



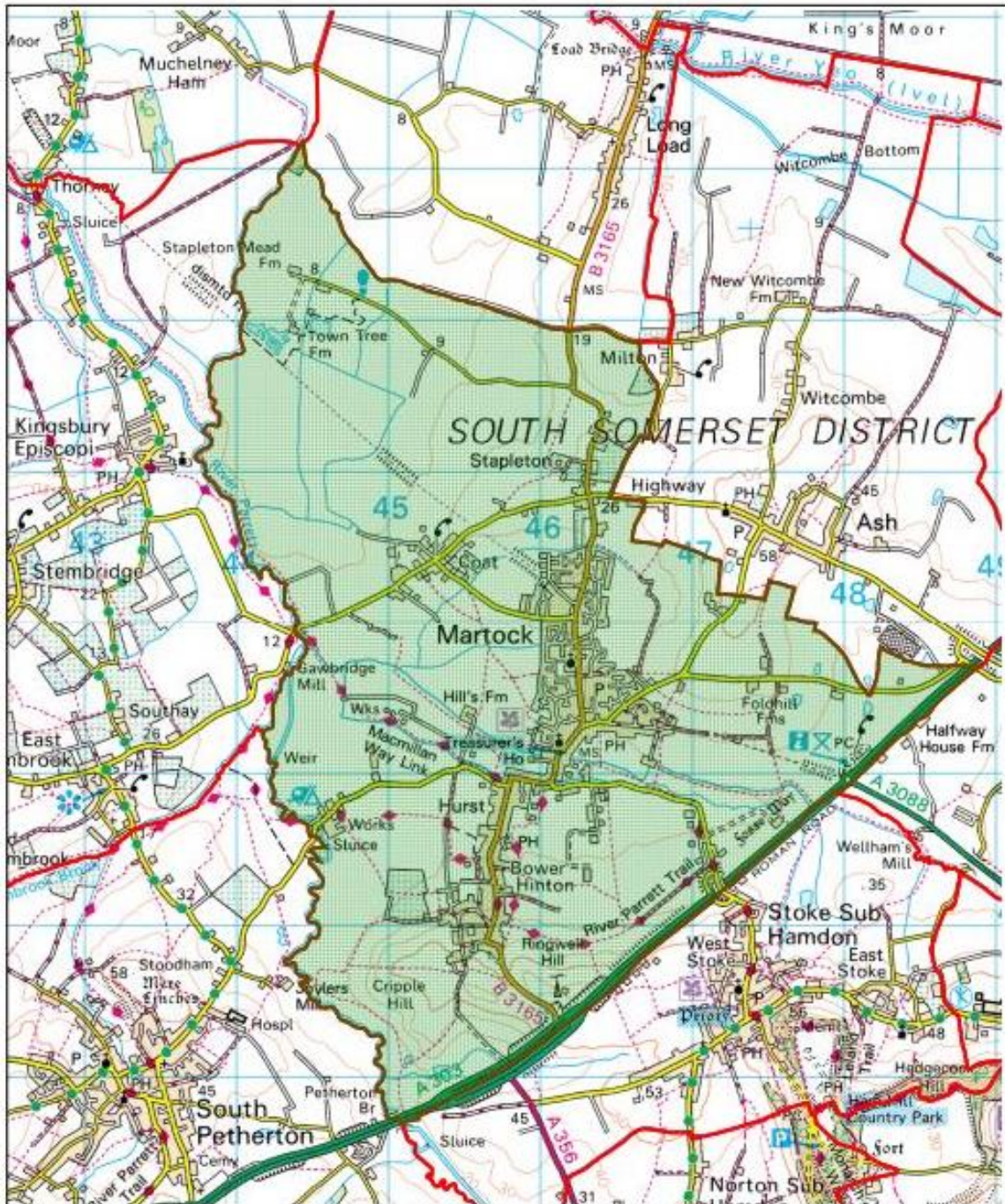
## Martock Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Report - the Strategic Context

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Compiled with the help of Paul Weston, Community Consultant





Name of neighbourhood area: Martock Neighbourhood Area

1:12,000

Designation date: 7th April 2016

Organisation who made the application: Martock Parish Council



Neighbourhood Area  
Parish Boundaries

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## Introduction

Planning policy and proposals need to be based on a proper understanding of the place to where they relate, if they are to be relevant, realistic and address local issues effectively. It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan is based on robust information and analysis of the local area; this is called the 'evidence base'. Unless policy is based on firm evidence and proper community engagement, then it is more likely to reflect the assumptions and prejudices of those writing it than to reflect the needs and aspirations of the wider area and community.

*We are advised that “the evidence base needs to be proportionate to the size of the neighbourhood area and scope and detail of the Neighbourhood Plan. Other factors such as the status of the current and emerging Local Plan policies will influence the depth and breadth of evidence needed. It is important to remember that the evidence base needs to reflect the fact that the plan being produced here will have statutory status and be used to decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area. It is necessary to develop a clear understanding of the neighbourhood area and policy issues covered; but not to review every piece of research and data in existence – careful selection is needed.”<sup>1</sup>*

This report sets out that part of the evidence base that can be described as the 'strategic context' i.e. those strategies and policies that currently prevail and will need to be acknowledged throughout the neighbourhood planning process. To meet the basic conditions laid down by the neighbourhood planning legislation, the Neighbourhood Plan will need to conform to several of these strategies.

We have extracted the relevant national and area-wide policies from the key documents that provide the context for the Neighbourhood Plan. These include:

- the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- the 'strategic' planning policies being produced by South Somerset District Council through its Local Plan (covering the whole District)
- the strategies of statutory bodies, other agencies and service delivery organisations

These all provide valuable background and context that needs to be understood before the Neighbourhood Plan can be prepared. Other key documents are 'signposted' and should be considered if necessary to help to fill gaps in understanding the context within which we plan, following completion of local research.

**This report provides a synopsis of the 'strategic' evidence base for our Neighbourhood Plan. It is important to recognise that this report provides a snapshot in time of available documented evidence. There may well be other written reports and strategy documents that become available in due course, which do not currently feature in this report but may need to be taken into account as the Neighbourhood Plan develops.**

**The more local information relating to Martock parish and that gathered through consultation with the community through events, discussion and the community surveys is documented in other reports. All of this 'evidence' will be considered together in due course to help identify the key themes, the vision, aims and objectives and subsequently the policies for the draft Martock Neighbourhood Plan.**

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<sup>1</sup> Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap, Locality, 2013 - <http://locality.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-roadmap-guide/>

## Key Planning Documents

There are several key planning documents which are relevant to most of the topic areas analysed in this report. It is important to understand, in general terms, what these documents are and the implication of their content to the neighbourhood plan. They provide the strategic context with which the Neighbourhood Plan needs to conform. To aid comprehension of these documents we have extracted the relevant policy statements and descriptions.

## National Planning Policies

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** sets out the Government's planning policies for England, setting the parameters within which the planning system, local planning authorities and Neighbourhood Plans should work and be set. In effect, together with relevant statutory legislation, the NPPF along with its companion National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) set out the 'rules' within which the planning system has to operate. The NPPF is set within the context of a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'<sup>2</sup>. Translating this to what it means for Neighbourhood Plans, it states that "*neighbourhoods should:*

- *develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development;*
- *plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan; and,*
- *identify opportunities to use Neighbourhood Development Orders to enable developments that are consistent with their neighbourhood plan to proceed.*"<sup>3</sup>

The NPPF also sets out the planning context within which Neighbourhood Plans should work. "*Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes and neighbourhood forums can use neighbourhood planning to:*

- *set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications; and,*
- *grant planning permission through Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders for specific development which complies with the order.*"<sup>4</sup>

It goes on to state that "*neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies... Outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict. Local planning authorities should avoid duplicating planning processes for non-strategic policies where a neighbourhood plan is in preparation.*"<sup>5</sup>

The **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)** amplifies the policies in the NPPF and provides further detailed and technical guidance. It contains explanations of the main processes that a neighbourhood plan must go through and also sets out the 'basic conditions' with which a neighbourhood plan must comply before proceeding to a local referendum and being 'made' (approved), which are as follows:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan).*
- having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, it is appropriate to make the order. This applies only to Orders.*

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<sup>2</sup> See paragraph 14 of the NPPF for the definition of the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 16, NPPF, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf) states

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 183, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 184, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

- c. *having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area, it is appropriate to make the order. This applies only to Orders.*
- d. *the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.*
- e. *the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).*
- f. *the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.*
- g. *prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).<sup>6</sup>*

## The Adopted South Somerset Local Plan

The Local Plan for South Somerset was formally adopted by South Somerset District Council in March 2015. The Plan sets the strategic context and strategic planning policies with which the Neighbourhood Plan needs to be in ‘general conformity’. This Evidence Report highlights relevant strategic policies and development management policies of the new Local Plan in text boxes as illustrated below.

### **POLICY SS1: SETTLEMENT STRATEGY**

Yeovil is a Strategically Significant Town and the prime focus for development in South Somerset.

The following are Market Towns where provision will be made for housing, employment, shopping and other services that increase their self-containment and enhance their roles as service centres:

Primary Market Towns: Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton

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

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

Rural Centres: Bruton, Ilchester, **Martock/Bower Hinton**, Milborne Port, South Petherton, and Stoke sub Hamdon.

Rural Settlements will be considered as part of the countryside to which national countryside protection policies apply (subject to the exceptions identified in Policy SS2).

The Neighbourhood Plan will not be able to contest the overall scale of housing proposed, broad location or site specific housing allocations deemed as ‘strategic’ in the Local Plan. Other policies deemed as ‘strategic’ in the Local Plan will also need to be used as the policy framework within which the Neighbourhood Plan is set. These strategic policies can only be amplified or given ‘granularity’ (further detail) in the local context where they provide added value in policy terms. The Development Management policies of the Local Plan, can be replaced, for good reason, by local neighbourhood planning policies in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

<sup>6</sup> Paragraph 065, National Planning Practice Guidance, DCLG, 2014. The basic conditions are set out in [paragraph 8\(2\) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.



## Natural Environment

### National Planning Policy Framework

Section 11 focuses on *conserving and enhancing the natural environment* while the preceding section 10 is concerned with *meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change*.

The following paragraphs<sup>7</sup> are of most relevance to the natural environment in broad terms:

*109. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*
- *recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures*

*110. In preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment. Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework*

*113. Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geo-diversity sites or landscape areas will be judged.*

*Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks*

## Landscape

### National Policy Planning Framework

*109. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*
- *recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- *preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and*
- *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

*117. To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:*

- *plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries;*
- *identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation;*
- *promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan;*
- *aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests; and*
- *where Nature Improvement Areas are identified in Local Plans, consider specifying the types of development that may be appropriate in these Areas.*

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<sup>7</sup> NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

123. *Planning policies and decisions should aim to:*

- *identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.*

125. *By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.*

### **Natural England National Character Areas<sup>8</sup>**

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geo-diversity and cultural and economic activity. Their boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision making framework for the natural environment.

NCA profiles provide a broad range of information that can be used by individuals and communities to help achieve a more sustainable future. The profiles include a description of the ecosystem services provided in each character area and how these benefit people, wildlife and the economy. They identify opportunities for positive environmental change (statements of environmental opportunity) and provide the best available information and evidence as a context for local decision making and action.

Landscape character assessment is an approach that aids recognition and understanding of the differences between landscapes, and states what constitutes local distinctiveness. In 1996, the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) undertook a national study of the character of England's landscape, to enable definition and description of the range and diversity of the English landscape, and its categorisation into 'character areas'. This study was published as a national map, with accompanying regional volumes that describe the resultant areas in detail. Volume 8: South West England, places Martock within character area **140 – Yeovil Scarplands**.

The key characteristics of these areas as noted by the assessment are<sup>9</sup>:

- *Contrasting and varied but complementary rhythm of the scarps and vales, with the flatter margins of the Levels and Moors.*
- *Scattered woodlands, many on steeper scarp slopes and within deep 'goyles' (steep, narrow valleys) and wet valley floors. Conifer Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites, relict orchards and poplar shelterbelts.*
- *Rural, agricultural character across the majority of the area, with distinct pastoral, mixed and arable areas.*
- *Several rivers draining east to west and a network of tributary streams, sometimes in goyles.*
- *Small villages and farmsteads contrasting sharply with urban and peri-urban Yeovil.*
- *Widespread earthwork remains, including medieval settlements, Roman villas and prehistoric forts, settlements and ritual sites.*
- *A range of principally Jurassic strata, particularly limestones and sandstones, giving rise to a suite of locally distinctive building stones, themselves imbuing distinctive local vernaculars.*
- *Relict open fields in the south-west contrasting with extensive thick hedgerows with frequent mature to veteran trees elsewhere.*
- *Winding rural lanes, bounded by verges and hedgerows, connecting villages and hamlets cut across by busy A roads linking larger towns and neighbouring NCAs.*
- *Manor houses and large mansions in landscaped parks.*

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<sup>8</sup> [www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/default.aspx)

<sup>9</sup> The full descriptive text of the Yeovil Scarplands Character Area is available on the Natural England website: [http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/CC/south\\_west/yeovil\\_scarplands.asp](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/CC/south_west/yeovil_scarplands.asp)

The Natural England Report for NCA 140 identifies the following key environmental opportunities:

SEO 1: *Work with the local farming and land management community to adapt to evolving funding mechanisms and climate change, encouraging business choices that balance food production with provision of a range of ecosystem services.*

SEO 2: *Protect, manage and enhance the diverse but coherent pastoral and mixed farming landscape character of the clay vales and limestone and sandstone scarps, their semi-natural grasslands and woodland and their characteristic wildlife. Manage the simple patterns of land use maintained by the long history of agriculture.*

SEO 3: *Protect and manage the National Character Area's rich cultural inheritance, including its historic environment and geodiversity. Raise the profile of the Yeovil Scarplands as a landscape of distinction and, in many places, great beauty.*

SEO 4: *Manage and plan for growth in the area around Yeovil and the other towns in this part of the National Character Area as they expand as employment and housing centres, ensuring that landscape character is used as a framework for future growth and enhancement.*

## **County and District Landscape Character Assessment & Management Guidelines**

A historic landscape characterisation study was undertaken by Somerset County Council Heritage team, completed in 2001. This study differentiates between unenclosed, anciently enclosed, and recently enclosed land, and notes ancient woodland sites and historic parkland. The resultant character plan for the Martock area indicates much of the surrounding land to be recently enclosed. This study places Martock and its wider surrounds at the junction of 2 visual character regions (VCRs) namely:

- 1) Ham Hill plateau, Yeovil Sands escarpments and valleys, and;
- 2) Central plain, Moors and river basins.

This is an indication of the subtle change in the character of the landscape in the area surrounding the settlement.

Each VCR is sub-divided into landscape character areas (LCAs). The following LCAs cover the Martock study area:

- i) Silts and Marls Low Hill Country (within the 'Central Plain, Moors and river basins' VCR)
- ii) Northern escarpments, Dip slopes and Foothills (within the 'Ham Hill plateau, Yeovil Sands escarpments and valleys' VCR) and;
- iii) River corridor (within both of the above VCRs).

**The Silts and Marls Low Hill Country LCA**, covers the majority of the town's area, along with the gently rising ground to the north and shallow vale to the east of the settlement. It is broadly described thus:

*The land use is mixed with large areas of arable on the ridges and 'islands' giving way to permanent grassland in the river corridor floodplain and moors. This land use was established when villages such as Martock, Kingsbury and Tintihull expanded greatly, particularly in the 14th century. In the Domesday book Martock had only one entry but in succeeding centuries manorial records list no less than nine dependent settlements, Bower Hinton, Hurst, Newton, Coat, Stapleton, Ash, Witcombe, Milton and Long Load. This growth was based on the reclamation of land from the 'waste' - enlarging the open fields and increasing productivity. This character zone is a continuation of the rolling arable landscape that lies between the Vale of Ilchester and the Yeovil sands hill country, encompassing the parishes of Ash, Martock, Long Load and Kingsbury Episcopi. It is a feature of low hills and weak escarpments fringing the moors and river corridors. Fields and roadsides are confined by elm hedges of some age and many fields down to permanent grass are often yellow with spring buttercups. Hurst and Madey Mills stream are pleasantly lined with willow and alder. There are centres of arable production particularly south and west of Martock. Fields are large and some hedges weak and gappy with a few struggling trees.*

To better facilitate the subsequent sensitivity evaluation, the LCA is sub-divided into two local character areas to reflect local variation in landscape character, as follows;

- i) 'Shallow hillsides N and NE of Martock', covering the quadrant of land stretching from Coat, through Stapleton toward Ash and Foldhill Lane, and;

- ii) The 'Hurst Brook Vale', laying between Foldhill lane, and Dimmocks Lane by Bower Hinton's east edge, and covering the broad valley drained by the Hurst Brook and Madey Mill Stream.

