

Planning and Transport Policy Sub-Committee

Decision Date – 14 February 2024

Key Decision – Yes

Mendip Local Plan Part II Limited Update – Consultation on Proposed site allocations

Executive Member(s): Councillor Ros Wyke, Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets.

Local Member(s) All Members in the former Mendip (Somerset East) Plan Area

Lead Officer: Alison Blom-Cooper Head of Planning/Chief Planning Officer

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1. Summary

- 1.1 To agree a draft site allocations report for Regulation 18 consultation identifying sites to progress a limited update the Mendip Local Plan Part II. This follows a Judicial Review decision and High Court directions to review and re-consider consider allocations to meet the ex-Mendip district wide requirement for 505 dwellings. This report gives details of the scope, site selection, consultation arrangements. The report also updates on timescales and external consultants which were reported verbally to the December 2023 meeting.
- 1.2 A working draft of the consultation report is Appendix 1 and the Initial Consultation Report at Appendix 2. A summary schedule of sites assessed in provided in Appendix 3 to support the list of proposed allocations.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Planning and Transport Policy Executive Sub-Committee agrees:
 - (a) the draft site allocations consultation document in appendix 1 which identifies the housing sites as directed in the High Court Order made on 16 December 2022 and varied on 14 July 2023.

- (b) that the draft site allocations consultation document, environmental reports and supporting documents listed in this report are published for a six-week public consultation as soon as practicable but no later than 28th February 2024.
- (c) that any minor changes necessary to the documents following this meeting and prior to the start of consultation are delegated to the Head of Planning for approval in order to expedite the consultation.
- (d) notes the timescales for the review and that responses to the consultation and any final amendments are due to be reported to this Sub-Committee on 20 June 2024 to meet the amended timetable as proposed to the High Court

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 To comply with the requirements of the High Court Order specified above and relevant legislation associated with the production and update of development plans.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1 There are no alternative options. It would not be appropriate to defer or not take forward consultation. The Council is in breach of a High Court Order and the revised timescales are still subject to agreement by the High Court. The Council has the opportunity to review the proposed allocations in the consultation report in response to the responses received.

5. Links to Council Plan (2023-27) and Medium-Term Financial Plan

- 5.1 Following the Judicial Review, the directions from the High Court allow for the policies/allocations in the Mendip Local Plan Part II (save for the 505 dwellings) to remain as adopted and to continue to be used as part of the development plan in the determination in planning applications. Retention of the extant planning framework for the Somerset East area supports sustainability, housing, and economic development priorities in the Council Plan. While the re-consideration and update exercise is limited in its scope by the Court Order, there are opportunities to include where requirements where appropriate to secure active travel and sustainable development measures.

The Council will also build on the approach and processes from this exercise in the preparation of the Somerset wide Local Plan.

- 5.2 This project requires statutory expenditure in the current year and next (2024-5) to meet the Court Order. Witness statements have been submitted to the Court as part of the application to vary the timetable set out in the Order. These explain the timeline of the financial emergency as a contributory reason for not being in a position to meet the originally imposed deadline of 31 December 2023 for Regulation 18 consultation. Council officers have provided assurance to the High Court that the proposed amended deadlines will be met and that necessary expenditure is secured and prioritised if the variation is granted.

6. Financial and Risk Implications

- 6.1 Following submission of the application to the High Court to vary the timescales in the Order, the Judge has requested and been provided with a letter of re-assurance from the s151 officer that resources will be provided to ensure the timetable is met and financial emergency will not impact on progress to submission.
- 6.2 The Local Plan Part II Limited Update has an agreed allocation from the Planning Services budget of £120k in 2023-24 (Year 1) and £214,500 (Year 2) in 2024-25. Year 1 expenditure is expected to be lower than estimated as provision for external agency officers has not been used and Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken in-house. The critical friend consultancy support is capped at £25,000. The Year 1 budget retains provision for additional legal advice if an in-person representation is required in the High Court. Additional Counsel opinion may also be needed on the examination process.
- 6.3 The higher costs in Year 2 relate to publication costs and examination of proposals by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). PINS will require a service level agreement to appoint an Inspector. Their costs are set nationally, and the Council will need to meet these. The Council will also need to provide a part-time administrative assistant (programme officer) to be in place shortly after the Regulation 19 publication. This could be an external expert or a secondment.

