out of their home and is fixed by Section 30 of the Land Compensation Act 1973. This figure is reviewed each September and at 2018/19 the payment amount was £6,300, from 1st October 2019 the payment amount is £6,400.
- 4.30 Under the Decant Policy for the North Taunton Woolaway Project, tenants are awarded gold banding in accordance with the phasing programme; that is, when their home is likely to be demolished within 12 months. The gold banding enables the tenant to bid on Homefinder Somerset for their permanent home or a decant home if they wish to return to a new build in the Project.
- 4.31 Some tenants, who are not in the current decanting phase, have been allocated new homes under Homefinder Somerset by virtue of their current status. The Decant Policy states that :

4.31.1 *'If a decision in principle has been agreed to refurbish, remodel, redevelop or dispose of a property, the Council may assist a tenant to move prior to a formal Council decision. In this situation where the Council has asked the*

tenant to move and a Council Officer is assisting a tenant to move, the tenant will be eligible for disturbance compensation payments. Also once the Council has made a formal decision then the tenant will become eligible for a home loss payment.'

- 4.32 To date, 23 tenants who were in properties in Phases B – D have moved to a new home and are seeking payment of their home loss. Funding is requested for payment of these discretionary home loss payment and a provisional estimated sum for an additional 10 tenants who may move before they are awarded gold banding prior to the Report regarding the next Phase of North Taunton Woolaway Project due before Council next year.
- 4.33 For these tenants on limited income, financial hardship could be caused by having to wait until a formal Council decision regarding the next Phase of development. To mitigate this it is requested that Council approves the discretionary payment of 33 x home loss payments.
- 4.34 **Phase A Budget Request**
- 4.35 An additional supplementary budget of £1.5 million from the estimated total scheme budget is requested to cover the additional costs associated with the first phase of this flagship scheme. These costs were not included as part of the estimated costs for Phase A agreed in February 2019. The additional estimated costs are set out in Appendix A attached to this Report and include:
- 4.35.1 Expenses incurred in relation to the costs of the master-planning application for Phases B – E, which were not included in the original estimated budget for Phase A.
- 4.35.2 An estimated increase in build costs based on revised cost estimates compared to those used to obtain the original estimated budget. These costs will remain an estimation until the tenders are returned for the Phase A scheme.
- 4.35.3 The actual total acquisition costs of the 3 private owned properties within Phase A exceeded the estimated acquisition costs forecasted in the original budget but acquisition of those properties has been achieved without the requirement for Compulsory Purchase Orders. The purchase of these properties were in accordance with the appropriate processes and valuations.
- 4.35.4 Increased costs in disturbance compensation as homeowners were entitled to claim compensation in accordance with the new Decant Policy which was not considered in the original budget. The level of disturbance compensation will vary from claim to claim and is dependent on the home owner's specific circumstances. The Council is required to pay for special adaptations previously assessed and required in the new property and the Council has incurred costs for significant disabled adaptations.
- 4.35.5 Additional funding to cover expenditure that were not identified at the time of formulating and seeking approval for the original estimated budget. This

includes the extension of consultant appointments and the appointment of new consultants to assist the internal Project team to resolve outstanding issues which require specialist knowledge. For example, the appointment of a Highways Consultant to resolve outstanding Section 278 Highway design and an Ecologist to produce a Wildlife Strategy to discharge a pre commencement condition for planning application 38/18/0465.