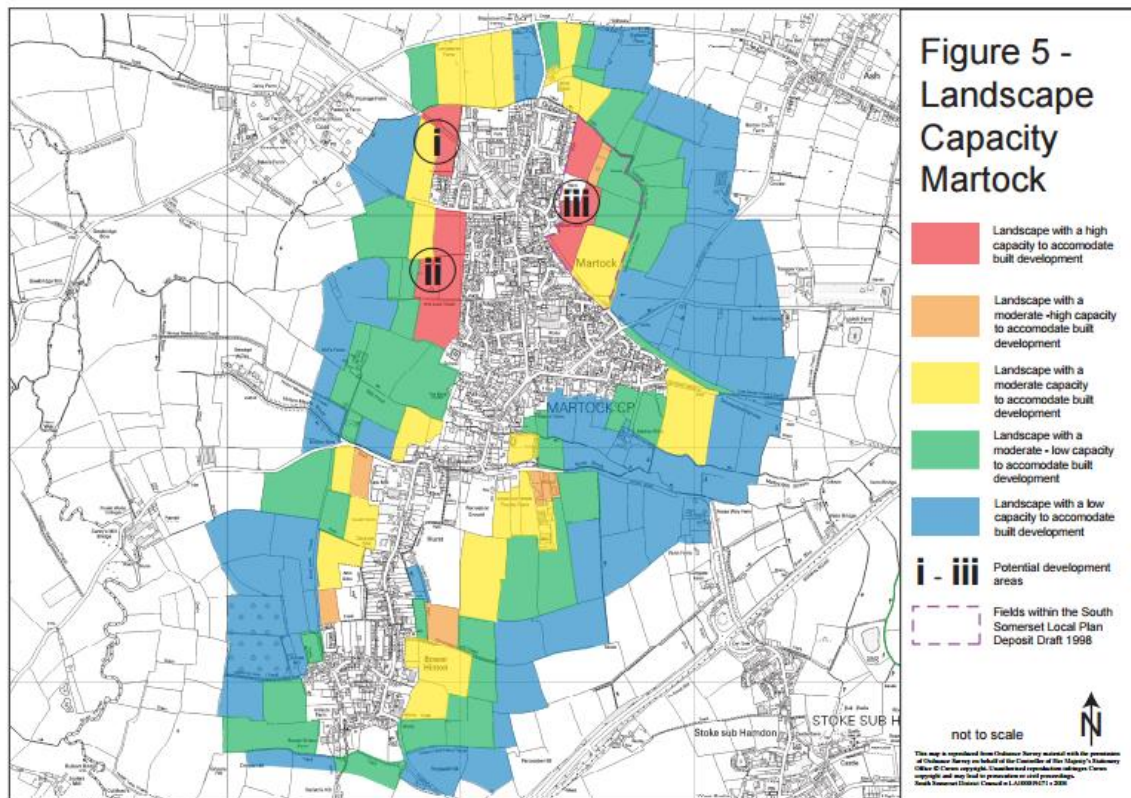
**The Northern escarpments, dip slopes and foothills LCA** broadly covers the rising ground around Bower Hinton in the southern quadrant of the study area, which for the purposes of this assessment is re-titled 'Bower Hinton low hills'. The assessment identifies and describes the area thus:

*Approached from the Vale of Ilchester to the north the escarpment is an important land mark identifying the location of Yeovil. In places buildings are silhouetted on the ridge; in others woodland and trees provide an important screen. Gradients are not severe and cultivation or improved pasture reaches high up the slope. Lanes and roads spill over into the plain below cutting deep holloways characteristic of the more sandy rock formations. To the west, the landscape is rolling mixed farmland. Hedges, usually of elm are generally intact but kept low. Remaining hedge trees are few, usually ash and suffering die-back. The most significant landscape features are the alder and willow-lined streams such as Ball's Water and Welham Brook; the latter having some fine willow pollards and traditional waterside buttercup meadows.*

Encroaching into the area, yet laying outside and to the west of the town, the '(Parrett) river corridor' landscape character area is locally identified as the 'Parrett vale' for the purposes of this study. The district assessment describes the landscapes of the general river corridors thus:

*The Rivers Yeo, Parrett and their tributaries make an important contribution to the diversity of the scenery as they cut through the Yeovil Sands. The Yeo occupies a gorge-like feature which was taken advantage of by the railway. The Parrett is a more juvenile river. Near its source at North Perrott, the river is a most natural water course, thickly coated with alders and willows and with most of its flood plain remaining as traditional grazing pasture.*

The South Somerset District Council study have been assessed, graded and mapped both landscape character and visual sensitivities. A landscape's capacity to accommodate built development will be the direct converse of the overall sensitivity judgement unless specific landscape values or development constraints are significant enough to reduce capacity one grade lower. The resultant capacity plan for Martock can be seen below:



The resultant plan indicates the study area divides into 5 broad categorisations of landscape capacity to accommodate built development, graded high; moderate-high; medium; moderate-low; and low, coloured red; orange; yellow; green and blue respectively. As the aim of this study was to identify land that has the capacity to be developed without too adverse an impact upon the landscape resource, it follows that those areas categorised as high and moderate-high capacity, and in a credible relationship with the town, should be investigated as potential development sites.

Three potential areas for development were identified on the landscape capacity plan being;

- i) land to either side of the disused rail-line NW of the town, by Martock trading estate;
- ii) land to the immediate west edge of Martock's residential area, laying between the primary school and the Coat road, and;
- iii) land to the east of Martock (part of the key site allocation within the 1998 Deposit Draft SSLP).

### **South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028**

The Local Plan Policy EQ2 aims to ensure that development contributes to social, economic and environmental sustainability and makes a positive difference to people's lives to help to provide homes, jobs, and better opportunities for everyone. At the same time, it aims to protect and enhance the natural environment, and conserve the countryside and open spaces that are important to everyone.

#### **POLICY EQ2: GENERAL DEVELOPMENT**

Development will be designed to achieve a high quality, which promotes South Somerset's local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the district.

Development proposals, extensions and alterations to existing buildings, structures and places will be considered against:

Sustainable construction principles;

Creation of quality places;

#### **Conserving and enhancing the landscape character of the area;**

Reinforcing local distinctiveness and respect local context;

Creating safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety;

Having regard to South Somerset District Council's published Development Management advice and guidance; and

Making efficient use of land whilst having regard to:

Housing demand and need;

Infrastructure and service availability;

Accessibility;

#### **Local area character;**

Site specific considerations

Innovative designs delivering low energy usage and/or wastage will be encouraged. Development must not risk the integrity of internationally, nationally or locally designated wildlife and landscape sites. Development proposals should protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and new dwellings should provide acceptable residential amenity space in accordance with Policy HW1.

The Local Plan Green Infrastructure is the mosaic of natural landscape features, spaces and corridors that lie within and between developed areas. They are essential elements of the character and appearance of an area and contribute positively to cultural heritage, the health and well-being of the local community and the general quality of life.

#### **POLICY EQ5: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Council will promote the provision of Green Infrastructure throughout the district, based upon the enhancement of existing areas including public open space, accessible woodland, and river corridors, and by ensuring that development provides open spaces and green corridor links between new and existing green spaces.

Development proposals should provide and/or maintain a network of connected and multifunctional open spaces that, where appropriate, meet the following requirements:

Create new habitats and connects existing wildlife areas to enrich biodiversity and promote ecological coherence;

Provide and/or maintain an accessible network of green spaces and improve recreational opportunities, including environmental education, local food production and support physical health and mental wellbeing;

Ensure that all children and young people have reasonable access to a range of play and leisure opportunities;

Provide and/or maintain opportunities for enhanced, attractive walking and cycling routes linking urban areas and the wider countryside;

Enhance and/or maintain the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape;

Contribute to and/or maintain local identity and sense of place;

Increase the district's tree cover;

Help mitigate the consequences of climate change (sustainable drainage systems, shade etc.); and

Alleviate current and future potential visitor and recreation pressure/disturbance to internationally designated conservation areas.

Existing Green Infrastructure will be protected against any adverse impact of development proposals. If loss of existing green infrastructure assets is unavoidable in order to accommodate necessary development, appropriate mitigation for the loss will be required. Development should include green infrastructure of an appropriate type, standard and size and be designated at least to meet Natural England 'Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard' (ANGSt) or otherwise appropriately contribute to improving access to natural greenspace such that the overall aims are met.

## **Biodiversity and Geo-diversity**

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

114. *Local planning authorities should:*

- *set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure;*

117. *To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:*

- *plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries;*
- *identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation;*
- *promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan;*
- *aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests; and*
- *where Nature Improvement Areas are identified in Local Plans, consider specifying the types of development that may be appropriate in these Areas.*

### **National Planning Practice Guidance**

Guidance > Natural Environment > Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure

008. *Local and neighbourhood plans and planning decisions have the potential to affect biodiversity or geodiversity outside as well as inside designated areas of importance for biodiversity or geodiversity. Local planning authorities and neighbourhood planning bodies should therefore seek opportunities to work collaboratively with other partners, including Local Nature Partnerships, to develop and deliver a strategic approach to protecting and improving the natural environment based on local priorities and evidence. Equally, they should consider the opportunities that individual development proposals may provide to enhance biodiversity and contribute to wildlife and habitat connectivity in the wider area.*

*In considering how development can affect biodiversity, and how biodiversity benefits could be delivered through the planning system, it is useful to consider:*

- *the policies and commitments in Biodiversity 2020;*

- *the contents of any existing biodiversity strategies covering the relevant local or neighbourhood plan area and any local biodiversity action plans;*
- *the potential effects of a development on the habitats or species on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 section 41 list (in Biodiversity 2020)*
- *whether an ecological survey is appropriate;*
- *the factors listed in guidance on local ecological networks that supports National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 117.*

*The statutory obligations in regard to international and national designated sites of importance for biodiversity must also be considered.*

*O17. Biodiversity maintenance and enhancements through the planning system have the potential to make a significant contribution to the achievement of Biodiversity 2020 targets.*

*Biodiversity enhancement in and around development should be led by a local understanding of ecological networks, and should seek to include:*

- *habitat restoration, re-creation and expansion;*
- *improved links between existing sites;*
- *buffering of existing important sites;*
- *new biodiversity features within development; and*
- *securing management for long term enhancement.*

The NPPG explains the value of ecological networks and what evidence should be taken into account in identifying and mapping them.

*Paragraph 009 - The components of an ecological network are explained at section 2.12 of the Natural Environment White Paper<sup>10</sup>.*

- *Relevant evidence in identifying and mapping local ecological networks includes:*
- *the broad geological, geomorphological and bio-geographical character of the area, creating its main landscapes types;*
- *key natural systems and processes within the area, including fluvial and coastal;*
- *the location and extent of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites;*
- *the distribution of protected and priority habitats and species;*
- *areas of irreplaceable natural habitat, such as ancient woodland or limestone pavement, the significance of which may be derived from habitat age, uniqueness, species diversity and/or the impossibilities of re-creation;*
- *habitats where specific land management practices are required for their conservation;*
- *main landscape features which, due to their linear or continuous nature, are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchanges of plants and animals, including any potential for new habitat corridors to link any isolated sites that hold nature conservation value, and therefore improve species dispersal;*
- *areas with potential for habitat enhancement or restoration, including those necessary to help biodiversity adapt to climate change or which could assist with the habitats shifts and species migrations arising from climate change;*
- *an audit of green space within built areas and where new development is proposed;*
- *information on the biodiversity and geodiversity value of previously developed sites and the opportunities for incorporating this in developments; and*
- *areas of geological value which would benefit from enhancement and management.*
- *Local Nature Partnerships can be a useful source of information for existing ecological networks.*

*Paragraph 13 - Information about ecosystems services is in Biodiversity 2020, A strategy for England's biodiversity and ecosystems services. An introductory guide to valuing ecosystems services has also been*

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/228842/8082.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228842/8082.pdf)

*published by Defra along with a practice guide, which could, where appropriate, inform plan-making and decision-taking on planning applications. The National Pollinator Strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England is a ten year plan to protect pollinating insects which support our food production and the diversity of our environment.*

## **Wild Somerset - The Somerset Biodiversity Strategy 2008 – 2018**

Objective 2: Sustainable development through the land use planning system.

Green Infrastructure is the biodiversity equivalent of the national grid - made up of an interlinked network of natural green spaces stretching across the entire county and beyond. The bedrock of the network should be the conservation and management of the remaining wildlife sites, with extensive habitat restoration and creation increasing the connections between them.

There is scope to deliver improvements at every scale, from installing green roofs on individual buildings, to neighbourhood nature reserves, to habitat restoration across entire landscapes.

For biodiversity, the effect will be to strengthen existing plant and animal populations and build resilience to unavoidable climate change - through enabling species to increase their chances of survival by moving more easily through the landscape. For people, green infrastructure should provide for multiple uses, such as recreation and cultural experience and other vital ecosystem services.

Objective 3: Increase in wildlife-friendly farming, forestry and sustainable rural enterprises.

Objective 4: Secure the future of all statutory and non-statutory wildlife sites

Objective 5: Implement landscape-scale biodiversity conservation.

Objective 6: To collect and maintain biodiversity information and ensure its effective use.

Objective 7: Develop the links between business and the environment.

Objective 8: Enable community engagement with the natural environment and biodiversity conservation

Objective 9: Make the most of the biodiversity value of wetlands.

Objective 10: Sustainable coastal and marine habitat management.

Objective 11: Achieve successful partnership working, increase the amount of funding available for conservation work and ensure best value.

## **South Somerset Local Biodiversity Action Plan**

South Somerset enjoys a high quality natural environment. Maintaining this quality is very important to residents and visitors and has been shown to be a core attraction for business moving to the area. An indication of the variety and biodiversity interest of the District is given by the number of designated sites. There are three National Nature Reserves within the District, (Hardington Moor, Barrington Hill and part of the Somerset Levels and Moors, which is also a European Special Protection Area), 39 nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest and nearly 600 Local Wildlife Sites.

A wide range of habitats is represented, from flower-rich limestone grassland to acid heathland; wet fen and grazing marshes rich in invertebrate and bird life to hay meadows; bluebell woods to parkland with veteran trees supporting rare insects and lichens. These reflect the varied landscape and topography, which is in turn underlain by a variety of geological formations from clays to greensands and limestones. In terms of species, South Somerset is thought to hold some 20% more rare or threatened species than its size would predict, indicating its species richness.

Following extensive scientific review and wide consultation, the Local Biodiversity Action Plan identifies six habitats and one group of species as priorities for conservation action in South Somerset. They are:

- Calcareous and neutral grassland
- Heathland
- Purple moor-grass and rush pasture
- Water and wetlands
- Woodland

- Native wildflowers of arable fields (arable weeds)

Each has its own Action Plan, approved in 2008, which sets out actions and sets targets.

### South Somerset Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026

Strategic Priority 31: South Somerset Together partners are exemplars in protecting and enhancing the natural environment

- Sponsor the delivery of the South Somerset Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2008-2013)

Strategic Priority 32: Promote sensitive land management approaches across South Somerset by 2010 and sub-regionally by 2020

- Showcase good practice of community involvement, such as the promotion of 'Rights of Way' conservation schemes, horticulture and community gardens and "wild places" for biodiversity;
- Actively encourage projects that link environmental work with wider goals, such as improving community cohesion by including excluded teenagers, those with mental health problems, ethnic minorities, those from economically deprived backgrounds, etc;
- Ensure soil quality is preserved even in small individual and neighbourhood gardens and allotments through information from advice organisations including the Soil Association;
- Make sure that increasing tourism and recreational activities in the countryside and river/waterways has the minimum impact on the environment and wildlife;
- Enhance biodiversity by promoting the creation of woodlands, wetland reserves and other habitat.

### South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028

The Local Plan includes a broad policy that complements the countywide Wild Somerset' Strategy, that covers the whole area of Somerset and describes how the partnership will work together and involve local communities and other agencies in activities to protect and enhance wildlife.

#### **POLICY EQ4: BIODIVERSITY**

All proposals for development, including those which would affect sites of regional and local biodiversity, nationally and internationally protected sites and sites of geological interest, will:

Protect the biodiversity value of land and buildings and minimise fragmentation of habitats and promote coherent ecological networks;

Maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats;

Incorporate beneficial biodiversity conservation features where appropriate;

Protect and assist recovery of identified priority species; and

Ensure that Habitat Features, Priority Habitats and Geological Features that are used by bats and other wildlife are protected and that the design including proposals for lighting does not cause severance or is a barrier to movement.

Where there is a reasonable likelihood of the presence of protected and priority species development design should be informed by, and applications should be accompanied by, a survey and impact assessment assessing their presence. If present, a sequential approach to the design of the proposal should be taken that aims first to avoid harm, then to lessen the impact, and lastly makes compensatory provision for their needs.

Development will not be allowed to proceed unless it can be demonstrated that it will not result in any adverse impact on the integrity of national and international wildlife and landscape designations, including features outside the site boundaries that ecologically support the conservation of the designated site.

South Somerset has only 5% coverage of woodland, which is significantly below the County average of 9%. Traditional old orchards and veteran trees are important features of the region providing good habitats for wildlife. The Local Plan has a policy aimed at preventing loss. There should be no net losses of woodland or forests due to development.

## **POLICY EQ6: WOODLAND AND FORESTS**

South Somerset District Council will support the implementation of the South West Woodland and Forestry Framework, ensuring the environmental, social and economic value and character of the district's trees, woods and forests are protected and enhanced in a sustainable way. Woodland areas, including ancient and semi-natural woodland should be maintained at least at 2005 levels and expanded where possible to provide a buffer to core areas of woodland.