Risk Assessment

Mendip Local Plan Review – site allocations Review					
Likelihood	4	Impact	4	Risk Score	20

- 6.4 The limited update to Local Plan Part II as directed by the Court and submission/examination is not a typical exercise of plan making. While there are precedents for other LPA single-policy, partial or fuller reviews of adopted plans, the narrow terms of this exercise are unusual.
- 6.5 There are a range of risks which are being assessed and can be summarised as:
- Compliance with the High Court Order – still subject to the Council submissions on a revised timetable and it cannot be assumed agreement will be given. At the time of writing this report, the Council is non-compliant with the timetable set out in the Order.
 - Ensuring a robust approach to site selection which accords with the approach of the extant adopted Local Plan.
 - Unknowns – e.g. Extent and nature of responses received to the Regulation 18 consultation – e.g. new sites or updated information/ objections to the proposed allocations. These may take longer than anticipated to process and analyse or could present the need for further unforeseen work or engagement to be undertaken which has not been planned as part of the work programme.
 - Changes in site availability if applications are refused, revised, or withdrawn/
 - Scope of the High Court directions in relation to soundness/ NPPF compliance – the update to Local Plan Part II will be subject to examination under the parameters of the latest version of the NPPF published in December 2023, whereas the extant elements of the adopted Local Plan Part II were examined and found sound under the NPPF published in 2012. This could lead to contradictions in approach and may make the examination process complex.
 - Considerations arising from the Mendip Housing Supply Position
 - Availability of officer resources.
 - Ensuring that the update process is legally compliant and responds robustly to the findings of the High Court – this includes the need to ensure that the Sustainability Appraisal process is clear and robust, and that reasonable alternatives are adequately identified as assessed as part of the process.

- Ensuring that the tests of soundness for development plan production are met – particularly that proposed site allocations will be deliverable and are justified by proportionate evidence.

6.6 Officers are working with the external consultants to maintain a risk register through to submission in order to mitigate their impact. The consultants will advise on any matters which should be addressed in this consultation stage and those which need to be addressed prior to the publication of the Regulation 19 plan. There is therefore flexibility in the recommendations to amend the site allocations report or response forms, if necessary.

Failure to progress the Local Plan Part II Limited update the deadlines as directed High Court engages significant legal and reputational risk to the Council. Recommendations in this report relate to publication of a consultation document which will mitigate risk.

Legal Implications

- 6.7 The Council is required to comply with the directions of the Court Order which is covered in the Executive report of 10 July 2023. Members should note that the Council applied on 18th December 2023 to vary the Order to extend the publication and submission timetable set out therein. The application explained the key reasons for the Council failing to meet the Regulation 18 publication deadline of 31st December 2023, namely the number of sites being put forward for allocation and delays in the process due to the expenditure constraints imposed following the declaration of the financial emergency.
- 6.8 One of the parties to the litigation has objected to the extended timetable. The Judge's decision is awaited, and it cannot be assumed that extended the proposed timetable will be agreed. At the time of writing this report, the Council is in breach of the Order. It is not clear what the implications would be if the application is refused.
- 6.9 The Council must follow the statutory requirements for consultation on development plans which are set out in the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and in the SCI.

7. HR Implications

- 7.1 There are no immediate HR implications.

8. Equalities Implications

8.1. There are no direct equalities implications as the recommendations endorse site options for consultation. An equalities impact assessment form part of the statutory process and documents submitted for examination.

9. Community Safety Implications

9.1. There are no immediate community safety implications

10. Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

10.1 The site assessments, site-selection methodology and sustainability appraisal review potential impacts and mitigation/ adaption is embodied in the process and will be tested through consultation and at examination.

11. Health and Safety Implications

11.1 There are no health and safety implications from the report.

12. Health and Wellbeing Implications

12.1. There are no immediate health and wellbeing implications from the report. Health and wellbeing form part of the wider sustainable development considerations in the site assessments.

13. Social Value

13.1. This is not directly applicable to the recommendation to consult on site options. Social value is secured through the policy requirements and development management processes where possible. Detailed policy requirements form part of the publication plan.

14 Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

14.1 The proposed decision has not been considered by Scrutiny Committee. As agreed, in order to streamline the process here will be an opportunity for the Climate and Place Scrutiny Committee to respond to the Regulation 18 consultation documents during the six week consultation period at their meeting in March 2024.