- 4.35.6 Costs associated with preparation of replacement homes for tenants decanted from the scheme and the requirement to keep the Project area maintained to an acceptable standard in terms of appearance, community morale and security of properties that were not identified previously.
- 4.35.7 The Project team is required to maintain the Project area to a suitable standard and to ensure the experience for households living in the area is not diminished as a result of the Project. As such, expenditure was required to provide suitable measures to secure the void properties and to cover the cost of security inspections via an external organisation during more problematic times of the year e.g. school holidays.
- 4.35.8 Running costs associated with the Project Office at Rochester Road, including the planning application fees.
- 4.35.9 Increasing the amount of contingency for Phase A to better protect the financial integrity of the phase against further potential costs like those aforementioned and those that could be experienced during construction e.g. increased material costs, increased labour costs etc.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The scheme compliments the Council's Corporate Strategy 2020 - 2024 - Homes and Communities – to offer a choice of good quality homes for our residents, whatever their age and income, in communities where support is available for those in need.
- 5.2 The Project significantly increases the number of affordable and social homes in Taunton and will be built by the Council including a range of housing types to cater for single person, family, vulnerable and elderly households.
- 5.3 The Project compliments that strategy objectives within the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2016 – 2046 objectives:
 - 5.3.1 **Providing Quality Homes.** We are committed to investing in our existing homes to deliver good quality of life for residents and value for the money spent, and to developing new homes that meet local needs.
 - 5.3.2 **Supporting the most vulnerable.** We are committed to letting homes to people who have the fewest housing options, and will provide additional support that helps people who are older, disabled, or socially excluded to live comfortably in their council-owned home.
 - 5.3.3 **Better Service.** We are customer and community focused and are committed to improving our services in line with what our residents have said matters to

them. Our approach will support people to move through our social housing provision to cater for their changing needs and aspirations over time.

- 5.4 **A Stronger Business.** We will prioritise efficiency to support delivery of our social priorities and objectives. It sets out how we will improve our business practices, drive out value for money and pursue new activities.
- 5.5 Engaging and listening to our residents has been the primary driver and embedded in the project principles established at the initiation of this project. The key project principles are:-
- 5.5.1 Existing SWT residents within the scheme will be given the opportunity to remain on a social rent level.
 - 5.5.2 Existing SWT residents within the scheme will be supported to downsize through the scheme design but retain the right to return to an equivalent size property within the new scheme.
 - 5.5.3 The Project is underpinned by the SWT development aspirations and provide new, high quality and energy efficient homes.
- 5.6 The new development compliments The Vision for Taunton as a Garden Town, specifically the themes:-
- 5.6.1 Growing our town greener – quality of the environment. The scheme incorporates green spaces and play spaces and provides more street trees.
 - 5.6.2 Growing Quality Places – quality of our places and neighbourhoods. The design of the scheme focuses on places and spaces with high quality homes, green streets and public spaces. The homes will be energy efficient and aim to incorporate sustainable technologies.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 The total cost of the whole North Taunton Woolaway Project as presented in the Report in February 2019 was estimated to be in the region of £45m as set out in Table 3 below modelled on the basis of delivering the scheme over a 10-year period.

| Table 3: Proposed Funding Profile for the North Taunton Woolaway Project | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------------|
| | North Taunton Woolaway project | Phase A (current approval) | Revised supplementary Approval requested | Total Revised approval |
| | £ 000's | £ 000's | £ 000's | £ 000's |
| Total estimated cost | 45,000 | 7,200 | 7,165 | 14,365 |
| Funded by: | | | | |
| Right to Buy (RTB) receipts | 3,468 | 534 | 61 | 595 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| Major Repairs reserve | 8,953 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| External borrowing | 32,579 | 6,666 | 7,104 | 13,770 |

- 6.2 The Council agreed the estimated funding allocations in principle, and delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer to update this as the programme progresses in line with the Council's capital and treasury strategies, prioritising affordability for the Housing Revenue Account. Any such updates to the funding arrangements would be reported to Councillors through the normal financial reporting process.

| | Phase A approved Budget | Phase A forecast | Phases B - E Acquisition & enabling | Total revised budget Phases A-E |
|--|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | £ 000's | £ 000's | £ 000's | £ 000's |
| Build & Infrastructure | 5,666 | 6,371 | 0 | 6,371 |
| Vacant possession | 627 | 804 | 3,682 | 4,486 |
| Planning, Decant, enabling costs & professional fees | 257 | 828 | 1,759 | 2,587 |
| Contingency | 650 | 650 | 272 | 922 |
| Total | 7,200 | 8,652 | 5,713 | 14,365 |