The loss of ancient woodland as well as ancient or veteran trees should be protected against loss wherever possible. Where secondary woodland is unavoidably lost through development it should be replaced with appropriate new woodland on at least the same scale

## **Flood Risk**

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

*100. Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Local Plans should be supported by Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and develop policies to manage flood risk from all sources, taking account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management bodies, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards. Local Plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid where possible flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change, by:*

- *applying the Sequential Test;*
- *if necessary, applying the Exception Test;*
- *safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management;*
- *using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding; and*
- *where climate change is expected to increase flood risk so that some existing development may not be sustainable in the long-term, seeking opportunities to facilitate the relocation of development, including housing, to more sustainable locations.*

### **National Planning Practice Guidance**

Guidance > Natural Environment > Flood Risk and Coastal Change

*061. The overall approach in paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework applies to neighbourhood planning.*

*In summary, the qualifying bodies involved in neighbourhood planning should:*

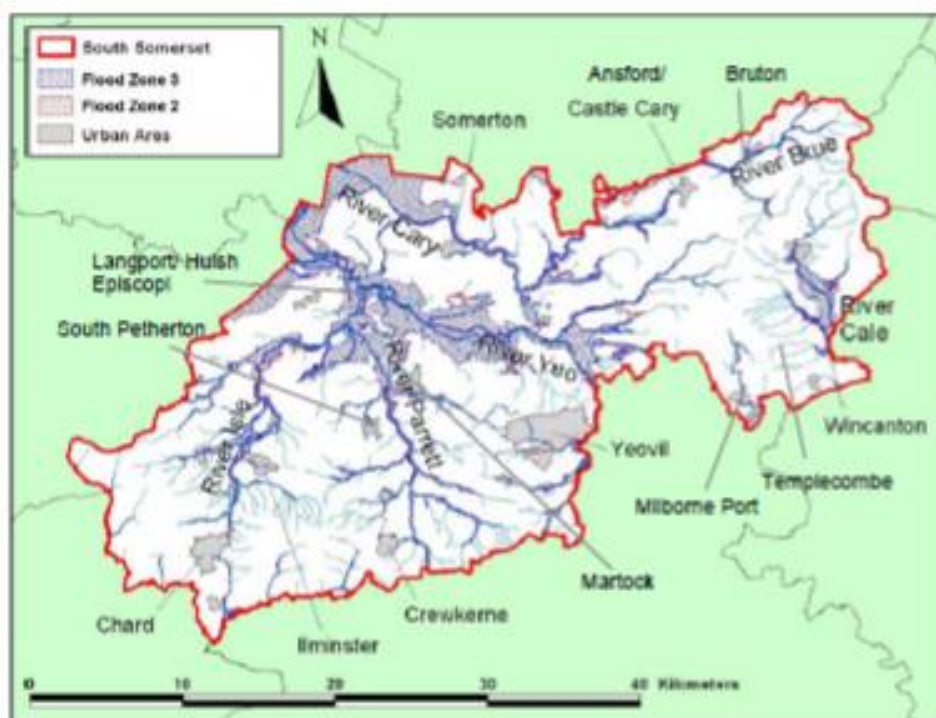
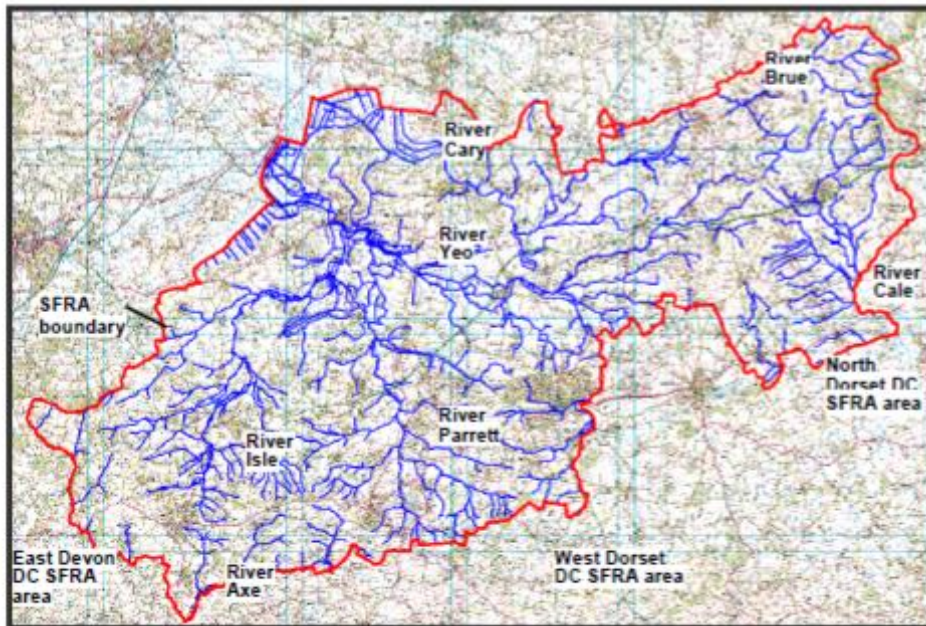
- *seek to ensure neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development/community right to build orders are informed by an appropriate assessment of flood risk;*
- *ensure policies steer development to areas of lower flood risk as far as possible;*
- *ensure that any development in an area at risk of flooding would be safe, for its lifetime taking account of climate change impacts;*
- *be able to demonstrate how flood risk to and from the plan area/ development site(s) will be managed, so that flood risk will not be increased overall, and that opportunities to reduce flood risk, for example, through the use of sustainable drainage systems, are included in the plan/order.*

*Local planning authorities should have in mind these aims in providing advice or assistance to qualifying bodies involved in neighbourhood planning. Further information on what information and advice should be made available is here [para 062].*

*062. Local planning authorities' Strategic Flood Risk Assessments should be the primary source of flood risk information in considering whether particular neighbourhood planning areas may be appropriate for development. Other important sources include the interactive maps of flood risk available on the Environment Agency's web site. Local planning authorities should make available to qualifying bodies any reports or information relating to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and share any other information relevant to flood risk (such as the application of the Sequential and Exception Tests to the Local Plan).*

Along with other statutory agencies, the Environment Agency has published advice on neighbourhood planning. Anyone preparing a neighbourhood plan or order may also find it helpful to consult the lead local flood authority for the area.

### South Somerset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2008



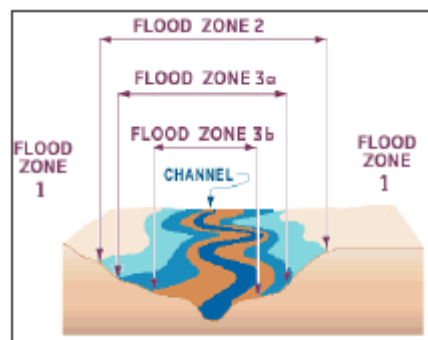
The South Somerset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of 2008 still influences the decision-making process. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment looks at flood risk at a strategic level on a local planning authority scale. It is the responsibility of South Somerset District Council, as they are responsible for allocating land for development, to demonstrate that the flood risk to and from development will be acceptably safe throughout the lifetime of the proposed development, taking account of climate change. The SFRA is prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency and other stakeholders to determine flood risk across the area.

The SFRA provides an evidence base to inform the preparation of Local Development Documents. In addition, the SFRA allows South Somerset District Council to:

- Apply the PPS25 Sequential Test on a consistent and auditable basis, using a sound evidence base.
- Prepare appropriate policies for the management of flood risk;
- Inform the sustainability appraisal so that flood risk is taken account of, when considering options and in the preparation of strategic land use policies;
- Identify the level of detail required for site-specific Flood Risk Assessments;
- Determine the acceptability of flood risk in relation to emergency planning capability.

The assessment categorises land according to flood risk as set out below.

- Flood Zone 1 – All areas that are not considered to be at risk of fluvial flooding. Whilst fluvial flooding is not a concern in these areas, the risk of flooding from other sources, such as surface water, groundwater, sewers and artificial sources (reservoirs) may still be an issue.
- Flood Zone 2 – Shows areas at risk of flooding in an extreme fluvial flood event. This zone shows those areas with a risk of flooding between a 0.1% and 1% Annual Exceedence Probability (AEP). Annual Exceedence Probability is the likelihood that a particular flow will be exceeded in a particular year.
- Flood Zone 3a – This represents the area that is part of Flood Zone 3, but outside Flood Zone 3b (Functional Floodplain). This zone identifies the areas at risk from a 1% AEP fluvial flood event or a 0.5% AEP flood event caused by flooding from the sea.
- Flood Zone 3b (Functional Floodplain) – The functional floodplain shows areas of land which are frequently flooded. For all areas it has been necessary to make conservative assumptions about the extent of the functional floodplain in the absence of historical flood outlines and detailed models. As such, the functional floodplain has been assumed to be equivalent to Flood Zone 3a, unless there is evidence to the contrary e.g. west of Ilminster.



Flood Zone classification

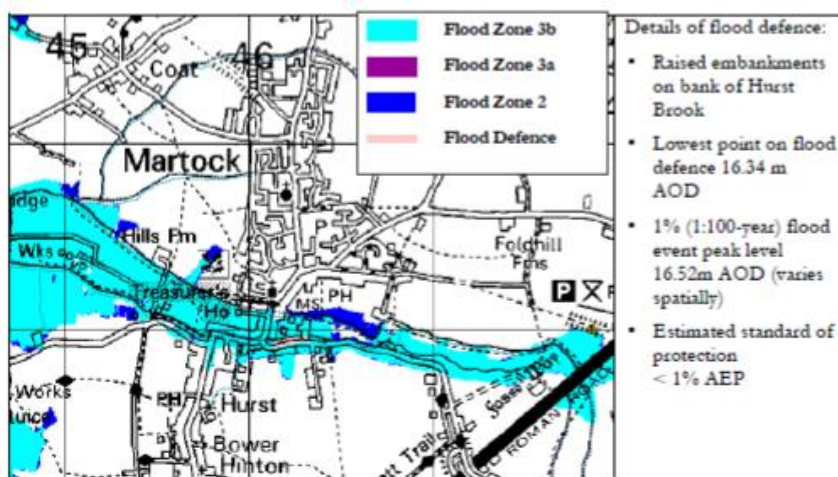


Figure 7.2 Flood defences at Martock

#### Potential effect of flood defence failure (residual risk)

The focus of this assessment is the flood defences in close proximity to the potential growth areas. With any flood defence, there is the residual risk that the defence fails, as a result of either overtopping and/or a breach. Should such an event occur it may result in rapid inundation of the local community behind the flood defence, and may pose a risk to life.

The flood defences generally provide a Standard of Protection below the 1 in 100-year flood event (1% AEP) and therefore the Flood Zone maps (based on modelling that assumes all flood risk are areas undefended) indicate the potential effect of flood defence failure.

If the Exception Test needs to be applied to specific site allocations behind flood defences, then Level 2

SFRA would be appropriate at this location to provide information on the flood hazards (flood depth, velocity, speed of onset of flooding, etc)

### **South Somerset Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026**

Strategic Priority 33: Assess the risks and opportunities in South Somerset that arise as a result of Climate Change

- A continuous, robust approach to policy development that takes into account the need to mitigate and/or adapt to Climate Change;
- Make sure the latest Climate Change adaptation measures, based on Government guidelines and National and International examples of good practice are used to good effect in the district;
- Monitoring the effects of Climate Change on the landscape, wildlife habitats and species, etc;
- Ensure the effect of Climate Change on people, the built environment including heritage, the natural environment, the economy, finance, education and all aspects of life, is minimised.

### **South Somerset Local Plan 2013-2031**

The Local Plan has a cover-all policy that addresses the development-related issues related to climate change. It is based on the following set of targets:

- Reduction in South Somerset per capita CO2 emissions
- 100% of new homes present CSH level 4 or above pre-assessment certificate where one is required, or make a detailed and credible case that this is not feasible or viable
- 100% of new homes present CSH level 5 or above pre-assessment certificate where one is required, or make a detailed and credible case that this is not feasible or viable
- 100% of new non-domestic buildings present pre-assessment certificate where one is required of BREEAM “excellent”, or make a detailed and credible case that this is not feasible or viable
- Annual 1% increase in the proportion of the district’s electricity consumption met by renewable electricity generation located in South Somerset
- No planning permissions should be granted where an Environment Agency objection cannot be overcome
- Incorporation of sustainable drainage systems in new developments (described in documents supporting the application)
- 100% of applications apply sustainable drainage systems unless there is a technical reason why it is not appropriate

#### **POLICY EQ1: ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IN SOUTH SOMERSET**

The Council will support proposals for new development where they have demonstrated how climate change mitigation and adaptation will be delivered, through inclusion of the following measures (as appropriate).

New development will ensure that carbon dioxide emissions are minimised through energy efficiency measures, renewable and low carbon energy, and where necessary Allowable Solutions; The following sustainable construction standards will be required, unless it is proven not to be feasible or viable:

- o Code for Sustainable Homes level 4 from 2013 (or as amended by future Government policy, regulations and/or legislation);
- o Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 from 2016 (or as amended by future Government policy, regulations and/or legislation);
- o BREEAM rating of ‘excellent’ for non-domestic buildings.

Development of renewable and low carbon energy generation will be encouraged and permitted, providing there are no significant adverse impacts upon residential and visual amenity, landscape character, designated heritage assets, and biodiversity. The presence of several airfields in South Somerset will mean the impacts of wind turbines upon electromagnetic interference and aviation radar will be a particular consideration; Developers must demonstrate that proposed wind turbines do not pose a risk to bat populations, and will not pose a barrier risk to migratory bird species, in particular to birds moving from key sites such as the Severn Estuary;

Development will be directed away from medium and high flood risk areas through using South Somerset’s

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as the basis for applying the Sequential Test. The area of search to which the Sequential Test will apply will be South Somerset wide, unless adequately justified otherwise in relation to the circumstances of the proposal;

Where appropriate, the Exception Test can be applied if this is consistent with wider sustainability objectives; Development should reduce and manage the impact of flood risk by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems, and through appropriate layout, design, and choice of materials;

Climate change should be considered in the design of new development, incorporating measures such as solar orientation, maximising natural shade and cooling, water efficiency and flood resilience;

Susceptibility to climate change should be taken into account on all proposals to develop sites with biodiversity interest.

A similar cover-all policy is set for pollution control.

#### **POLICY EQ7: POLLUTION CONTROL**

Development that, on its own or cumulatively, would result in air, light, noise, water quality or other environmental pollution or harm to amenity, health or safety will only be permitted if the potential adverse effects would be mitigated to an acceptable level by other environmental controls, or by measures included in the proposals. This may be achieved by the imposition of planning conditions or through a planning obligation.

New development should not exacerbate air quality problems in existing and potential AQMA's. This should include consideration of the potential impacts of new developments and increased traffic levels on internationally designated nature conservation sites, and adopt mitigation measures to address these impacts.

### **Agriculture**

**Grade 1 - excellent quality agricultural land**

Land with no or very minor limitations to agricultural use. A very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown and commonly includes top fruit, soft fruit, salad crops and winter harvested vegetables. Yields are high and less variable than on land of lower quality.

**Grade 2 - very good quality agricultural land**

Land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting. A wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can usually be grown but on some land in the grade there may be reduced flexibility due to difficulties with the production of the more demanding crops such as winter harvested vegetables and arable root crops. The level of yield is generally high but may be lower or more variable than Grade 1.

**Grade 3 - good to moderate quality agricultural land**

Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. Where more demanding crops are grown, yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2.

**Subgrade 3a - good quality agricultural land**

Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops, especially cereals, or moderate yields of a wide range of crops including cereals, grass, oilseed rape, potatoes, sugar beet and the less demanding horticultural crops.

**Subgrade 3b - moderate quality agricultural land**

Land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year.

**Grade 4 - poor quality agricultural land**

Land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (e.g. cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. In moist climates, yields of grass may be moderate to high but there may be difficulties in utilisation. The grade also includes very droughty arable land.

**Grade 5 - very poor quality agricultural land**

Land with very severe limitations which restrict use to permanent pasture or rough grazing, except for occasional pioneer forage crops.

The Local Plan does recognise that certain types of development are necessary. For instance, by its nature equestrian development requires a countryside location, but the cumulative impact of development can have an adverse impact on the rural character of the area.

#### **POLICY EQ8: EQUINE DEVELOPMENT**

Horse related facilities and equestrian enterprises in the countryside will be permitted provided:

New stables/field shelters closely relate to existing settlements or groups of buildings and should not interfere with the amenities of the adjoining residents;

Their design, scale, siting and materials respect the landscape character of the locality;

Development will not be allowed to proceed unless it can be demonstrated that it will not result in any adverse impact to the integrity of national and international wildlife and landscape designations, including features outside the sites boundaries that ecologically support the conservation objectives of designated sites;

Any proposal for equestrian development including apparatus, jumps, menages, schooling areas and field sub division should respect or enhance the characteristic pattern and features of the surrounding landscape.

Proposals for larger scale private or commercial enterprises should not be unacceptably harmful to highway safety. This should be demonstrated by means of a traffic impact assessment.

The Local Plan supports a viable rural economy and its diversification. The policies that relate to development in the countryside aim to ensure that it should be of a scale that is appropriate to the surrounding area and not harmful to the essential character of the countryside location. Farm diversification is permitted. Housing for agricultural workers is permitted.

#### **POLICY EP5: FARM DIVERSIFICATION**

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

The character, scale and type of proposal is compatible with its location and landscape setting;

A development will not be allowed to proceed unless it can be demonstrated that it will not result in any adverse impacts to the integrity of Natura 2000 sites and other national and international wildlife sites and landscape designations;

They form part of a comprehensive farm diversification scheme and are operated as part of a viable farm holding and contribute to making the holding viable;

Appropriately located existing buildings should be re-used where possible; and

Where new or replacement buildings are required, the proposal is in scale with the surroundings and well related to any existing buildings on the site.

#### **POLICY HG9: HOUSING FOR AGRICULTURAL AND RELATED WORKERS**

A development proposal in the countryside to meet the accommodation needs of a full- time worker in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, equestrian activities or other business where a rural location is essential should demonstrate that:

There is a clearly established existing functional need;

The enterprise is economically viable;

Provision on-site (or in the immediate vicinity) is necessary for the operation of the business;

No suitable accommodation exists (or could be made available) in established buildings on the site or in the immediate vicinity;

It does not involve replacing a dwelling disposed of recently as general market housing;

The dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the operational needs of the business;

The siting and landscaping of the new dwelling minimises the impact upon the local landscape character and visual amenity of the countryside and ensures no adverse impact upon the integrity of nationally and internationally designated sites, such as AONB.

Where a new dwelling is permitted, this will be the subject of a condition ensuring the occupation will be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working in the locality in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, equestrian activities or other rural business (or a surviving partner of such a person, and any resident dependents).

**POLICY HG10: REMOVAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND OTHER OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS**

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

That there is no longer a continued need for the property on the holding or for the business;

There is no long term need for a dwelling with restricted occupancy to serve local need in the locality;

The property has been marketed locally for an appropriate period (minimum 18 months) at an appropriate price and evidence of marketing is demonstrated

## Built Environment and Heritage

### National Planning Policy Framework

Regarding **Design Matters**, Section 7 focuses on policy which seeks to ensure good design. Paragraph 56 of the NPPF states the Government's intention for the built environment to be required to have good design. *"The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people."*<sup>11</sup>

The paragraph which applies most directly to neighbourhood plans is the following:

*"Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:*

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development*
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit*
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks*
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation*
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion*
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping"*<sup>12</sup>

The NPPF is also clear that design requirements should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative, nor impose particular architectural styles or tastes. However, it is appropriate to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

The NPPF also states the following.

*"Applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Proposals that can demonstrate this in developing the design of the new development should be looked on more favourably."*<sup>13</sup>

The NPPF also has policy relating to advertisements the need for their control to be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation.