15. Background Papers

Executive 10 July 2023 Item 8: Mendip Local Plan - Variation to Order of 16/12/22

Statement of Community Involvement – October 2024 [Link](#)

Somerset Council Local Development Scheme October 2024 [Link](#)

Mendip Village Growth Monitor April 2023 [Link](#)

16. Appendices

Appendix 1 Site Allocations Consultation Report (working draft)

Appendix 2 Draft Initial Consultation Statement

Appendix 3 Summary of site options by settlement

17. Background

- 17.1 The Executive agreed on 10 July 2023 to undertake a limited update of this development plan to comply with the directions of a High Court Order. This followed a Judicial Review into the Local Plan Part II where five site allocations to provide 505 dwellings were deleted from the plan. The court decision confirmed legal errors in the Local Plan Part II Inspector's report/reasoning and the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) relating to the consideration of sites exclusively in the northeast of the District, without reasonable alternatives across the wider Local Plan area.
- 17.2 The remainder of the Local Plan Part II remains as adopted. The 505 dwellings relate to an unallocated element of the housing requirement in the Local Plan Part I Policy CP2 and reflected the extension of the Plan period by an additional year to 2029.
- 17.3 The consultation report identifies proposed housing allocations and represents the Council's re-consideration of sites as required by the High Court. This consultation will provide the main opportunity for public, stakeholder and development interests to comment on the proposed sites.
- 17.4 The Council has flexibility in how it undertakes consultation in preparing a plan at Regulation 18 but needs to comply with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement September 2023 which provides for a six week consultation at this stage. To comply with the amended timetable proposed to the High Court, the Regulation 18 consultation must commence no later than 28th February 2024.

Changes to sites or requirements will be assessed and consideration given to the comments received to see if amendments are required. The Council will then produce a final version of the proposed sites and consequential changes to the Local Plan Part II (Regulation 19). There is a then a further six week period where representations of the soundness of the proposals can be made. These will form part of the submission documents and considered by the Local Plan Inspector at Examination. A timeline of these stages is shown in Table x and in the initial consultation statement.

Update on the application to vary the Court Order timescales

17.5 The directions in the Court Order required Regulation 18 consultation on the proposed allocations to commence by 31 December 2023. As advised to the December Sub-Committee, the Council submitted an application to vary the Order to revise the timetable for consultation to take place following the 14 February 2024 meeting. The proposed revised timescales in the application before the High Court are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1	Court Order	Variation sought
Regulation 18 consultation on Proposed Sites	<i>By 31 December 2023</i>	By 28 February 2024
Regulation 19 Publication	<i>By 31 March 2024</i>	By 30 June 2024
Submission for Independent Examination	<i>By 1st July 2024</i>	By 30 September 2024

17.6 The application to vary the Order was submitted on 18 December 2023 and served on interested parties in the Judgment. No objections have been raised by Norton St Phillip Parish Council and the Secretary of State has adopted a neutral position. Lochailort Investments have made an objection due to the delay to the timescales. A further explanatory letter from the Council’s Solicitor and a Witness Statement from the Chief Planning Officer were submitted to the Court in w/c 22nd January 2024 and a letter from the s151 officer on 1st February. The Judge has yet to conclude whether he can consider the application on the papers without a hearing or whether the Council’s proposed extended timetable is acceptable. An update will be provided at the meeting.

Update on work completed and external support

- 17.7 A timeline of key steps, tasks and engagement to date (based on that provided to the High Court) is summarised in Table 5. This has predominantly been undertaken by the Somerset East policy team supplemented by two planning policy graduates and with critical input /project management time provided by senior policy officers.
- 17.8 Following financial approval from the Commercial and Procurement Board on the 18 December 2023, the Council appointed DAC Planning to provide additional support and critical friend advice to the Local Plan Review process up to the submission of the Plan to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for Examination. DAC Planning has extensive experience in supporting the production, examination and implementation of Local Plans having been responsible for preparing the Planning Advisory Service toolkit 2021 which provides practical advice and tools to undertake a Local Plan review. [PAS Local Plan Route Mapper v2.0.pdf](#) DAC Planning have previously provided Wirral Council with advice and support on the progression of their Local Plan. This included processing Regulation 18 consultation representations and assisting Wirral Council in preparing and carrying out Regulation 19 publication. DAC Planning have also previously provided advice on the timeline and resources required for the production of the Somerset Local Plan in 2022.
- 17.9 DAC are currently providing an external review of the risks, site selection and the sustainability appraisal assessments. The instruction commenced on 9 January 2024 and advice has been provided to officers preparing the consultation documents and informs the summary of risks in this report.