- 6.3 The original Phase A budget request was based on high level estimates. The revised costs, as identified in Confidential Appendix A, are the result of a more detailed Works cost provided by the Employers Agents, higher acquisition costs and clarity regarding professional fees and other on costs.
- 6.4 The supplementary budget relating to the Acquisition and Enabling costs for Phases B to E, are identified in Confidential Appendix B.
- 6.5 The revenue implications of the above have been included in the revised 30 year HRA business plan.

7 Legal Implications (if any)

- 7.1 Statutory Home loss and Disturbance payments will be made in line with legislative guidance and the North Taunton Woolway Decant Policy. As properties are anticipated to be purchased under, or 'under the threat of' the exercise of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers there is scope for utilisation of the HMG guidance on compensation payments.
- 7.2 Whilst the Council intends to work closely with each household and seek agreement to achieve vacant possession in the event an acceptable agreement cannot be sought, the Council approved in February 2019 the principle to utilise Compulsory Purchase Powers should vacant possession not progress. The CPO will be delegated to

Executive in the event this is required.

- 7.3 If vacant possession cannot be provided to a contractor by the long stop date in the build contract, the Council will be at risk of litigation for specific performance under the contract and this will potentially have associated financial implications.
- 7.4 Section 11 (6) of the Local Government Act 2003 relates to the Council's ability to retain and use Right to Buy receipts to fund affordable housing.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications

- 8.1 New build homes will be constructed to Part L of the Building Regulations which will substantially improve the thermal performance of the dwellings compared to the existing dwellings. Some dwellings currently have EPC ratings as low as band E.
- 8.2 The external wall construction will be upgraded and windows replaced to the refurbished homes which will increase the insulation, upping their fabric energy efficiency and improving the environmental performance of the dwellings.
- 8.3 The new development has been designed to take advantage of biodiversity opportunities in the neighbourhood such as planting trees and creating a new public open space.
- 8.4 The Project has enabled the Council to embrace and design a new garden community to incorporate the Garden Town Principles and safeguard the natural environment, providing areas of planting and open space whilst ensuring residents have access to suitable homes and facilities.
- 8.5 More energy efficient central heating will be installed to both the refurbished and new build dwellings.
- 8.6 Energy efficient lighting can be installed in the refurbished and new build dwellings and water saving sanitary ware such as aerating taps and dual flush water cisterns will reduce the water consumption.
- 8.7 Progressing the Reserved Matters for Phases B – E will provide the Council with a further opportunity to review the plans to consider the impact of climate change and explore modern methods of construction and further built environment energy efficiency initiatives. Phases B – E already include the provision of electric vehicle charging points.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 Through the design of the Project, tenants and residents will feel safe in the public realm and feelings of safety and security in the home due to the adoption of crime prevention measures in the new development.
- 9.2 Consultation with Police and other statutory authorities has already been undertaken as part of the planning application process. No implications arose thanks to the meticulous design and resident consultation that was undertaken to achieve planning permission.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was previously provided in February 2019.
- 10.2 The quality of the new housing being provided will help create and encourage better living environments for everyone. As a consequence, it is expected the health outcomes for the area will be improved as well as opportunities for reaching better educational outcomes for households.
- 10.3 The community space and open space will be accessible for all groups in the community reflecting the diversity of the local population, helping to bring people together and foster good relations between different groups.

11 Social Value Implications

- 11.1 The resident consultation phase of the Project has delivered social value through providing the opportunity for residents to be actively involved in the scheme design process and provide valued and informed contributions.
- 11.2 Social Value forms part of the selection criteria for the procurement of Phase A main contractor, and for future phases.