Regarding the **historic environment**, Section 12 focuses on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Most of the policy in the NPPF requires specific actions of local planning authorities, although by implication and through reference to planning decisions, much of its content also applies to neighbourhood plans. A number of important sections are reproduced below.

*"Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment... including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them*

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<sup>11</sup> Paragraph 56, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Paragraph 58, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Paragraph 66, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place”<sup>14</sup>

“When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.”<sup>15</sup>

“In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness”<sup>16</sup>

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.”<sup>17</sup>

## National Planning Practice Guidance

The National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>18</sup>, which amplifies the policies in the NPPF, has a section on design. It sets out why good design is important and focuses on answering the following questions:

- What planning objectives can good design help achieve?
- What is a well-designed place?
- How should buildings and the spaces between them be considered?
- Which planning processes and tools can we use to help achieve good design?
- Are there design issues that relate to particular types of development?

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<sup>14</sup> Paragraph 126, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Paragraph 127, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

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<sup>16</sup> Paragraph 131, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

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<sup>17</sup> Paragraph 132, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> See <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/rural-housing/how-should-local-authorities-support-sustainable-rural-communities/>

The NPPG also has a section on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Two of the sections focus on plan making and decision taking. The former includes a section on ‘How should heritage issues be addressed in neighbourhood plans?’ It states:

*“Where it is relevant, neighbourhood plans need to include enough information about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the Local Plan into action at a neighbourhood scale.*

*Where it is relevant, designated heritage assets within the plan area should be clearly identified at the start of the plan-making process so they can be appropriately taken into account. In addition, and where relevant, neighbourhood plans need to include enough information about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions.*

*The local planning authority heritage advisers should be able to advise on local heritage issues that should be considered when preparing a neighbourhood plan. The local Historic environment record and any local list will be important sources of information on non-designated heritage assets.”<sup>19</sup>*

### **English Heritage - Good Practice Advice on Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment**

Historic England’s website states that *“Including heritage matters in a neighbourhood plan will help make sure that potential new development is properly integrated with what is already there and does not result in the loss of local distinctiveness. Addressing how best to integrate new development into an existing place can encourage people to be innovative.*

*Taking into account what is special about a place often demonstrates that off-the-shelf design and construction might not be appropriate. It encourages sensitive development of historic buildings and places that can invigorate an area, stimulating investment, entrepreneurship, tourism and employment.”<sup>20</sup>* It provides guidance on heritage and neighbourhood planning which is worth referencing here. The guidance note sets out the benefits of including the historic environment in neighbourhood planning and what information about local heritage should go into a neighbourhood plan.

*“Any policies you include in the Neighbourhood Plan should be based on appropriate evidence, and information on how a place has developed and evolved is often a key element. This could include a description of the historic character of the area, as well as identifying any listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, registered parks and battlefields or local heritage assets. An assessment of the condition and vulnerability of the local historic environment will also help in identifying the need for any future management action. When deciding on how much information to provide, as a guiding principle, we recommend including as much as is necessary to guide future decisions that may affect the character and heritage of a place. Our guidance on “Knowing Your Place”<sup>21</sup> may help you in deciding what information to include in your Plan.”<sup>22</sup>*

The guidance also sets out where information on the historic environment can be found. It also provides guidance on how a community can undertake a local ‘place check’ to help identify the design and heritage issues of importance.<sup>23</sup>

The guidance sets out the sorts of evidence and policies which could be included in a neighbourhood plan. *“It is for the local community to decide on the scope and content of a Neighbourhood Plan. However, there could be benefits in setting out a specific historic environment section within the Plan, drawing on the evidence from*

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<sup>19</sup> Paragraph 007, National Planning Practice Guidance, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2013  
<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/plan-making-historic-environment/>

<sup>20</sup> See <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/government-planning-policy/national-planning-policy-framework/>

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/knowning-your-place/>

<sup>22</sup> pp.3-4, English Heritage Good Practice Advice on Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment, English Heritage, 2014,  
<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/planning/neighbourhood-planning-information-aug14.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> See <http://www.placecheck.info/>

Place check, other sources of information on the historic environment, and/or more detailed assessments where they have been carried out. These could include:

- An analysis of the historic character of the area highlighting its contribution to the development and appearance of the place
- The identification of any listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, and battlefields or local heritage assets, and a discussion of the contribution they make to local character
- The environmental issues which the Plan seeks to address
- Opportunities to repair, conserve or bring heritage assets back into use, especially those that are at risk
- Policies to manage the settings of heritage assets or important views
- Policies to promote locally distinctive development in terms of scale and materials
- Particular historic environment considerations to be taken into account when seeking to develop specific sites
- Opportunities for investment into the historic environment alongside delivery of new development, for example through Neighbourhood Level Community Infrastructure Levy spending, Planning Contributions and other sources of funding

The Neighbourhood Plan could also identify any buildings and spaces that are worthy of protection through national designation or local designation, the possibility of new or revised conservation areas together with conservation area appraisals, the need for a local heritage list or local buildings at risk survey.<sup>24</sup>

## Heritage at Risk Register

There are some elements which warrant extra protection through the planning system. Since 1882, when the first Act protecting ancient monuments and archaeological remains was passed, Government has been developing the designation system. Listing is now applied to about half a million buildings ranging from palaces to street lamps.

English Heritage, as the government's expert adviser, is responsible for making recommendations – but it is still the Secretary of State at the Department for Culture Media and Sport who makes the decisions on whether a site is designated. Understanding and appreciation develop constantly, which makes keeping the designation base up-to-date a never-ending challenge. While responding to threat-driven cases, we also seek to work strategically. Recent developments have seen a greater striving for openness and transparency in the process of designating a site, and better communication of what makes something special.

Conservation areas are designated locally by local planning authorities. They are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

## Listed Buildings

A listed building is a building (or structure) that has been designated as being of 'special architectural or historic interest'. The older and rarer a building is, the more likely it is to be listed. Buildings less than 30 years old are listed only if they are of outstanding quality and under threat. Listed buildings are graded I, II\* and II. Grade I and II\* are particularly important buildings of outstanding interest; together they amount to 8% of all listed buildings. The remaining 92% are of special interest and are listed grade II.

Entries on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest may comprise a number of separate buildings. Formal residential terraces are the most obvious example. Entries on this Register reflect how buildings are grouped and recorded on the statutory list. Structures can occasionally be both listed as buildings and scheduled as monuments.

Criteria for inclusion on the 'at Risk Register'

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<sup>24</sup> pp.7-8, English Heritage Good Practice Advice on Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment, English Heritage, 2014

Buildings (not in use as a public place of worship) considered for inclusion on the Register must be listed grade I or II\*, (or grade II in London) or be a structural scheduled monument. Buildings are assessed for inclusion on the basis of condition and, where applicable, occupancy (or use). The condition of buildings on the Register ranges from 'very bad' to 'poor', 'fair' and (occasionally) 'good'. The Register also includes buildings that are vulnerable to becoming at risk because they are empty, under-used or face redundancy without a new use to secure their future. Assessing vulnerability in the case of a building in fair condition necessarily involves judgement and discretion. A few buildings on the Register are in good condition, having been repaired or mothballed, but a new use or owner is still to be secured.

Buildings are removed from the Register when they are fully repaired/consolidated, their future secured, and where appropriate, occupied or in use.

### **Conservation Areas**

South Somerset District Council has powers to declare an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance to be a Conservation Area. Such declaration introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest. Apart from a few minor exceptions, no building can be demolished without prior approval (conservation area consent) and six weeks' notice must be given if any tree is to be cut down or lopped. 33 designated Conservation Areas within South Somerset, covering the historic areas of many towns and villages. There is a requirement under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for all local authorities to review their conservation areas and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. Reviews must be carried out every five years as the character and appearance of a conservation area can change over even small periods of time.

### **South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028**

The historic environment is a valuable part of South Somerset's cultural heritage and contributes significantly to the local economy and identity of the district, adding to the quality of life and well-being of residents and visitors. Whether in the form of individual buildings, archaeological sites, historic market towns or landscapes, the conservation of this heritage and sustaining it for the benefit of future generations is an important aspect of the role the Council plays on behalf of the community and, as the local planning authority, fulfilling the Government's core planning principles. The District Council is committed to protecting and where appropriate enhancing this irreplaceable heritage.

#### **POLICY EQ3: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

Heritage assets will be conserved and where appropriate enhanced for their historic significance and important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place. Their potential to contribute towards the economy, tourism, education and local identity will be exploited.

All new development proposals relating to the historic environment will be expected to:

Safeguard or where appropriate enhance the significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness of heritage assets;

Make a positive contribution to its character through high standards of design which reflect and complement it and through the use of appropriate materials and techniques;

Ensure alterations, including those for energy efficiency and renewable energy, are balanced alongside the need to retain the integrity of the historic environment and to respect the character and performance of buildings, adopting principles of minimum intervention and reversibility

The distinct character of, the different areas, of the district is subject to Local Plan policy. All development will be expected to achieve high quality architectural and urban design standards, creating places that are attractive, durable and function well. All developments will be expected to achieve high environmental standards and levels of sustainability. All buildings should be designed to be fit for purpose, and adaptable in their use to suit changing occupier needs over time.

#### **POLICY EQ2: GENERAL DEVELOPMENT**

Development will be designed to achieve a high quality, which promotes South Somerset's local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the district.

Development proposals, extensions and alterations to existing buildings, structures and places will be considered against:

Sustainable construction principles;

Creation of quality places;

Conserving and enhancing the landscape character of the area;

Reinforcing local distinctiveness and respect local context;

Creating safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety;

Having regard to South Somerset District Council's published Development Management advice and guidance; and

Making efficient use of land whilst having regard to:

Housing demand and need;

Infrastructure and service availability;

Accessibility;

Local area character;

Site specific considerations

Innovative designs delivering low energy usage and/or wastage will be encouraged. Development must not risk the integrity of internationally, nationally or locally designated wildlife and landscape sites. Development proposals should protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and new dwellings should provide acceptable residential amenity space in accordance with Policy HW1.

Part of the challenge is to minimise the loss of countryside and damage to the rural character of much of the district. Part of the Local Plan's overall strategy to guide development towards the most sustainable locations available, which maximise social and economic benefits, minimise the loss of Greenfield sites, reduce the need to travel and make the best use of land and other resources.

#### **POLICY SS7: PHASING OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND**

The Council will encourage early development of previously developed land. A minimum target of 40% of new development should be on previously developed land and a 5-year land supply needs to pertain.

Previously developed land (PDL), often called brownfield land, is the land that was developed but is now vacant or derelict, or currently in use but with known potential for redevelopment.

#### **POLICY HG2: THE USE OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND (PDL) FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

South Somerset District Council will seek to provide a minimum of 40% of new dwellings on previously developed land over the period of the local plan. This will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report and reviewed as necessary

The replacement of small country dwellings with more grandiose houses can radically change the character of a site to one of a more suburban nature and also reduce the supply of the smaller rural dwellings. To help protect the character of South Somerset's countryside, extensions and replacements of dwellings are controlled by Local Plan policy in terms of scale and design. The erection of replacement dwellings and extensions to existing houses can individually, and cumulatively over a period of years, have an adverse impact both on the character of individual properties and the surrounding countryside.

#### **POLICY HG8: REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

The replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside will only be permitted where:

The scale of the replacement would not result in an unacceptably large increase in the height or size of the original dwelling; and

The development is compatible with and sympathetic in scale, design, materials, layout and siting to the

character and setting of adjoining buildings, and to the landscape character of the location; and  
The replacement is on a one for one basis and evidence is provided that the use of the existing dwelling has not been abandoned.

Extensions to existing dwellings in the countryside will be permitted where the extension does not result in a dwelling that is disproportionate to the scale of the original dwelling and the size and design of the extension are appropriate to the landscape character of the location.

The growth planned in the Local Plan needs to be supported by infrastructure, community facilities, and services to ensure the development of sustainable places. If infrastructure and the needs of the community are not achieved alongside growth there will be unacceptable impacts on local areas and residents and the quality of the environment will be adversely affected. The local authority is committed to ensuring that this does not happen and has successfully sought and used planning obligations to obtain the necessary resources to assist in the delivery of this vital infrastructure.

#### **POLICY SS6: INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY**

The Council will secure the provision of (or financial contributions towards) affordable housing, social, physical and environmental infrastructure and community benefits which the council considers necessary to enable the development to proceed. Proposals that form part of potentially wider sites will be assessed in terms of the capacity of the site as a whole and such requirements sought on a pro rata basis.

Planning Obligations (through S106 legal agreements) will be used to cover those matters which would otherwise result in planning permission being refused for an individual development and will be negotiated on a site by site basis.

The Council, in line with current practice within this and other Councils, will obtain payment from developers for legal and monitoring fees in association with Section 106 Agreements.

Affordable housing and infrastructure required as a result of a site specific planning obligation will normally be expected to be provided for on site where appropriate and delivered in timely manner alongside growth but may, exceptionally, be provided nearby or through financial contribution.

The types of infrastructure required will be considered on a site by site basis and may include the following, where appropriate and not otherwise funded in full or part through CIL (not exhaustive):

Affordable housing;

Renewable and low carbon energy;

Provision and enhancement of open space, sports facilities and play areas;

Providing for and improving accessibility by a variety of modes of sustainable transport;

Improvements to biodiversity assets and green infrastructure;

Road and highway improvements; and

Community facilities, including Early Years, Primary, and Secondary educational provision.

The level of developer contribution will be proportionate to the nature, scale and viability of the project having regard to the:

Scale and form of development;

Capacity of existing infrastructure; and

Potential impact of the development upon the surrounding area and its facilities.

Where viability of a scheme is contested the Council will adopt an open book approach to negotiations in line with adopted Council procedures.

A Community Infrastructure Levy will be charged throughout the District in accordance with the adopted Charging Schedule for the provision of infrastructure in the area.

The Council will work in partnership with other authorities and infrastructure providers to ensure coordination of infrastructure delivery to support growth.

## South Somerset Historic Environment Strategy

South Somerset District Council expects development proposals which affect heritage assets to have regard to legislative and policy requirements, including those set out in the Planning Act (1990), the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028), and the NPPF.

In order to provide a more comprehensive framework for considering development proposals, the Council has established overarching objectives against which all proposals for change in the historic environment will be expected to secure

Objectives:

1. Safeguard or enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings.
2. Reduce or remove risks to heritage assets.
3. Secure the optimum viable use of heritage assets in support of their long-term conservation.
4. Be of an appropriate design for their context and make a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment.
5. Where possible better reveal the significance of heritage assets and
6. make a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities.

Actions

- *The Council will require proposals which may affect the significance of a heritage asset, or its setting, to be supported by a statement of heritage significance sufficient to be able to understand that significance and assess the degree of impact that would result. The Council expects the applicant to have consulted the Historic Environment Record (HER) and to provide a summary of this information in the statement.*
- *The statement should feature as part of the technical evidence submitted as part of a planning or listed building consent application.*
- *The Council requires proposals for change that would result in harm or loss to a heritage asset to be clearly and convincingly justified.*
- *The Council will expect applications that constitute enabling development to conform to the requirements set out in the Historic England Guidance – Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places.*
- *The Council will support the use and development of the Somerset Historic Environment Record. Where possible and appropriate, evidence about the historic environment gathered as part of the development management process will be included in the Historic Environment Record in order to make it accessible to the public.*
- *The Council will monitor the effectiveness of existing historic environment policies set out in the South Somerset Local Plan. If required, new or amended policies relating to the historic environment will be included in the Early Review of the Local Plan by March 2018.*
- *The Council will expect the physical preservation in situ of nationally important archaeological assets (whether Scheduled or not) together with the protection of their settings.*
- *The Council will seek to protect listed buildings and their settings from development proposals which would have an adverse effect on their character and significance and will continue to provide specialist advice to ensure that their special interest is taken into account in any proposed changes.*
- *The Council will keep details of the implications of listing and the responsibilities of owners available on the conservation pages of the Council's website where links to both the National Heritage List for England and the Somerset Historic Environment Record will be maintained to allow the public to be able to check the status of any building or feature.*
- *The Council will continue to give owners (and potential owners) of historic buildings advice about works requiring listed building consent and on appropriate ways to carry out such works of alteration or repair without harm to their special interest. Wherever possible, owners will be referred to publications that set out Council policy and/or technical guidance.*
- *As the local planning authority, the Council expects to be consulted on proposals as directed by the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2013 and will provide a timely response to all consultations from Parochial*

*Church Councils, the Diocesan Advisory Committee(DAC) the other exempted denominations and the local authorities representative on the DAC.*

- *The Council will seek to ensure any development within the setting of a heritage asset will not result in harm to the asset or its setting.*
- *The Council will produce maps to show what it would regard as the curtilage of any listed building for decision making purposes and to provide advice upon request. In these cases the Council may require a condition survey of the listed building to identify any needs for repairs and require the necessary repairs to be paid for through proceeds from the development and secured through a legal agreement.*
- *The Council will seek to protect Registered Parks and Gardens and the Battle of Langport site, their landscape, component features and settings from development proposals which would have an adverse effect on their character and significance and will continue to provide specialist advice to ensure that their special interest is taken into account in any proposed changes. We will work with Historic England, the Somerset Gardens Trust, the Battlefields Trust and local history societies to ensure that these sites are fully understood and appropriately designated.*
- *In conservation areas, the Council will seek to ensure all new development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area and its setting and proposals will create buildings and places which will make a positive contribution to the character of area.*
- *Development will be required to employ materials and colours that reflect those characteristic of the area and conform to the existing pattern of historic built form and historic property boundaries.*
- *There will be a general expectation that buildings that contribute positively to the character of a conservation area should be retained.*
- *Development proposals which involve the demolition of a building that is considered not to contribute to a conservation area's significance will be supported only if a detailed programme of redevelopment has been agreed.*
- *Open spaces, gaps in frontages, undeveloped areas and large gardens, views and vistas can often be important elements in the character of a conservation area. Conservation area appraisals, where they are prepared, will identify these features Where they have not been prepared the Council will endeavour to identify significant features at pre-application stage. The Council will expect the protection of these features.*
- *Proposals must demonstrate that any conservation area appraisal has been taken into account.*
- *The Council will give future priority to the review of conservation areas:*
  - *in the larger settlements where they have not been reviewed and there is no current appraisal in place;*
  - *areas where there is substantial pressure for change within or to the setting of the area; and*
  - *areas where changes since designation have led to significant boundary anomalies*
- *Such reviews will involve local residents and businesses, ward members, Parish Councils and local amenity societies wherever possible to ensure that the special interest described in the appraisals reflects the views of local residents. The future "Action Plan" will help define who and how any future Conservation Area reviews will take place.*
- *The Council will consider the introduction of further Article 4 Directions to control otherwise permitted alterations whenever either a conservation area is reviewed and appraised or a new designation is made.*
- *The Council will consider the introduction of further Article 4 Directions to control otherwise permitted alterations whenever either a conservation area is reviewed and appraised or a new designation is made.*
- *The Council will consider new Conservation Area designations or extensions to existing areas where areas possess demonstrable quality and special architectural or historic character and where there is local community commitment to its designation and preservation. The future "Action Plan" will help define who and how any new Conservation Areas will be defined.*
- *The Council will seek to ensure any development in an AONB will conserve the area's cultural heritage and is in conformity with that area's management and historic environment plans. There will be a*