Officers have been very mindful that there is a need to ensure an objective assessment of all sites considered for allocation. DAC Planning will review site selection process, site selection documentation and sufficiency of the sustainability appraisal including the completed site selection templates and/ SA framework . There is provision in the recommendation to make changes for consistency before consultation if necessary.

18. Scope and Approach

- 18.1 The limited update to the Local Plan Part II requires the Council to identify housing sites capable of delivering 505 dwellings across the whole of the Somerset East (former Mendip) area. Despite its narrow focus, this exercise involves most of the

formal process, statutory obligations and assessment work associated with a site allocation document. This includes a call for sites of available land and testing of site options. Recommended sites are also subject to statutory Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

- 18.2 The Somerset Local Development Scheme (LDS) approved in October 2023 is clear that the scope of this review is limited to identification of sites to provide the 505 dwellings and does not involve a wider update of policies or other adopted designations (e.g. open spaces/ employment land). The Council has not therefore re-considered the adopted spatial strategy for Mendip or updated evidence on housing requirements. These will be addressed in the future Somerset Development Plan. Progress on evidence base work is reported separately to this meeting. An advisory meeting with the Planning Inspectorate on the scope of this exercise and additional legal advice may be sought during the consultation period.
- 18.3 The consultation documents will not involve re-publishing the whole Local Plan Part II and will only cover the choice of sites and policy options to address the 505 requirements.

Call for Sites and Site selection

- 18.4 A call for sites covering the Somerset East area was held in July and August 2023 inviting details of land available for development or re-confirmation of sites previously identified during Local Plan Part II. 51 new housing sites were promoted with a further 83 known sites being re-confirmed. A total of 140 sites were assessed in detail. These locations of sites submitted as available for development are mapped in Appendix 3.
- 18.5 Officers have designed a site selection methodology/ assessment process focusing on sites which can
- (a) deliver housing by the end of the Mendip Local Plan period (2029);
 - (b) are in compliance with the adopted spatial strategy in Local Plan Part 1 and particularly policies CP1 and CP2 and;
 - (c) are in sustainable and accessible locations
- The sites struck out of the plan have been reconsidered but do not carry any additional advantage in the selection process.

- 18.6 The Inspector's mis-direction of the former Mendip District Council stems from the advice given in the Interim Hearing report in mid 2019 (ED20). Housing sites which have become available, submitted as applications or permitted since the interim report in mid 2019 can be counted towards the 505.
- 18.7 As the adopted Local Plan includes an allowance for small sites of 5 units or less, these cannot be considered for allocation as they would be considered part of the examined housing supply. Sites where applications have been refused and being contested at appeal have been assessed but are not proposed until an appeal outcome is known.
- 18.8 The selection exercise gives more weight to sites with permission or current applications which have a greater prospect of coming forward in the plan period. Assessments also take account of the extent to which phosphate mitigation and constraints on the capacity of the A36 around Frome are likely to impact on short-term delivery.

Sustainability Appraisal

All the site options (except those screened out) have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal and testing of reasonable alternative options. Appendix 3 to this report present a high level summary of SA findings and conclusions for the site assessment templates. The SA report with detail will be published in full as part of the consultation.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment will be published as part of the consultation.

Duty to Co-operate (DTC)

- 18.9 Officers have engaged with Bath & NE Somerset (BaNES) Council on the responses to the call for sites which involve land promoted on their boundary. Officers have considered the additional and remitted sites proposed as allocations in this location. Two sites with permission are proposed to contribute to the 505.
- 18.10 BaNES have commenced their own development plan review (2022-2042) with an options consultation to be published this month. The extension of development south of Midsomer Norton and Westfield is not one of the BaNES

early options. The adjoining LPA retains its objections in principle in relation to the conflict with their adopted Plan as well as concerns around the cumulative infrastructure burdens imposed by a neighbouring authority.