12 Partnership Implications

- 12.1 Any Project opportunities for partnership working with different organisations and agencies that enhance the benefits of the scheme will be explored as they arise. For example, NHS Talking Therapies have worked in partnership with us to provide a local presence for resident mental health and well-being. This has improved our tenant access to services, enabling them to receive support that they might not have otherwise accessed if not for the regeneration of the scheme.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 13.1 The Project as a whole has been designed to Nationally Described Space Standards to ensure properties are futureproofed and residents can benefit from some of the principles of lifetime homes and will contribute to the improve health and wellbeing of the residents.
- 13.2 Phase A includes a new community building to provide a focal point for local people to meet and enhance community spirit and interactions.

14 Asset Management Implications

- 14.1 The Housing (HRA) Asset Management Strategy 2016 reflects the challenges the Council faces and improving its focus on value for money for the Council and for our residents:
 - 14.1.1 **To promote sustainable local communities** through coordinated capital investment and housing management.

- 14.1.2 **To work closely with residents** to ensure that their homes meet their needs and aspirations.
 - 14.1.3 **To invest in stock**, to achieve good quality and environmental standards and to ensure that all statutory obligations are met.
 - 14.1.4 **To ensure that stock secures and strengthens the financial viability** of the business plan and safeguards its long term future and the income stream it generates.
 - 14.1.5 **Deliver Value for Money** through targeting investment where it will have the best financial and social return.
 - 14.1.6 **To carry out options appraisals** on stock that does not meet the above criteria, exploring the widest range of alternative options to improve outcomes for residents and for our business plan.
 - 14.1.7 **To deliver investment programmes in an effective way**, achieving agreed quality and value for money.
- 14.2 Through the evaluation, the asset management model identified 4% of the total stock with an average Net Present Value which is negative. These were exclusively for the Council's Woolway constructed properties, reflecting the anticipated need for major works to these properties in the medium term.
- 14.3 The HRA Asset Strategy 2016 recognised the Woolway house type as the Council's lowest performing stock with a limited life expectancy and high future maintenance costs. Unless action is taken to address the structural defects, the properties will continue to deteriorate, increasing the problems of a poorly performing dwelling.
- 14.4 Providing new energy efficient, affordable homes with a range of property sizes will improve the living standards for residents to create a sustainable community of high quality homes. In addition, increasing the scheme density will generate greater income and make best use of the Council's assets.

15 Data Protection Implications

- 15.1 All personal data is held in accordance with GDPR regulations.

16 Consultation Implications

- 16.1 Community Engagement and supporting the residents affected by the scheme, have been at the forefront of the Project's ethos to regenerate the area.
- 16.2 Officers have held 1 to 1 interviews with residents achieving approximately 90% coverage. This is in addition to attending the Implementation Working Group monthly meetings to provide updates on the progression of the scheme. The Implementation Working Group comprises a group of local residents who are affected by the Project.

16.3 The Project office has been a very effective tool in breaking down barriers with the community and encouraging communication.

17 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)

17.1 The North Taunton Woolaway Project report was presented to Shadow Scrutiny on the 4th February 2019 and Shadow Executive 11th February 2019. At each meeting the Project and the report recommendations have been supported unanimously.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate)
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate) **20th November 2019**
- **Full Council – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate) **3rd December 2019**

Reporting Frequency: **Once only** **Ad-hoc** **Quarterly**
 Twice-yearly **Annually**

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

| | |
|------------|---|
| Appendix A | CONFIDENTIAL Phase A Forecast Costs Compared to Approved Budget |
| Appendix B | CONFIDENTIAL Phases B – E Forecast Pre-Construction Acquisition and Enabling Costs |

Contact Officers

| | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|
| Name | Rich Wiseman | Name | Jane Windebank |
| Direct Dial | 01823 217542 | Direct Dial | 01823 219520 |
| Email | r.wiseman@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk | Email | j.windebank@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk |

| | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| Name | James Barrah | Name | |
| Direct Dial | 01823 217553 | Direct Dial | |
| Email | j.barrah@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk | Email | |

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Agenda Item 12

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