*general expectation that buildings that contribute positively to the significance of an AONB should be retained.*

- The Council will continue to maintain an up-to-date Register of Listed Buildings at Risk in South Somerset and will act corporately to secure their repair and reuse. It will monitor them and, where appropriate, intervene to see they are protected or repaired with the aim of reducing the number of buildings at risk and ensuring that all listed buildings in the district, including those in its ownership, are adequately maintained.*
- We will work with Historic England to maintain the National Heritage at Risk register and participate in actions to resolve cases in South Somerset.*
- The Council will continue to support Somerset Building Preservation Trust by appointing elected members to its management board, through funding and officer support where possible in order to encourage its active work for the historic buildings of Somerset.*
- The Council will assess development proposals on design quality and the contribution a design will make to local character and context or street scene and its impact in the wider landscape or any key views. Design statements in support of development proposals for historic sites and/or areas should identify how the design responds to context issues.*
- The Council will expect development proposals which affect locally important archaeological remains to take account of the relative importance of the remains and ensure that arrangements are made to record archaeological remains impacted by the development.*
- The Council will expect development proposals to take account of the potential for archaeological remains present in Areas of High Archaeological Potential or elsewhere where there is reason to believe that important remains exist, and that appropriate assessment and necessary protection will be afforded to any archaeological remains identified.*
- The Council will support development proposals that would affect a local heritage asset or its setting, where it is demonstrated that the development proposal will not harm the historic, architectural, cultural, or landscape interest. Such interest and heritage significance must be described and evaluated and any change proposed should conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the heritage significance of the asset.*
- Article 4 Directions to impose planning controls over alteration and demolition may be applied in the interest of protection for such assets.*
- Development proposals will be expected to take into account any direct or indirect impact that may arise to the historic landscape assets and justify any harm or loss, balancing harm or loss against the significance of the asset.*
- The Council will continue to carefully evaluate hedgerows notified for removal and seek the retention of those considered to be of significance to the historic landscape or its ecology.*
- The Council will seek to preserve trees of value and significance to historic areas making Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate.*

## **Infrastructure**

### **Somerset Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2015/16 (update)**

The latest IDP is framed around the delivery of the Local Plan targets including:

Martock – 230 total dwellings required from 2006-2028 (77 already completed by 2015)  
3.19ha. of employment land from 2006-2028 (1.45ha. provided by 2015)

The key strategic issues identified in the IDP for Martock are:

Flood risk and Drainage - In Martock, there are flooding issues where the River Parrett travels through the settlement. There are localised problems, exacerbated by small culverted watercourses which are prone to blockage or are undersized – the culverted watercourses that run through the settlement are described by Somerset County Council as being at capacity. There have been property flooding incidents at Foldhill Lane and Long Load Road, and flooding on the highway at various locations but particularly at Stoke Road. The flood alleviation scheme at Martock includes a 300m flood embankment, throttle structures, widened channel, and

walls. If development is proposed on the eastern edge of Martock then existing culverts should be upgraded, funded through developer contributions. Flood defences may need to be raised in the future, depending on the location and floor levels of future development. A minor scheme to improve the inlet to Foldhill Lane culvert is being carried out by SCC.

Utilities - Short term issues associated with a lack of electricity capacity have been identified in Martock, South Petherton, and Stoke-sub-Hamdon. These can be resolved through local reinforcement, paid for by developers.

Open Space and Community Facilities - New housing will generate a need for additional open space and outdoor play space, sports, community and cultural facilities; although the timing of this is not fundamental to delivering development (Priority 2 and 3). Equipped play areas at Bruton, Ilchester, Martock and Stoke-sub-Hamdon are particular priorities (Priority 2). Delivery of this infrastructure will be dependent on securing contributions from development (where viable), along with obtaining other funding streams.

The IDP shows no concern with regard to Education and Healthcare.

## Housing

### National Planning Policy Framework

It is important to understand the framework provided to ensure that local planning authorities establish policies and practices that will ensure provision of adequate numbers of appropriate new dwellings in their district. Paragraph 184 recognises that neighbourhood plans also have a role to play.

*“Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.”<sup>25</sup>*

Section 6 of the NPPF focuses on policy which seeks to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes. Much of the policy is directed towards provisions local planning authorities should make through their plans and the decision making process for planning applications. It includes requirements to boost the supply of housing through an understanding of market and affordable housing needs in the housing market area, identify a five-year housing land supply of deliverable sites, identify developable sites or broad locations for growth for a further 10 years, understand the expected rate of housing delivery and set out appropriate housing densities for the locality.

Importantly, paragraph 49 states that *“Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.”<sup>26</sup>*

Paragraphs 54 and 55 relate to housing in rural areas. They state that:

*“In rural areas, exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Local planning authorities should in particular consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.”<sup>27</sup>*

*“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:*

- *the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; or*
- *where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or*
- *where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting; or*
- *the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling. Such a design should:*
  - *be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;*
  - *reflect the highest standards in architecture;*

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<sup>25</sup> Paragraph 184, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Paragraph 49, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Paragraph 54, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

- significantly enhance its immediate setting; and,
- be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.”<sup>28</sup>

Another key principle of the NPPF relates strongly to housing development, “*Requiring Good Design*”. Paragraph 58 encourages neighbourhood plans to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development (not just housing).

*“Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:*

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.”<sup>29</sup>*

### **National Planning Practice Guidance**

The National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>30</sup>, which amplifies the policies in the NPPF, has a section on how local authorities should support sustainable rural housing and communities and is worth noting the guidance it offers on housing provision:

- *“It is important to recognise the particular issues facing rural areas in terms of housing supply and affordability, and the role of housing in supporting the broader sustainability of villages and smaller settlements.*
- *Assessing housing need and allocating sites should be considered at a strategic level and through the Local Plan and/or neighbourhood plan process. However, all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas – and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless their use can be supported by robust evidence.”*

It is particularly important to note the line “...allocating sites should be considered at a strategic level and through the Local Plan and/or neighbourhood plan process.” in the context of considering whether or not a neighbourhood plan should allocate housing sites for development or not. (The term ‘allocation’ refers to development sites which are set out on a map with boundaries to the site and which define exactly where development will take place. Allocating sites does *not* mean that no other development will come forward on other sites.) As already set out above, a neighbourhood plan cannot determine or deal with housing sites deemed by the local authority as being ‘strategic’ in nature, usually large scale developments, but which can also be sites deemed to be of critical importance to the delivery of the overall scale of housing identified in the Local Plan. Smaller, non-strategic (or ‘local’), sites can be allocated in the neighbourhood plan, although they do not have to be.

<sup>28</sup> Paragraph 55, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG), paragraph 58, page 15

<sup>30</sup> See <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/rural-housing/how-should-local-authorities-support-sustainable-rural-communities/>

Clearly, local consultation will play a role in determining the approach to housing sites. However, there are also other factors which are worth identifying in order to frame a debate on whether or not the neighbourhood plan allocates housing sites.

So, in summary, there are a number of options to deal with housing delivery:

- A. Allow the local authority to lead the process of allocation, but also introduce local criteria based policies in the neighbourhood plan to guide design, layout, density, steer away from inappropriate locations for development, etc.; or
- B. Allocate housing sites through the neighbourhood plan, and also introduce local criteria based policies in the neighbourhood plan to guide design, layout, density, steer away from inappropriate locations for development, etc.; or
- C. leave delivery solely to the market, but also introduce local criteria based policies in the neighbourhood plan to guide design, layout, density, steer away from inappropriate locations for development, etc

### **South Somerset Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026**

Strategic Priority 25: Make sure there is enough land supply for housing development to better meet the needs of the district

- Use robust Section 106 Agreements to secure the maximum affordable housing from development schemes and monitor/enforce compliance by the developer;
- Develop mechanisms that allow land to be compulsorily made available for potential development and/or once planning permission is granted it is developed after an agreed period of time;
- Incorporate the findings of the Affordable Housing Site Identification Study (2008);
- Encourage information sharing between partners, specifically via mapping (GIS) to identify land and opportunities for development;
- Programmes providing dispersed housing types, tenures and prices across the district matching the needs of people;
- Incorporate lifetime housing standards that give flexible accommodation that can meet the needs of a changing population

Strategic Priority 26: Increase the number of affordable homes in the district to meet identified needs

- Make sure there are a range of accommodation choices that meet the needs of older people, young people, women and families needing refuge, single people, families, homeless people and people of all ages needing supported or specific accommodation;
- Provide enough night shelters and high quality temporary accommodation;
- Work to prevent homelessness;
- Work to reduce under occupation in all housing especially in social housing;
- Promote tested alternative procurement models including Community Land Trusts;
- Increase the availability, quality standard and affordability of privately rented accommodation, including Houses in Multiple Occupation by working with and supporting landlords through grants, loans and other incentive schemes;
- Promote housing schemes that contribute towards balanced and cohesive communities through good design and layout throughout the district;
- Incorporate the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for South Somerset (2008);
- Ensure housing schemes in rural communities have access to local employment, services and facilities by encouraging “parish clusters”.

### **South Somerset Rural Housing Action Plan 2016-18**

Where the need for a survey is identified, the District Council will continue to support Parish Councils and local groups such as Community Land Trusts. Support will be forthcoming either from the relevant Area Development Team or the Strategic Housing Unit or both, depending on the local circumstances on a case by case basis. Where appropriate Parish Councils and other local groups may also seek independent help from the Wessex Community Land Trust Project.

### **South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028**

The growth figure in the Local Plan has been calculated in light of the Council's overall economic-led strategy and the jobs target. The approach seeks to ensure the district meets its objective to deliver sustainable growth that balances jobs and homes, whilst increasing the amount of people who both live and work within South Somerset.

#### **POLICY SS4: DISTRICT-WIDE HOUSING PROVISION**

Provision will be made for sufficient development to meet an overall district requirement of at least 15,950 dwellings in the plan period April 2006 – March 2028 inclusive.

The majority of housing being directed towards Yeovil as the principal town in the district, followed by a reduced level at each of the Market Towns, and a then a smaller allocation for each of the Rural Centres, A total housing requirement is allocated for the Rural Settlements, with decisions on how much, and where to be determined in conjunction with the aims of Policy SS2. For Martock, it means 124 additional dwellings are required. This is based on the following calculation:

Local Plan 2006-2028 total housing requirement of 230 dwellings minus, existing housing commitments 2006-2012 (at April 2012) i.e. 106 dwellings = 124 dwellings.

#### **POLICY SS5: DELIVERING NEW HOUSING GROWTH**

Housing requirement will make provision for at least 15,950 dwellings in the plan period 2006 – 2028. At least 7,441 dwellings will be located within the Urban Framework of Yeovil and via two Sustainable Urban Extensions.

This provision will include development and redevelopment within development areas, greenfield development identified within this Plan or to come forward through conversions of existing buildings, residential mobile homes and buildings elsewhere in accordance with the policy on development in rural settlements.

Prior to the adoption of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, a permissive approach will be taken when considering housing proposals in Yeovil (via the SUEs), and 'directions of growth' at the Market Towns.

The overall scale of growth (set out below) and the wider policy framework will be key considerations in taking this approach, with the emphasis upon maintaining the established settlement hierarchy and ensuring sustainable levels of growth for all settlements. The same key considerations should also apply when considering housing proposals adjacent to the development area at Crewkerne, Wincanton and the Rural Centres.

The distribution of development across the settlement hierarchy will be in line with .....

In order to maximise affordable housing delivery there is an objective to include all residential development in the affordable housing contribution process, thereby capturing a significant proportion of developments that would otherwise be exempt, without threatening viability or reducing housing delivery.

### **POLICY HG3: PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Planning permission for the erection of new dwellings will be permitted provided that, where it is viable to do so, the scheme provides affordable housing in accordance with the following:

Settlement	Affordable housing target	Threshold	OR Hectares (irrespective of number of dwellings)
Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions Yeovil Primary Market Towns Local Market Towns Rural Centres Rural Settlements*	35%	6 dwellings	0.2ha

- All affordable housing contributions shall enable the provision of the number of affordable dwellings without the need for public subsidy;
  - Affordable housing will be provided on the application site except where there are good planning grounds that indicate that the provision of affordable housing would not be appropriate on that site. It is preferable in such circumstances that a financial or other contribution should be made towards the provision of affordable housing on another site in the settlement or nearby settlement;
  - Where the above level of affordable housing provision renders a site unviable a reduction of provision will be accepted on the basis of an 'open book' submission in accordance with Policy SS6 and the Planning Obligations Protocol 2006.
- \* Threshold only applies to those developments considered to be acceptable by nature of their sustainability as permitted by Policy SS2.

### **POLICY HG4: PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING - SITES OF 1-5 DWELLINGS**

Small sites below the threshold for a full affordable housing contribution will be expected, where it is viable to do so, to pay a commuted sum equivalent to a percentage of affordable housing provision on site as set out below. This will be over and above the relevant standard CIL contribution.

Settlement	Percentage equivalent of affordable housing provision on site	Number of dwellings
Yeovil, Primary Market Towns and Local Market Towns	5%	1-5
Rural Centres and Rural Settlements	10%	1-5

As well as making provision for affordable housing it is also important that the right mix of market housing is provided based on current and future demographic trends, the needs of the market and the community. The over-arching principle of creating sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities will particularly be applied when negotiating housing mix on large site applications (10 dwellings or more).

### **POLICY HG5: ACHIEVING A MIX OF MARKET HOUSING**

A range of market housing types and sizes should be provided across the district on large sites that can reasonably meet the market housing needs of the residents of South Somerset. The mix should contribute to the provision of sustainable and balanced communities.

On small sites, housing types and sizes should be provided that, taken in the context of existing surrounding dwellings, contribute to that provision of sustainable, balanced communities.

Evidence shows that the age of the population in the south west is going to increase significantly and preparing the district to cope with this change will be challenging. In order to help address this need, specialist housing options will be required, this could include care homes, Extra Care housing and Continuing Care Retirement Communities. Opportunities to adapt the existing housing stock should be maximised.

#### **POLICY HG6: CARE HOMES AND SPECIALIST ACCOMMODATION**

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

Advice on the design and layout of Gypsy and Traveller sites can be found in Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide. The guidance explains that although there is not one ideal site size, past experience of residents and managers suggest that a maximum of 15 pitches provides a comfortable environment within which to live and is easy to manage. Smaller sites of 3 and 4 pitches can also work well, particularly when designed to accommodate an extended family. Experience in South Somerset suggests that applicants favour small family owned sites. The Council is seeking to establish such small pitch sites on any publicly provided sites within the district. There may be instances where it is appropriate to have a mixed residential and employment use, this is particularly the case for Showmen's yards.

#### **POLICY HG7: GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE**

The accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be met by ensuring that they are accommodated in sustainable locations where essential services are available.

Site allocations will be made to accommodate at least:

23 Residential pitches (from 2013 onwards);

10 Transit pitches; and

6 Travelling Showpeople plots.

The following criteria will guide the location of sites:

Significantly contaminated land should be avoided;

Development should not result in an adverse impact on internationally and nationally recognised designations (for example: Natura 2000 sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty);

The development should not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area;

The site is reasonably well related to schools and other community facilities;

The health and safety of occupants and visitors will not be at risk through unsafe access to sites, noise pollution or unacceptable flood risk;

There should be adequate space for on-site parking, servicing and turning of vehicles;

The option of mixed residential and business use on sites will be considered where appropriate.

The number of pitches provided should be appropriate to the size of the site and availability of infrastructure, services and facilities in accordance with the general principles set out in the settlement hierarchy.

## South Somerset Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The SHMA identifies the profile for new market housing in South Somerset taking into account supply and demand for each type and size. The profile is based on examining the difference between the supply and demand for homes. It suggests that in terms of housing type in South Somerset there is a greater requirement for detached and semi-detached houses than for terraced housing and flats. In terms of size there is a much smaller requirement for 1 bedroom properties compared with the other house sizes with three quarters of the requirement being for 2 and 3 bedroom properties.

Key findings include:

- There are an estimated 13,717 households in South Somerset with one or more members in an identified support needs group, this represents 19.4% of all households. These households were most likely to state a requirement for help maintaining their home.
- Nearly 30% of households (29.6%) contain only older people. These are almost all comprised of one or two persons, however a significant proportion reside in accommodation with three or more bedrooms. Within the social rented sector there are over 400 older person households living in properties with at least three bedrooms indicating an opportunity to reduce under-occupation.
- There are 16,826 households containing families with children in South Somerset. Lone parent families are more likely to be living in private and social rented accommodation and are less likely to be under-occupying their property.
- The survey estimates that 13,717 households in South Somerset are headed by a key worker. Key workers are defined as anyone identifying themselves as working in public administration, defence, education or health and social work through the questionnaire. Key worker households are more likely than other households in employment to be able to afford market housing.
- Recent first-time buyers have an average income of £38,064 (36.1% higher than the average for the District) and are headed by someone with an average age of 31.
- 64.1% of households are classified as rural (non-urban). Rural households have higher average levels of income and savings than urban households.

## Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment HELAA

Summary of Key Findings

- A total of 309 sites have been identified and assessed.
- 181 sites have been identified as suitable available and achievable.
- 130 housing sites with the potential to provide 8,618 dwellings have been identified as suitable, available and achievable.
- 28 mixed use sites with the potential to provide 2,833 dwellings and 193,896 sq m of floorspace for economic development have been identified as suitable, available and achievable
- 23 sites for economic development only with the potential to provide 260,181sq m of floorspace have been identified as suitable, available and achievable.
- The assessment identifies sites with the potential to deliver a total of 4,297 dwellings (0-5 years).
- The assessment identifies sites with the potential to deliver a total of 4,321 dwellings (6-10 and 11 plus years).

The HELAA identifies opportunities for housing and economic development on sites, which are considered to be deliverable, developable and available. It does not allocate sites to be developed. The allocation of sites for future housing or economic development will be identified through the preparation of Local Plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans.

The identification of potential sites within the HELAA does not imply that planning permission would be granted if an application were to be submitted. The HELAA is a high-level assessment. All planning applications will

continue to be considered against the appropriate policies within the adopted Development Plan<sup>1</sup>, having regard to any other material considerations.

The inclusion of potential sites within the HELAA does not preclude them from being considered for other uses. The HELAA includes sites suitable to accommodate five dwellings or more, or economic development of 0.25ha (or 500m<sup>2</sup> of floor space) and above. The exclusion of sites from the HELAA which fall below this threshold does not preclude the possibility of a planning application being submitted and later granted. Suitable sites (particularly small sites) for residential or economic development that have not been identified in the HELAA will continue to come forward through the usual planning process, including neighbourhood planning.

The HELAA does not prevent other alternative sites coming forward for development.

### **South Somerset Monitoring Report 2016**

The Annual Monitoring Report represents an opportunity to provide an update on important information across a series of issues.

Summary of key housing issues:

- Between 2001 and 2011 South Somerset has delivered more dwellings than any other local authority in the county (7,263 dwellings).
- Most of the main settlements saw an approximate 10% increase in the number of dwellings over the period 2001 to 2011.
- The number of empty homes in the district remains consistent and relatively static, although recent good work has reduced the overall number since 2012 / 2013.
- South Somerset has seen a steady rise in the number of households in the district between 2001 and 2011.
- Latest projections for future household numbers show that South Somerset will need to provide for the second highest amount in Somerset, after Sedgemoor.
- The affordability of an average house in South Somerset is around 7.5 times the average income.
- Affordable housing need in South Somerset remains high. With approximately 25% of all need in the county arising from the district.

### **Delivering New Housing (Policy SS5)**

Summary of key issues:

- South Somerset's housing database has been overhauled to ensure monitoring data is robust.
- Completions recorded from 2006 to 2016 show a total of 6,252 new homes built across the district.
- This figure is behind target. At this point in the Local Plan, the Council should have achieved 7,250 new homes.
- Progress in meeting the target figure for new homes in individual settlements is mixed.
- Although development in each settlement is not judged on an annual basis, because development sites are planned to come forward throughout the lifetime of the plan, it is a useful indicator of progress to compare delivery against an annualised average.
- The annualised breakdown shows that eight out of the 14 settlements where a target figure is specified are behind schedule in delivering the number of homes that ought to have been achieved by 2016.

### **Realising Affordable Housing (Policy HG3 and Policy HG4)**

Summary of key issues:

- The Council's objectives set out in Policy HG3 and HG4 have been rendered out of date by a major change in Government policy on the delivery of affordable housing.
- The Government's new policy is that no affordable housing obligation should be placed on development schemes of 10 dwellings or less.
- Policy HG3 and Policy HG4 will be replaced through the Council's Early Review of the Local Plan.

- The 35% requirement for affordable housing on all sites which are above the Government's threshold remains.
- The affordable housing programme managed by the Strategic Housing team monitors delivery of all affordable tenure forms delivered over each financial year.
- Total delivery of affordable housing in South Somerset since 2006/2007 is 2,281 gross; and 1,553 net.

#### Delivery Against Policy HG7 (Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show-people)

##### Summary of key issues:

- South Somerset's record of delivery on Gypsy and Traveller sites is very good.
- 35 residential pitches have been delivered since 2006.
- Future provision is still required across all types of pitches.
- Sites for transit and travelling show-people are urgently required to meet Local Plan objectives.

#### **South Somerset Private Sector Housing Strategy 2015-19**

The Private Sector Housing Strategy is a commitment by South Somerset District Council to work positively with the private rented housing sector to:

- secure access to affordable housing by the homeless and low-income households, particularly the young. To support the landlord and tenant relationship.
- improve the condition of older property occupied by vulnerable people, ensuring that the decent homes standard is met in most properties.
- seek to create sustainable homes and communities by addressing fuel poverty, reducing CO2 emissions and promoting independent living.
- reduce the number of long-term empty homes
- maintain and improve the quality of our intelligence in order to ensure that our interventions are effective.
- ensure standards in houses in multiple occupation and other private rented accommodation are met and maintained by amongst other things tackling 'rogue landlords'

Action 1 - We will develop a GP referral scheme by January 2016 that allows GPs to refer those patients living in poor housing affecting their health to the council.

Action 2 - We will continue working with the Housing Options Team and the NLA to organise two Landlords forums each year.

Action 3 - We will continue to promote the WRT Home Loan scheme to fund the improvement of substandard housing. We will aim to facilitate 25 loans a year.

Action 4 - We will work to reduce the number on non-decent homes standard in the district using all the resources available.

Action 5 - We will seek to maximise the use of all available funds in the form of grants and loans to support our private sector housing strategy.

Action 6 - We will work to bring as many empty properties back into occupation as possible with a target of 25 per year.

Action 7 - We will prioritise high risk premises and inspect 60 HMOs a year. We will increase the supply of shared rented accommodation such as HMO's to respond to Welfare Benefit cuts.

Action 8 - We will licence all HMOs that require licensing in the district. We will actively seek out and ensure all such properties are found.

Action 9 - We will respond to all complaints from the public within five working days and take appropriate action to deal with all unsatisfactory housing found.

Action 10 - We will inspect all properties where occupants have complained of poor housing and ensure that all property used to rehouse homeless people is up to standard. We will inspect all properties of people who apply for Gold Band status on the grounds of poor housing and ensure they are brought up to standard to reduce demand for alternative housing.

Action 11 - We will ensure that all applications for disabled facilities grants are determined within six months. We will ensure that all initial visits to disabled clients are made within five working days of referral from Occupational Therapists dept.

Action12 - We will make maximum use of the Home Aid service and refer all eligible clients to the service within five working days.

Action13 - We will work with partners to improve the energy efficiency of as many properties as possible with a commitment to improve at least 100 properties a year

Action 14 - We will support the work of the Yeovil One Team by being an active member of the Team and will help to develop work plans and policy.

Action 15 - We will continue to deal with all serious cases of hoarding that arise. We will respond to any referrals within five working days

Action 16 - We will ensure that the rights of all ethnic groups associated with housing are protected by us as far as it is practicable to do so.

Action 17 - We will undertake periodic inspections of all mobile home parks to ensure they comply with licensing conditions and will deal with any tenancy issues that arise.

### **Self-build and Custom Housebuilding**

New rules came into effect on 31 October 2016 which amended the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 and implemented Chapter 2 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 which sets out provisions to support self-build and custom housebuilding.

These place a duty on relevant authorities to make land available to meet the demand on their self-build and custom housebuilding registers. The legislation requires 'relevant authorities' to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority's area and to have regard to that register when carrying out their functions. Unless exempt, they also have a legal duty to grant sufficient 'development permissions' to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area.

### **National Planning Practice Guidance**

The NPPG says self-build and custom housebuilding registers provide valuable information on the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in an authority's area and should form a key part of an authority's evidence base of demand for this type of housing. Local planning authorities should use the demand data from the registers in their area, supported as necessary by additional data from secondary sources when preparing their Strategic Housing Market Assessment to understand and consider future need for this type of housing in their area. Relevant bodies with plan-making functions should use their evidence on demand for this form of housing from the registers that relate to their area in developing their Local Plan and associated documents. This includes when preparing their local housing strategies. When developing plans to regenerate their area, local authorities should have regard to registers that relate to their areas and consider the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding.

## Leisure and Recreation

### National Planning Policy Framework

*“Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:*

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss*

*Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.*

*Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.”<sup>31</sup>*

### National Planning Practice Guidance

National Planning Practice Guidance, published by DCLG, provides supplementary guidance to the NPPF. A number of recent and relevant revisions to the guidance have been published. These include guidance on health and wellbeing and Local Green Space:

#### Open Space

*“Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space. Open space, which includes all open space of public value, can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby; have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure, as well as being an important part of the landscape and setting of built development, and an important component in the achievement of sustainable development.*

*It is for local planning authorities to assess the need for open space and opportunities for new provision in their areas. In carrying out this work, they should have regard to the duty to cooperate where open space serves a wider area.”<sup>32</sup>*

#### Local Green Space

*“Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.*

*Local Green Space designation is for use in Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans. These plans can identify on a map (‘designate’) green areas for special protection. Anyone who wants an area to be designated as Local Green Space should contact the local planning authority about the contents of its local plan or get involved in neighbourhood planning.*

*Designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. In particular, plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the Local Green Space designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making.*

*Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented.*

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<sup>31</sup> Page 18, paras 74-76, National Planning Policy Framework, HM Government, 2012

<sup>32</sup> Planning Practice Guidance Para:001 Ref: 37-001-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

*Local Green Spaces may be designated where those spaces are demonstrably special to the local community, whether in a village or in a neighbourhood in a town or city.*

*The green area will need to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion. For example, green areas could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis.*

*Provided land can meet the criteria at paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework there is no lower size limit for a Local Green Space.*

*Land designated as Local Green Space may potentially also be nominated for listing by the local authority as an Asset of Community Value. Listing gives community interest groups an opportunity to bid if the owner wants to dispose of the land.”<sup>33</sup>*

National agencies have been considering the implications of the new NPPF and setting out their own national policies and guidance which often makes reference to the role of neighbourhood plans.

**Sport England** believes that it is important that the Neighbourhood Plan reflects national policy for sport as set out in the NPPF document with particular reference to Pars 73 and 74 to ensure proposals comply with national planning policy. It is also important to be aware of Sport England’s role in protecting playing fields and the presumption against the loss of playing fields. *“As set out in our national guide, playing fields are one of the most important resources for sport in England. They provide the valuable space required to maintain and enhance opportunities for people to participate both in formal team sports and in other more informal activities. Along with sporting benefits, good quality, accessible playing fields also contribute to maintaining active and healthy communities and securing wider reaching benefits.*

*Planning applications affecting playing field land*

*Since 1996 Sport England has been a statutory consultee on all planning applications for development affecting playing field land. This requires local planning authorities to consult Sport England when a relevant planning application is received. Sport England’s comments should then be taking into account prior to them making any decision whether or not to grant planning permission. This requirement is set out by the government in Statutory Instrument 2010/2184.*

*Depending on the nature of the application Sport England will inform the relevant sport’s national governing body of the proposals and seek their comments prior to submitting a response to the local planning authority.*

*It is Sport England’s policy to oppose any planning application which will result in the loss of playing field land unless it is satisfied that the application meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.*

*If a local planning authority is minded to grant planning permission for an application despite receiving an objection from Sport England then the requirements of Circular 02/2009 may apply. This instructs local planning authorities to notify the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government of an application if the land is owned by a local authority or used by an educational establishment (currently or within the five years prior to receiving the application), and where Sport England has objected due to a current or resulting deficiency of playing field land in the area or because the replacement to be provided is inadequate.*

*Playing Pitch Strategies*

*Sport England believes that the best way to protect and improve the provision of playing fields is for a local area to have an up-to-date and adopted Playing Pitch Strategy in place. The starting point for assessing the vast majority of planning applications affecting playing field land should therefore be to look at how the proposals fit with the local Playing Pitch Strategy. The following link provides guidance on developing a Playing Pitch Strategy and Sport England’s knowledge of the coverage of such strategies across the country.”<sup>34</sup>*

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<sup>33</sup> Planning Practice Guidance Para:022 Ref: 37-022-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

<sup>34</sup> A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England – Planning Policy Statement, Sport England, 2014

*“Sport England works with Local Authorities to ensure Local Plan policy is underpinned by robust and up to date assessments and strategies for indoor and outdoor sports delivery. If local authorities have prepared a Playing Pitch Strategy or other indoor/outdoor sports strategy it will be important that the Neighbourhood Plan reflects the recommendations set out in that document and that any local investment opportunities, such as the Community Infrastructure Levy, are utilised to support the delivery of those recommendations. If new sports facilities are being proposed, Sport England recommend you ensure such facilities are fit for purpose and designed in accordance with our design guidance notes.”<sup>35</sup>*

## **South Somerset Open Space Strategy 2011-15**

### **Park or Public Garden**

Definition: Sites with a formally recognised layout that have been designed primarily to provide aesthetic enjoyment. This can include sweeping landscapes of the historic estates, to ornamental gardens that include flower beds and features such as statues.

Primary purpose: To offer well-equipped and maintained areas that are accessible to all, designed for informal recreational use and providing opportunities for community events

Proposed provision standard: 0.19 ha per 1000 population

Rationale: Parks and public gardens are perceived as being of particular importance to our residents and are used regularly by 13% of visitors (2nd highest type of open space used) and were seen as the 3rd most wanted type of open space. In the absence of any national standards a local setting should be set balancing the gathered evidence base with the results of the user consultation. In order to address the aspirations of our users and to minimize local deficiencies a standard set marginally above the current level of provision will enable us to achieve this.

In reality this provision standard will enable us to provide two further minimum size formal parks or public gardens within the district.

### **Informal Recreational Open Space**

Definition: Sites where the emphasis is on providing informal activities for children, young people and adults. Some of these spaces may contain a range of features and additional facilities.

Primary purpose: To provide opportunities for people to access open space close to home and to enhance the appearance of the local environment.

Proposed provision standard: 0.55 ha per 1000 population

Rationale:

Residents were split in their opinions about informal recreational open space. Whilst the results of the resident survey identified that informal recreational open space was the 6th most used type of open space (with 8% of our users visiting), it also showed that other open space types were more valued by the users. However, our own findings identify that informal recreational open space is of significant value, as quite often these areas fulfil our main or only source for open space contributions within the built environment and they generally have multiple functions. There is a national standard currently available for ‘informal’ open space provision through the ‘Fields in trust’ Ref 5 standard, and we have chosen to adopt this in order to reflect the importance of informal recreational open space.

### **Green Corridor**

Definition: These are generally well-planted linear corridors of land that are designed to allow the passage of people and wildlife from one point to another. They often link larger areas of open space or enable traffic free access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Primary purpose: Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife movement across urban areas.

Proposed provision standard: To be determined by future work on the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Rationale:

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<sup>35</sup> Correspondence with Planning Administrator, Sport England, May 2014

Green corridors were seen as one of the most valued types of open space that we provide with 18% of respondents wishing to see more provided and it was also the third most visited type of open space. There are currently no national standards that can be applied to the provision of green corridors. The development of a proposed standard will be prepared as part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy

### **Natural Open Spaces**

**Definition:** Sites providing people with access to, and experience of nature. It includes woodland, country parks, nature reserves and wetland areas. Areas are designed and managed using native species, to aid, conserve, and develop wildlife biodiversity. They are owned by various agencies and trusts and our resident survey indicates that these are widely used and highly valued.

**Primary purpose:** To preserve and develop Somerset's unique wildlife habitats, whilst enabling public access to these environments and raising awareness through educational opportunities.

**Proposed provision standard (total)** 1.594 ha per 1000 population

**Rationale:**

The value placed on natural open spaces is clear, both in terms of a recreational resource and the role they play in biodiversity and conservation.

The results of the resident survey indicate that not only are they one of the most visited types of open space (31% of users) but are also the type for which the greatest demand in increase was for (43% of users).

The current national recommended standard from English Nature identifies; a 2.0ha of accessible natural open space required per 1000 people. The green nature of South Somerset means that most people have relative easy access to natural open space and the national English Nature standard would be unachievable. It is therefore suggested that we set the quantity standard at 1.0ha per 1000 in order to satisfy the aspirations of residents and to meet any local deficiencies.

### **Existing Open Space**

Using national standards as guidance the Strategy identified a series of baseline quality principles that will be applied to existing open spaces.

*We will strive to ensure that as a minimum our open spaces will:*

- *Be clean, attractive and well maintained*
- *Be welcoming and well signed with attractive entrances and exits*
- *Be safe and secure for our users*
- *Have good access routes into and around the open spaces*
- *Be managed in a sustainable manner*
- *Reflect the needs of the community*
- *Promote the conservation of wildlife and South Somerset's unique landscape*
- *Promote community involvement*

### **Open Space on New Developments**

Where a new development is required to provide areas of open space 'on-site', the Council provides the developer with advance notice of the essential characteristics required to provide an acceptable landscape scheme and open space design.

*This is provided in the documents "Landscape Design – A Guide to Good Practice" and its associated Addendum, these documents identify our expected standards and treatment for:*

- *Landscape design principles*
- *Nature conversation*
- *Ground preparation standards*
- *Detailed design standards*
- *Development within the countryside*

- Site aftercare and quality provision

MINIMUM DISTANCE STANDARDS OF NEW OPEN SPACE ARISING FROM DEVELOPMENT		
Type of open space	Proposed walking distance	Proposed driving distance
Yeovil, Market towns and Rural centres specification		
Parks and Public Gardens	15 minutes walking time or 720m in a straight line	N/A as would wish to encourage walking
Informal recreational Green Space	10 minutes walking time or 480m in a straight line	N/A as would wish to encourage walking
Natural Open Spaces	N/A as likely to be on urban fringe	10 minutes travelling time or 5.8km in a straight line
Green Corridors	These have no distance standards as they are integrated through the urban infrastructure	

### South Somerset Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation<sup>36</sup>

Typology	Standard (sq m per 1,000 population)
Local Facilities	
Equipped play space	2,000
Youth Facilities	500
Playing Pitches	14,000
Changing Rooms	Original 347.2 Updated from draft Core Strategy to 115.7
Community Halls	Rural parishes 353 Yeovil, market towns and rural centres 119
Strategic Facilities	
Theatres and Arts Centres	45
Artificial Grass Pitches	255.5
Swimming Pools	10.86
Indoor Tennis Centres	23.72
Sports Halls	46.88

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/sport-and-health/planning-for-open-space,-sport-and-recreation/>

## Somerset Major Sports Facilities Strategy 2013

The overall purpose of this strategy is to ensure that robust sports facility planning is in place at district/borough and county levels to help ensure that sports facility needs of local people are met both now and in the future.