18.11 Given that the Council is not required to consider further sites in this area, officers, consider that any additional sites should be part of future discussions in terms of respective plan reviews and not this 505 exercise.

19. Summary of Proposed Allocations

- 19.1 A working draft of the consultation report is provided at Appendix 1. This which describes the background to the limited update and scope, reviews supply and constraints by settlement and sets out proposed allocations. Where relevant to the Reg 18 consultation, officers have noted any additional housing opportunities which might be considered but are not available.
- 19.2 Officers have recommended 10 sites as proposed allocations which are summarised in Table 2. These are expected to deliver 544 dwellings over the remainder of the plan period and have an overall capacity of 764 dwellings.
- 19.3 The majority of sites have the benefit of planning consent but there are also sites with applications under consideration or subject to discussions with the Council. Build out estimates for these sites from 2024-29 are shown in an appendix to the consultation report.
- 19.4 The proposed allocations do not include sites allocated in primary and secondary villages with the exception of a permitted site in Coleford. Development monitoring indicates most of these settlements have exceeded their housing requirements established in Local Plan Part I. Overall, completions, allocations, and commitments in the rural area outside the principal towns is expected to be 80% above the Mendip Local Plan Part 1 allocation of 1,780 dwellings. The summary assessment in Appendix 3 highlights the most village options have negative or strong negative impacts on landscape and settlement character/ settlement identity and heritage (as judged from the high level sustainability assessment).

Somerset East: LPP2 update - proposed allocations

Scale 1:129763
Notes:

Compiled by on 19 January 2024

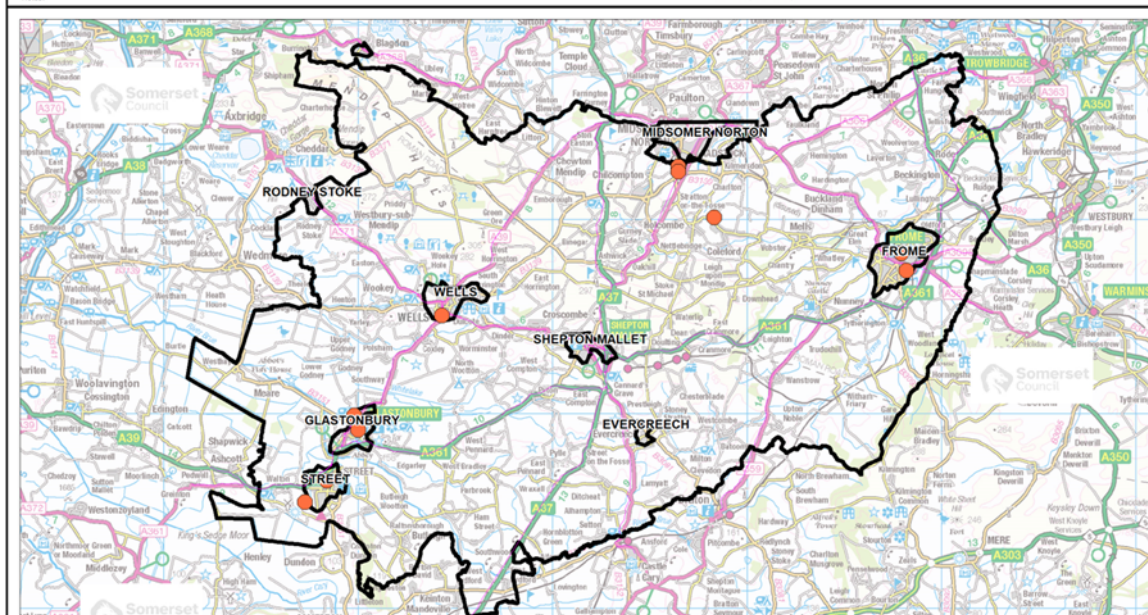


Table 2: Proposed Site Allocations*

Settlement	Status	LPP2 Policy Reference	HELAA Site Ref	Minimum Dwellings	Total Size Hectares	Delivery 2024-29
Frome						
Land off Adderwell	Permission	FR9	FRO218	25	0.77	25
Land at North Parade Car Park	Application	FR10	FRO227	18	0.41	18
Glastonbury						
Land off Common Moor Drove	Permission	GL6	GLAS124	90	7.0	60
Land at Norbins Road	Application	GL7	GLAS122	6	0.2	6
Street						
Land to rear of Crispin Centre	Application	ST5	STR146	50	0.6	40
Brooks Road - part of Future Growth Area	Pre-app	ST3-updated	STR001	120	10.9	60
Wells						
Wells Police Station	Permission	WL6	WELLS127	47	0.4	47
Midsomer Norton/ Westfield						
Land at White Post	Permission	MN1	NRAD001M	270	12.1	150
Land at Beauchamps Drive	Permission	MN4	NRAD008	75	3.4	75
Villages						
Anchor Lane, Coleford	Permission	CL2	COLE014	63	3.4	63
Total				764	39.08	544

*subject to review at committee, consultant feedback and sustainability appraisal testing before consultation

19.5 The locations of proposed allocations are shown in the Map and Table 2 above. These are recommended on the basis of site assessments and sustainability appraisal process and are considered to be suitable, sustainable and deliverable which are the tests which will be applied at the independent examination.

20. Consultation Documents and Arrangements

20.1 These are detailed in the Initial Consultation statement at Appendix 2 and follow the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Documents to be published are shown in Table 4. The Council notify statutory consultees and town/parish councils. General consultees will be those with links or relevance to the former Mendip area.

20.2 The consultation will be for 6 weeks with documents online (using citizenspace) and Inspection copies at the Shepton Mallet offices. Officers will also hold online briefings for the public, members and town/parish council during early/late March 2024.

20.3 Following the consultation period, responses will be summarised and published in an updated consultation statement. Given the narrow scope of this site allocations exercise and extent of permitted sites, it is not envisaged there will be public meetings or in-person drop-in sessions. A forward timetable of events is shown below in Table 3.

20.4 The SA scoping report and main report will be published for comment as part of the consultation. Comments must be sought from Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency.

TABLE 3 MENDIP SITE ALLOCATIONS REVIEW - TASKS AND CONSULTATION STAGES 2024

14 th February 2024	PTP Exec sub-committee Decision to approve proposed allocations for consultation
Week commencing 26 th February - 10 th April – but no later than 28 th February 2024	Draft Site Allocations Report consultation stage (Regulation 18) Comments will also be invited on: (1) Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2) Sustainability Appraisal Report Supporting Documents: Initial Consultation Statement (Reg 18)

April – June 2024	Collation and review of responses Recommendations for changes to sites in light of submissions. Discussions with Planning Inspectorate on soundness issues Finalising site allocations policies Consequential changes/ corrections to changes to Local Plan Part II Updates to SA and HRA and Consultation Report Updates to Policies Map
20 th June 2024	PTP Exec sub-committee Decision to approve final site allocations report for publication and submission to Secretary of State (SoS)
Late June – Early August (but publication to be no later than 30 th June 2024)	Final site allocations report - 6 week publication (Regulation 19) Consultees invited to make representations on the final allocations report on the soundness of the proposals. Representations made are collated and submitted with the plan documents to Planning Inspectorate for examination.
August/September	Finalise summary of representations and submission documents
By 30 September 2024 at the latest	Submission to Planning Inspectorate
October 2024	Examination process starts Appointment of Inspector. Examination dates scheduled
Nov 2024 – Spring 2025	Examination period/ Hearings (if required) Inspectors Report and adoption of updates to the Plan

**TABLE 4 MENDIP LOCAL PLAN PART II - LIMITED UPDATE
SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS TO BE PUBLISHED AT REGULATION 18**

	Document	Description
Consultation Document		
1	Draft consultation document with proposed allocations	Working draft – Appendix 1 to this report
Site Assessments and supporting evidence		
2	Schedule of Site Assessments	Individual Site Maps and assessments
3	Summary of site options by settlement	Draft at Appendix 3 to this report
Consultation		
4	Initial Consultation Statement	Working draft - Appendix 2 to this report
5	Supporting material on Consultation Portal / response forms / Information on Mendip Local Plan Pages. Notice of consultation to stakeholders	
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)		

6a	SA Scoping Report	Includes Update of Plans. Policies and Programmes/Baseline
6b	Main SA Report (Reg 18)	
6c	SA – Site Summary Schedule	
Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)		
7	HRA report on proposed sites	
Other supporting evidence		
<p>This includes monitoring reports which may be referenced in the main consultation document including 5 year supply statement, village growth monitor and brownfield register. The council may also provide details of sites not confirmed as available</p>		