It aims to achieve this by:

- Ensuring that needs assessments at district/borough and county levels are integrated into local authority infrastructure planning in order to attract investment through the planning system
- Attracting external investment by having a joined up and evidence based approach
- An Action Plan which combines resources against agreed priorities and objectives

### South Somerset Facilities

There are 18 sports halls within South Somerset, provided via the public, private and education sectors. The majority of these are on school sites. However, many offer very limited or no community access. Consequently, the number of halls actually available reduces from 18 to 11.

A shortfall equivalent to 11.34 courts of hall space existed in 2007. This is projected to increase to 19.44 courts by 2027. There are qualitative shortfalls at 7 of the sports halls, including all those in Yeovil, and significant deficiencies in available daytime use in Yeovil.

Proposed actions include:

#### Sports Halls:

- Develop a new community based 8 court multi-purpose competition sports hall centrally in Yeovil (2016-20)
- Develop a new facility in Ilminster (2016-20)
- Develop a new facility as part of the urban extension in Yeovil (2021-25)
- Enhance existing facilities at Huish Episcopi and CRESTA (ongoing)
- Replace existing Huish Episcopi and CRESTA provision (2012-25)
- Enhance facilities at Bucklers Mead, Preston and Westfield Schools (ongoing) plus support replacement at Bucklers Mead, Preston and Westfield Schools (2021-25)
- Enhance access and upgrade provision at Wadham School (2021-25)
- Enhance existing facilities at Yeovil College (ongoing)
- Replace the sports hall at Yeovil College (2021-25)
- Work with Augusta Westland to identify their preferred future strategy for their sports hall (2021 – 25)

#### Swimming Pools:

There are 14 swimming pools in South Somerset but the majority offer very limited or no community access. Certain swimming pools in neighbouring authorities also serve parts of South Somerset district. Consequently, the number of pools assessed reduces from 14 to 4.

Goldenstones, Crewkerne Aqua Centre and Wincanton Swimming Pools (i.e., 3 of the 4 assessed) are operating to near full capacity.

A shortfall equivalent to 636sq.m (approx. 2 community pools) existed in 2007. This is projected to increase to 943sq.m (approx. 3 community pools) by 2027.

Proposed actions include:

- Rationalise Goldenstones by developing an 8-lane competition pool and leisure pool (2016-20).
- Develop a community pool in the Langport area (2016-20)
- Enhance existing facilities at CRESTA (ongoing).
- Support replacement of the pool at CRESTA (2021-25)
- Upgrade Wincanton pool (2021-25).

#### Indoor Tennis

There are no dedicated indoor tennis courts in South Somerset. However, nearly all residents in the District live beyond the 30 minute travel time of the indoor tennis courts in Taunton. The current shortfall calculated to be 4.77 indoor courts, which is projected to grow 5.54 indoor courts by 2028.

Proposed action is to develop a new 4 court indoor tennis facility centrally in Area South (2016-20)

## Indoor Bowls

There are three indoor bowling facilities with a (collective) total of 12 rinks, all of which are well used, but only have adequate physical access. There are deficiencies in the north and the east of the district based on a 20 minute drive time; some of these areas fall within the catchment of facilities in Taunton, Frome and Street. There is an estimated shortfall of 2 rinks by 2027. No qualitative shortfalls are identified.

## South Somerset Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026

Strategic Priority 9: Reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity in all age groups

- Maintain an understanding of the lifestyle choices people of all ages make and the barriers to physical activity and healthy eating, in urban and rural areas of the district, especially in neighbourhoods and communities where health inequalities have been identified in the past;
- Encourage farmers, food growers, manufacturers and suppliers to make sure enough food is grown to satisfy • need and to help support a healthy diet;
- Raise the standard of and access to affordable sport and leisure facilities, offering a wide range of physical and cultural activities across the district, in towns, villages and rural areas;
- Offer incentives to encourage greater individual, family and neighbourhood/community participation in local physical activities, healthy cooking and eating and growing your own food in gardens and allotments;
- Ensure the design of the built environment encourages physical activity, especially by reducing the use of cars to access services and facilities.

## South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028

In calculating the amount of open space required, the type of development and make-up of individual housing schemes will need to be taken into account in order to determine likely household size. It is accepted that not all types of development generate the same demand for open space, outdoor playing space, and sport and recreational facilities, such as single bedroom accommodation, rest homes, nursing homes, sheltered accommodation, special needs housing. The provision of on-site (or contribution towards off-site) play and youth facilities, playing pitches and changing facilities, public open space and landscaped areas will require developers to agree the future management of this space with the Council. In areas of particular sensitivity, it is recognised that there is a role for open space provision in alleviating pressure on existing natural areas.

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

Where new housing development generates a need for additional open space, outdoor playing space, local and strategic sports, cultural and community facilities, provision/contributions will be made as appropriate. The need for additional open space may be required due to the proximity to sensitive (internationally-designated) conservation areas, so as to alleviate potential development-related pressure on those sites. Housing provision consisting of sheltered housing, rest and nursing homes, special needs housing will be exempt from these standards with exception of informal recreational open space.

Developments of one bedroom dwellings will not be required to provide equipped play provision and youth facilities but will be required to provide for other open space and outdoor playing space.

Dependent upon the size and layout of the development, the provision of open space, outdoor playing space, local and strategic sports, cultural and community facilities, may be required on site or may form part of a contribution towards off site provision of either new or improved facilities. In such circumstances off-site provision towards local facilities should be made in a location, which adequately services the new development and a planning obligation may be used to secure this.

Provision should be made for future maintenance to ensure the continued availability of the facilities.

Green Corridors, Public Rights of Way, Civic Spaces, Cemeteries, Private Open Space and Community Allotments are other aspects of Green Infrastructure, which need to be given full consideration.

Open space is defined as informal recreational open space, formal parks and gardens, country parks, natural

open space and woodlands.

Outdoor Playing Space is defined as playing pitches, equipped play areas and youth facilities.

Existing outdoor sports, play and youth provision is protected by the Local Plan from inappropriate future development which would result in the loss of these facilities. This includes:

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

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

### **POLICY HW3: PROTECTION OF PLAY SPACES AND YOUTH PROVISION**

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

There is a partial development of a site and the remaining site will be retained at its current provision and improved;

Alternative provision of equivalent community benefit of a similar nature which is accessible and made available locally within the same catchment;

There is a proven oversupply of equipped play areas and youth facilities, or they are not appropriately located.

## Community Wellbeing

### National Planning Policy Framework

*Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:*

- *give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools*
- *work with schools' promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted*<sup>37</sup>

*"Planning should.....take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs."*<sup>38</sup>

*Planning policies and decisions, in turn, should aim to achieve places which promote:*

- *opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity*
- *safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion*
- *safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas*<sup>39</sup>
- *"Planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities."*<sup>40</sup>

### National Planning Policy Guidance

National Planning Practice Guidance, published by DCLG, provides supplementary guidance to the NPPF. These include guidance on health and wellbeing:

#### Health & Wellbeing

*"Local planning authorities should ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision making. Public health organisations, health service organisations, commissioners and providers, and local communities should use this guidance to help them work effectively with local planning authorities in order to promote healthy communities and support appropriate health infrastructure."*<sup>41</sup>

### Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Somerset 2013 – 2018

Shared Vision for Health and Wellbeing in Somerset:

People live healthy and independent lives, supported by thriving and connected communities with timely and easy access to high-quality and efficient public services when they need them.

#### Priorities

Theme 1: People, families and communities take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

##### Action – Community action

The Health and Wellbeing Board will give greater support for community-led action to encourage healthier lifestyles.

##### Action – Healthy planning and policy

The Health and Wellbeing Board will ensure that health and wellbeing is given due consideration in planning and other policy decisions to maximise the positive impact of our environment on healthy lifestyles.

<sup>37</sup> Page 17, para 72, National Planning Policy Framework, HM Government, 2012

<sup>38</sup> Page 6, para 17, National Planning Policy Framework, HM Government, 2012

<sup>39</sup> Page 17, para 69, National Planning Policy Framework, HM Government, 2012

<sup>40</sup> Page 10, para 37, National Planning Policy Framework, HM Government, 2012

<sup>41</sup> Planning Practice Guidance Para: 001 Ref ID: 53-001-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

Action – Prevention first

The Health and Wellbeing Board will be used alongside other impact assessments, when developing new local policy, taking significant decisions on services and during commissioning processes.

Theme 2: Families and communities are thriving and resilient.

Action – Well-connected, vibrant communities

There will be a much greater focus on supporting neighbourhoods and communities to take responsibility for shaping and transforming their own lives and their local services.

Action – Improving educational attainment

The Health and Wellbeing Board will focus on continuing to improve educational attainment at GCSE and foundation level with particular emphasis given to the groups with lowest attainment.

Action – Supporting families and people with low resilience

There will be specific focus on working with the least resilient families and people in our communities and ensuring smooth access to relevant and tailored services.

Theme 3: Somerset people are able to live independently.

Action – Housing for independence

There needs to be an increased focus on the changing housing needs of the Somerset population, with particular emphasis given to widening the housing options for achieving and maintaining independent living.

Action – Support for carers

The Health and Wellbeing Board will ensure support for carers is integrated across health and social care.

Action – Joining-up of support services

Integrated health and social care will be developed across the county to support people to regain and maintain their independence for as long as possible.

## **NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group Strategy 2014-2019**

The vision: *“People in Somerset will be encouraged to stay healthy and well through a focus on:*

- *building support for people in our local communities and neighbourhoods*
- *supporting healthy lifestyle choices to be the easier choices*
- *supporting people to self-care and be actively engaged in managing their condition*

*When people need to access care or support this will be through joined up health, social care and wellbeing services. The result will be a healthier population with access to high quality care that is affordable and sustainable.”*

The Four Strategic Themes:

Theme 1: Encouraging communities and individuals to take more control of and responsibility for their own health and wellbeing

Theme 2: Developing Joined Up Person Centred Care

Theme 3: Transform the effectiveness and efficiency of urgent and acute care across all services

Theme 4: Sustain and continually improve the quality of all services

## **South Somerset Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026**

Strategic Priority 9: Reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity in all age groups

- Maintain an understanding of the lifestyle choices people of all ages make and the barriers to physical activity and healthy eating, in urban and rural areas of the district, especially in neighbourhoods and communities where health inequalities have been identified in the past;
- Encourage farmers, food growers, manufacturers and suppliers to make sure enough food is grown to satisfy • need and to help support a healthy diet;
- Raise the standard of and access to affordable sport and leisure facilities, offering a wide range of physical and cultural activities across the district, in towns, villages and rural areas;

- Offer incentives to encourage greater individual, family and neighbourhood/community participation in local physical activities, healthy cooking and eating and growing your own food in gardens and allotments;
- Ensure the design of the built environment encourages physical activity, especially by reducing the use of cars to access services and facilities.

Strategic Priority 11: Support the particular needs of the growing number of older people in the district

- Address the health and social care needs of a growing elderly population;
- Enable older people to meet their needs for lifetime homes, a healthy diet, safety, affordable warmth and financial security;
- Enable older people to work for longer, access training (including IT skills), live independently, enjoy physical and mentally stimulating activities with their own and other age groups;
- Encourage those with knowledge, skills and time to be more involved in the community and/or provide mentoring for local businesses and young people;
- Build the means of access into all services, to take account of the needs of older people;
- Talk to older people about their service needs in order to build more effective provision;
- Support community self-help initiatives with regard to the needs of older people.

### **South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028**

The Local Plan says every settlement has buildings or amenities that play a vital role in local life, such as community centres, libraries, village shops, post offices or pubs. Local life would not be the same without them, and if they closed or changed to private use, it would be a real loss to the community. Policy EP15 requires applicants submitting any proposal to redevelop an existing local amenity to an alternative use, which would not be of benefit to the community and would result in a significant or total loss of that service or facility, to either provide alternative provision or demonstrate that there are no suitable, viable alternative community uses.

The Localism Act requires local authorities to maintain a list of assets of community value which have been nominated by the local community, and when listed assets come up for sale or change of ownership, the Act gives community groups the time to develop a bid and raise the money to buy the asset when it comes on the local market.

#### **POLICY EP15: PROTECTION AND PROVISION OF LOCAL SHOPS, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

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

alternative provision of equivalent or better quality, that is accessible to that local community is available within the settlement or will be provided and made available prior to commencement of redevelopment; or there is no reasonable prospect of retention of the existing use as it is unviable as demonstrated by a viability assessment, and all reasonable efforts to secure suitable alternative business or community re-use or social enterprise have been made for a maximum of 18 months or a period agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to application submission.

## Transport and Travel

### Introduction

Transport and accessibility is not wholly the responsibility of the planning system and not always the subject of planning policies. Everyday matters such as road maintenance and control of vehicle access to certain roads, for example, are usually the responsibility of the Highways Authority, where planning permission is not usually required. Likewise, the frequency of bus services is not something over which planning policy can have much, if any, influence in rural areas. Other things such as the erection of mobile phone masts can often be the subject of permitted development rights, particularly outside of protected areas. Neighbourhood planning should explore the degree to which local policy can affect change to address issues or concerns, and adapt and improve facilities and services through the application of planning policy as development proposals are submitted.

### National Planning Policy Framework

Section 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) focuses on policy which seeks to promote sustainable transport. Paragraph 29 states that *“Transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. Smarter use of technologies can reduce the need to travel. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. However, the Government recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.”*<sup>42</sup>

Transport policy guidance also sets out the relationship between appropriate locations and scales of development and transport. *“Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.”*<sup>43</sup>

The NPPF emphasises the need for plans and decisions on development to be mindful of the importance of accessibility in relation to scale and infrastructure. *“Plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. However, this needs to take account of policies set out elsewhere in this Framework, particularly in rural areas.”*<sup>44</sup>

It also sets out criteria to apply to the practicalities that new development should accommodate: *“Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to*

- *accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies*
- *give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities*
- *create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones*
- *incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles*
- *consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport”*<sup>45</sup>

Paragraph 39 sets out the criteria to be applied when local authorities seek to set parking standards for development.

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<sup>42</sup> Paragraph 29, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Paragraph 30, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

<sup>44</sup> Paragraph 34, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

<sup>45</sup> Paragraph 35, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

- *“If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, local planning authorities should take into account:*
- *the accessibility of the development*
- *the type, mix and use of development*
- *the availability of and opportunities for public transport*
- *local car ownership levels*
- *an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles”<sup>46</sup>*

The NPPF also sets out the Government’s policy in relation to telecommunications in section 5 of the NPPF, ‘Supporting high quality communications infrastructure’ stating that high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. Paragraphs 43 and 44 state that: *“In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband. They should aim to keep the numbers of radio and telecommunications masts and the sites for such installations to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network. Existing masts, buildings and other structures should be used, unless the need for a new site has been justified. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.*

*Local planning authorities should not impose a ban on new telecommunications development in certain areas, impose blanket Article 4 directions over a wide area or a wide range of telecommunications development or insist on minimum distances between new telecommunications development and existing development. They should ensure that:*

- *they have evidence to demonstrate that telecommunications infrastructure will not cause significant and irremediable interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services or instrumentation operated in the national interest; and*
- *they have considered the possibility of the construction of new buildings or other structures interfering with broadcast and telecommunications services.”<sup>47</sup>*

## **National Planning Practice Guidance**

The National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>48</sup>, which amplifies the policies in the NPPF, has a section on travel plans, transport assessments and statements in decision making. This provides detail on what these processes and documents are and how to develop them, which is not repeated here.

## **Somerset’s Future Transport Plan 2011-2026**

Our Goal for 2026 - *“People of all ages and walks of life are valued. They support others in their local communities and provide leadership on important issues. Communities are forward looking and determine what happens in their area. Organisations work well together in partnership and everyone is proud to live in Somerset and to promote its benefits to others.”*

Our Transport Challenges to reach this Goal

- To share and attract resources through partnerships and other external sources to achieve our goals; and
- To encourage local communities to meet their individual transport needs.

Policy POS1 Community and Partnership involvement

We will help our communities to help themselves. We will help them to make improvements to transport, allow them to shape our work and deliver improvements in partnership with other organisations.

Policy SUS1 Climate Change

<sup>46</sup> Paragraph 39, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

<sup>47</sup> Paragraphs 43-44, NPPF, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

<sup>48</sup> See <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/rural-housing/how-should-local-authorities-support-sustainable-rural-communities/>

We will publish an annual action plan explaining how we will lead Somerset's response to climate change. Transport will have an important part to play in this.

#### Policy SUS2 Bus and Community Transport Services

We will do what we can to maintain essential services in the early years of this plan and work to improve the way services work together and provide better bus information during its later years.

#### Policy SUS3 Smarter Choices

We will help people make smarter travel choices. We will provide high quality transport information and encourage organisations to develop 'Travel Plans'

#### Policy SUS4 Cycling

We will encourage people to cycle more by helping them to make smarter travel choices and get better cycling skills. We will support the provision of appropriate and well connected cycling facilities.

#### Policy SUS5 Walking

We will help people make more trips on foot and help people see the benefits of walking.

#### Policy SUS6 Rights of Way

We will work to maintain our Rights of Way network and improve the information available to help people use them.

#### Policy SUS7 Rail

We will work in partnership with the rail industry and other stakeholders to encourage more people to travel by train. We will support better services, facilities, security, integration and improvements in the way people see train travel.