TABLE 5 MENDIP SITE ALLOCATIONS REVIEW - TIMELINE OF WORK AND ENGAGEMENT

Date	
10 th July	Executive Committee report giving endorsement to Plan Update/ original timescales
14 th July	Amended High Court Order with timescales published.
19 th July	Scrutiny Committee advised around engagement with Local Members
24th July	Call for sites commenced in compliance with Order
25 th July	Briefing for Somerset East Members
27 th July	Commencement notices sent to Statutory Consultees. towns and parishes
31 st July	Duty to Co-operate meeting with adjoining LPAs (Bath and Wiltshire)
10 th August	Advisory Meeting with PINS
7-28 th August	Legal advice on approach /Initial draft of site selection methodology
4th September 2023	Call for sites closing date
11th –21 st September	Review and checking of submissions (two weeks)
	2 nd Duty to Co-operate meeting (specific to this Plan review)
25 th September	Finalised list of non-submission sites
26 th September	Briefing for Town and Parish Councils (including adjoining Plan areas)
27 th September	Two additional planning officers start work to review submissions
2 nd October	Site Assessments – Analysis of proposed developments and mapping for technical officer and Member workshops - completed by 26 th October
4th October	Local Development Scheme approved at Executive including Local Plan Part II update setting out scope of Plan exercise
4th October	Executive agreement to establish Planning and Transport Policy sub-committee. Terms of Reference to agree development plan consultation documents at Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 stages to streamline the internal approval system.
12 th October	Somerset technical officers workshop (highways/ecology/flooding/Minerals and waste)

23 rd October	Brief for external support/ critical review completed/ Additional internal Project Management resource added to Team
23 rd October	Initial site Assessments completed by workshop.
26 th October	Somerset East Councillor workshop to provide input on all 'call for sites' submissions
30 th October	Approach to Sustainability/deliverability assessments agree following workshop
6 th November	Additional Senior Planning Officer support secured (2 days pw)
15 th November	Duty to Co-operate meeting with adjoining LPAs (scheduled) Final non-ecology comments on sites received.
20 th November	Initial draft shortlist of candidate sites compiled.
1 st December	Assessments for all sites circulated to technical officers/Sustainability Appraisal scoping
7 th December	Officer and Member Briefings on shortlist of candidate sites -
15 th December	4 th Duty to Co-operate meeting to discuss preferred options nr BaNES
18 th December	Application to amend High Court Order timescales lodged
22 nd December	Appointment of 'critical friend' DAC Planning and inception meeting (8 th Jan)




Report Sign-Off

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance	David Clark	2 nd Feb 2024
Communications	Chris Palmer	1 st Feb 2024
Finance & Procurement	Jason Vaughan	2 nd Feb see Para 6.1
Workforce	Dawn Betteridge	N/A
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	5 th Feb 2024 - tbc
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	N/A
Chief Planning Officer	Alison Blom-Cooper	30 th Jan 2024
Council solicitor	Martin Evans	31 st Jan 2024
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Ros Wyke	5 th Feb 2024
Consulted:		
Local Division Members	N/A	
Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr Mark Healey	Notified 3rd Feb
Scrutiny Chair	Cllr Dimery	5 th Feb 2024

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or

www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment

Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)	 Somerset Council	x	 NHS Somerset	 NHS Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
Version	1	Date Completed	28 th January 2024	
Description of what is being impact assessed				
Identification of housing sites for public consultation (some permitted) totalling 505-550 dwellings over the next five years				
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				
Project is based on previous evidence base agreed in adopted local Plan Parts I and II				
Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups and what have they told you? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?				

This would be part of the consultation stage set out in the report
 There is a requirement to publish a separate Equality Impact Assessment as part of the submission documents for examination

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	Neutral – extant district policies requires mix of tenures and house sizes and major sites should provide affordable housing . two sites in the proposed options provide older-persons accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable Housing policies will apply. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

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Completed by:	Andre Sestini
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Date	28/1/2024
Signed off by:	Alison Blom-Cooper
Date	24 th Jan 2024
Equality Lead sign off name:	Angela Farmer
Equality Lead sign off date:	2 nd Feb 2024