#### Policy SUS8 Emerging Technologies

We will consider how electric vehicles, responsibly sourced biofuels and other new technologies could help us meet our goals and challenges.

#### Policy SUS9 Noise

We will manage the effect transport-related noise has on our communities at problem locations. We will assess sites according to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' guidance and prioritise possible solutions.

#### Policy SUS10 Landscapes and Biodiversity

We will protect Somerset's landscapes and biodiversity by working to minimise the effect transport schemes have on them.

#### Policy ECN1 Car and Taxi

We will work to better manage the traffic on the roads and improve the most congested junctions and routes. We will work with developers to try and make sure new developments don't make conditions worse.

#### Policy ECN2 Sustainable Development

We will work with developers to ensure they take into account the way people travel, and how people travel, to access services.

#### Policy ECN3 Parking

We will help improve parking facilities to encourage more sustainable means of travel. We will work to improve the management of parking and help plan new developments appropriately.

#### Policy ECN4 Information & Communication Technology

We will promote the use of ICT to reduce the need to travel and increase people's ability to access goods and services.

#### Policy ECN5 Freight

We will help hauliers choose the most appropriate routes and work to improve communication between communities and the hauliers that serve them.

#### Policy ECN6 Maintenance

We will maintain our network in a way that makes best use of the resources available.

#### Policy EDU1 School Travel

We will help people walk and cycle to Somerset's schools and make the school transport services we provide more efficient.

#### Policy SAF1 Road Safety

We will work with partner organisations, for example, by helping drivers and riders to improve their skills.

#### Policy SAF2 Motorcycling

We will promote safe and responsible motorcycling by working with our partners to deliver our road safety policy and helping to improve parking provision.

#### Policy HLT1 Stay Active

We will help people be more active by giving them more opportunities to travel in a healthy way, such as by walking or cycling.

#### Policy HLT2 Access to Health

We will talk to healthcare providers about transport plans, to help make it easier for people to access their services. We will help to develop 'out of hours' transport to healthcare services.

#### Policy HLT3 Air Quality

We will work to minimise the effect any changes to Somerset's transport systems have on air pollution. We will work with Somerset's district and borough authorities to improve air quality in Somerset by encouraging partnership working and sharing best practice with our neighbours.

### **Somerset Parking Strategy 2013**

#### Objectives of the Parking Strategy

The County Council has a leading role in both the management and provision of parking in Somerset.

If the management of parking is to deliver wider policy aims our approach needs to balance various conflicting aspirations. Our objectives for parking management include:

- Managing parking in order to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres by ensuring the needs of shoppers and visitors are prioritised;
- Managing parking in order to meet the needs of residents who live within towns, in villages and in rural areas;
- Encouraging the use of more sustainable modes, including adequate provision of accessible and secure bicycle and motorcycle parking;
- Managing parking on the highway network to encourage the use of public transport;
- Managing parking effectively in order to reduce commuter trips from new developments by car;
- Contributing to the reduction of CO2 emissions from vehicles; and
- Meeting the special parking needs of people with disabilities.

The County Council, in consultation with the district and borough councils in Somerset, sets parking standards that are aligned with both the latest national guidance and local aspirations.

Our objectives for parking provision in new developments include:

- Enabling well designed development that uses land efficiently and minimises nuisance to residents and neighbours;
- Revising residential parking standards to enable us to meet the car, cycle and motorcycle parking needs of residents, including those with disabilities;
- Setting out revised optimum car parking standards and minimum standards for cycle parking for non-residential development; and
- Encouraging the use of more sustainable modes through parking provision.

#### Policy PP1: Countywide Parking Standards Policy

Somerset County Council will work with the Local Planning Authorities to ensure that the levels and design of parking provided at new developments are in accordance with revised Countywide Parking Standards, which include the minimum requirements for disabled car parking that developers will be expected to provide in new developments. Where it is appropriate for a development to make use of existing off-site parking facilities this will be encouraged, subject to negotiation with the County Council and, if required, third-party operators.

#### Policy PP2: Residential Parking Standards Policy

Residential standards have been developed to ensure that car, cycle and motorcycle parking provided for new homes is sufficient to meet the needs of both current and future occupiers (including 16-amp charging points, or any future standardised equipment, for electric cars), whilst avoiding over-provision. Flexibility of Countywide Standards will be considered where they are justified by fully funded Travel Plan measures including parking management. New residential developments will be designed and located to encourage sustainable transport choices. Unallocated parking areas will be incorporated to meet the needs of visitors and appropriate shared use parking arrangements considered.

#### Policy PP3: Non-Residential Parking Standards Policy

Optimum car standards, optimum motorcycle standards and minimum cycle and blue badge parking standards have been developed for non-residential use classes. Departures from these standards will be considered where the Transport Assessment/Statement for the proposed development provides sufficiently robust evidence to justify the departure and where a fully funded Travel Plan is secured, supported by comprehensive monitoring of parking activity.

#### Policy PP4: Tourism and Visitor Parking Policy

Where specific destinations attract high volumes of visitors, Somerset County Council will work with the managers of the destination sites to reduce the demand for excessive car parking. The availability of coach and motor-home parking and pick-up/set-down opportunities will be kept under review as demand changes.

#### Policy PP5: Park and Ride Sites Policy

The provision of park and ride sites will be considered where there is a need to reduce the impacts of traffic on congested radial routes into town centres, at sensitive visitor attractions and/or where it is required to relocate commuter parking to edge of town locations.

### **Somerset Cycling Strategy 2012**

The aim of the Cycling Strategy is to contribute to healthier and more sustainable lifestyles by increasing levels of cycling in Somerset for both utility and leisure purposes. This will be achieved by increasing the number of people cycling, the number of cycling trips that are made and the overall distances that are cycled.

#### Cycling Strategy Objectives

1. To improve the cycle network and make conditions more favourable for cyclists.
2. To promote the benefits of cycling and increase the number of people across the age spectrum travelling by bicycle particularly for short trips and journeys to work.
3. To identify opportunities for, and support the development of, leisure and recreational cycling to support our residents to be healthier and to raise the profile of Somerset as a destination for cycle tourism.

Policy CS1 - We will improve cycle linkages and networks through-out Somerset taking into account the location.

Policy CS2 - We will support increased community and stakeholder involvement in the development of the cycle network

Policy CS3 - We will ensure developers fully consider the needs of cyclists within their development design and any associated improvements

Policy CS4 - We will support and promote campaigns to increase cycling across all segments of the population within Somerset

Policy CS5 - We will support the use of, and help to develop, the leisure cycle network to realise its economic potential for Somerset

### **Somerset Walking Strategy 2012**

Aim is to contribute to healthier and more sustainable lifestyles by increasing levels of walking in Somerset for both utility and leisure purposes. This will be achieved by increasing the number of people walking, the number of pedestrian trips that are made and the overall distances that are walked.

The objectives of the strategy are:

Objective 1: Ensure walking networks provide accessibility for all;

Objective 2: Improve the quality of the walking environment;

Objective 3: Improve safety and security for pedestrians; and

Objective 4: Ensure the planning process delivers high quality walking environments

Policy WS1 We will seek to improve the pedestrian network taking into account all types of user

Policy WS2 We will support the integration of the pedestrian network with all modes of travel

Policy WS3 We will support the development and delivery of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Policy WS4 We will support the improvement of the pedestrian environment to encourage an increase in walking in Somerset

Policy WS5 We will maintain the pedestrian network to the highest possible standard given the available resources

Policy WS6 We will seek to reduce the number of pedestrian casualties within Somerset and to provide an environment that reduces the perception of personal safety issues

Policy WS7 We will ensure developers fully consider the needs of all pedestrians within their development design and any improvements associated with the development

### **South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028**

South Somerset is a predominantly rural district with subsequent diverse travel patterns meaning the car will remain an essential mode of travel. However, considerable benefits can be delivered by enabling travel by other means than the car. The district wide measures listed in policy TA1 are aimed at reducing single car occupancy and the need to travel, or encouraging the use of more sustainable travel, or alternative fuels where travel is necessary.

#### **POLICY TA1: LOW CARBON TRAVEL**

All new residential and employment developments in South Somerset should, subject to general viability:

- i. Provide Travel Information Packs;
- ii. Provide for the charging of electric vehicles with an external charging point of at least 16 amps adjacent to each parking space and within the curtilage of the site. Such charging points should also be provided for garages within the development;
- iii. Provide a Green Travel Voucher for each occupier/employee valid for 1 year for use on sustainable transport;
- iv. Provide facilities for cycle parking within the new development commensurate with the levels and standards designated in the SCC cycle parking strategy;
- v. Include Travel Plans (commensurate with Policy TA4);
- vi. Ensure that sustainable transport measures are in place and operational concurrent with first occupancy. Additionally, developments of all new residential dwellings should:
  - vii. Enable ease of working from home by providing a designed in specific work area with broadband connections.

Where the scale of new residential development or employment sites would have an impact on existing public transport planning obligations will be sought to:

- viii. Deliver improved public transport connections increasing accessibility through enhancements to either existing conventional bus routes or existing Demand Responsive Transport schemes or the provision of new services and new bus stops, bus timetables and bus shelters. These should be commensurate with the scale of the development that enables good on-going connections with the public transport network. The developer will be required to enter into a planning obligation in accordance with Policy SS6 to ensure provision of such facilities, which shall be provided prior to first occupation of the new development.

Somerset County Council has produced 'Travel Planning Guidance'<sup>242</sup> and this has been offered to Local Planning Authorities as a basis for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as part of the Council's development plan. Key elements of this guidance have been taken on board in producing the Travel Plans Policy TA4.

## POLICY TA4: TRAVEL PLANS

i. Travel Plans will be required commensurate with the scale of the development. The 3 broad types of Travel Plan are:

1. Measures-only Travel Statements;
2. Travel Plan Statements;
3. Full Travel Plans.

The content of the Travel Plan document and the measures expected therein are indicated in Table 1 below. The measures should ensure that modal shift is maximised for developments with good levels of accessibility

ii. The thresholds for development size determining which type of Travel Plan should be in place are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 1

Content of Travel Plan Document:	Travel Plan type		
	Measures-only Travel Statement	Travel Plan Statement	Full Travel Plan
Site Audit Report		Yes (Residential developments only)	Yes
Action Plan	Yes Table of Measures (See below)	Yes On-site measures To be supplemented with Tables of Measures for each phase at reserved matters stage and post occupation	Yes
Monitoring Strategy and Modal share Targets		Yes (Excluding residential developments)	Yes
SCCs (On Travel registration and completion prior to travel plan approval)		Completed modal share targets table attached to travel plan	
Site Specific Travel Information Leaflet	Yes	Yes	Yes
Smarter Travel Policy Dossier	Yes	Yes	Yes
Travel Website	Yes	Yes	Yes
Details of Parking levels/locations for every mode of transport	Yes	Yes	Yes
Travel Plan Coordinator		Yes	Yes
Promotional Activity		Yes	Yes
Travel Plan Forum to work with neighbouring sites		Yes	Yes

**POLICY TA4: TRAVEL PLANS (Continued...)**

Table 2

Land Use Type	Lower Development Size threshold (Sq m Gross Floor Area unless indicated)	Type of Travel Plan Required
A1 –food	>100	Measures only Travel Statement
	>500	Travel Plan Statement
	>800	Full Travel Plan
A1 – Non-food	>100	Measures only Travel Statement
	>500	Travel Plan Statement
	>1500	Full Travel Plan
B1	>500	Measures only Travel Statement
	>1000	Travel Plan Statement
	>1500	Full Travel Plan
B8	>1000	Measures only Travel Statement
	>2000	Travel Plan Statement
	>5000	Full Travel Plan
C3	> 10 dwellings	Measures only Travel Statement
	> 30 dwellings (or where car parking allocation is fewer than 1 space per dwelling for any dwelling in the development)	Travel Plan Statement
	> 50 dwellings	Full Travel Plan

iii. All development within the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions will be required to meet the Framework Travel Plan criteria and be commensurate with Policy YV5.

iv. Any development site with 25 or more car parking spaces or more than 1000 sq m of floor area could be required to produce a travel plan as a general principle. This is used as a basic threshold to negotiate and determine a requirement for a travel plan document for land uses not listed above.

All new development is required to address its own transport implications. Larger schemes are required to prepare Transport Assessments and, where required, Travel Plans to illustrate how the amount of trips generated will be minimized, how the impacts will be accommodated, and how accessibility to the site by all modes of transport will be achieved. Development proposals will be expected to provide or contribute towards the cost of providing transport infrastructure where this is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

**POLICY TA5: TRANSPORT IMPACT OF NEW DEVELOPMENT**

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

- i. Safeguarding existing and new transport infrastructure, which is important to an efficient and sustainable transport network from development that would prejudice their transport use;
- ii. Securing inclusive, safe and convenient access on foot, cycle, and by public and private transport that addresses the needs of all;
- iii. Ensuring that the expected nature and volume of traffic and parked vehicles generated by the development would not have a detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area and would not compromise the safety and/or function of the local or strategic road networks in terms of both volume and type of traffic generated;
- iv. Ensuring that proposals, which specifically require a location with direct access to the strategic road network due to the volumes and quality of traffic generated, are well located on these networks. There is a presumption against direct access from the strategic road network. Exemptions will only be made where the type of development is such that it requires a high order (of route hierarchy) route location, such as roadside service stations or freight transfer facilities;
- v. Assessing the transport impact of development and ensuring delivery of the necessary transport

infrastructure for the proposal and requiring larger schemes to prepare Transport Assessments.

vi. Requiring car parking and vehicle servicing at levels appropriate to the development and its location, in accordance with the approved/adopted standards identified in Policy TA6.

The rural nature of South Somerset must be considered in setting appropriate levels of parking provision in new development. The amount of parking provided in new developments should strike an appropriate balance that considers various issues. Enough car parking needs to be provided to help support the local economy and allow people to make necessary trips, particularly for those whose only realistic travel option is the car. Too much car parking can encourage car use and lead to congestion and increased CO2 emissions, and can waste land and result in poorly designed places; whilst too little parking can lead to parking in inappropriate places, making the streets more cluttered. Somerset County Council adopted the Countywide Parking Strategy in March 2012. It includes parking standards for cars, cycles and motorcycles for both residential and non-residential development. It was logical and appropriate for South Somerset District Council to apply the Highway Authority's car parking standards and endorsed their use. The adopted Countywide Parking Strategy is therefore be applied when considering parking provision for new developments in South Somerset.

**POLICY TA6: PARKING STANDARDS**

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

## Local Economy

### National Planning Policy Framework

*“Local planning authorities should:*

- *Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances*
- *plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries*
- *identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement*
- *facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit*

*Planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.*

*Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose.*

*Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose.”<sup>49</sup>*

In terms of retail, the NPPF focuses on the role of town centres and a sequential test being applied to retail development, with a focus on town centres first and then edge and out of town development. With regard to areas outside of town centres, the focus is on proposals being subject to an impact assessment. In rural areas, the focus is very much as set out above in terms of the role in relation to the rural economy but also in relation to the sustainability of services and facilities reflected elsewhere in the NPPF and summarised in other topic areas in this report.

### Somerset Economic Strategy

Somerset’s market towns and rural economy: key issues, trends and opportunities

- Somerset’s market towns and rural areas are economically significant and account for an unusually large proportion of GVA;
- Somerset’s market towns are key employment and service centres for their surrounding rural areas and their future competitiveness is key to the development of the county’s rural economy;
- Nevertheless many of Somerset’s market towns currently have a narrow economic base and are vulnerable to future decline. Strengthening the economic base of these towns and combating constraints on their competitiveness are key issues;
- Outside of the market towns and rural centres, the rural economy is characterised by low productivity activities and is subject to sectoral decline including fundamental agricultural change. There is a need to diversify and add value to the rural economy;
- Geographically West Somerset and Sedgemoor have particularly vulnerable rural economies; and
- High housing and transport costs and limitations to public transport reduce economic opportunities and quality of life for low income groups and young people.

Strategic Objective 5 is therefore:

To revitalise the economy of Somerset’s market towns and rural communities

Strengthen and diversify the economic role of Somerset’s market towns and rural centres

- Encourage new business formation, particularly in knowledge based and high value added activities

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<sup>49</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, HM Government, 2012

- Ensure through future LDFs sufficient future employment land provision for local economic growth needs in each of these centres
- Targeted action to attract small scale high value added inward investment
- Maintain existing skills specialisms and broaden local skills base
- Define future role of vulnerable town centres and promote their regeneration
- Encourage the development and implementation of community driven plans for the regeneration of Somerset's market towns and rural centres

Increase the productivity and sustainability of Somerset's rural economy

- Encourage growth of higher value added economic activities
- Support the sustainable growth of sectors with greater potential in rural Somerset (including high value tourism, creative industries, and environmental technologies)
- Facilitate diversification and adaption to change in existing key sectors (particularly agriculture)
- Targeted action to strengthen the economy of poorly performing rural areas (particularly West Somerset and parts of rural Sedgemoor)

Strengthen the economic infrastructure of rural Somerset

- Improve rural broadband and ICT infrastructure
- Through Somerset LTP2 and future LDFs maximise opportunities to increase the transport accessibility of Somerset's market towns and rural areas
- Maximise the availability of rural workspace and affordable housing
- Develop the business support infrastructure of rural Somerset

### **Somerset Growth Plan 2014-2020**

The purpose of the Growth Plan is to attract and guide investment, to overcome barriers and maximise sustainable growth from local opportunities, benefitting Somerset's communities, businesses and residents. The main barriers to growth in Somerset are:

- An ageing population
- Relatively small and dispersed urban areas (i.e. lack of urban agglomeration)
- A lack of higher level skills
- Inadequate infrastructure to support further expansion in the economy
- Flooding and its consequential disruption to transport and the economy

The vision for Somerset in 2020 builds on the county's opportunities. It comprises:

- An economy with sustained growth faster than the UK
- A global reputation in nuclear, low carbon energy & advanced manufacturing, and food & drink (including agri-tech)
- Increased value in the rest of the economy, particularly in land management, tourism, health, logistics, construction and Business and professional services
- Strong growth hubs at Bridgwater, Frome, Taunton and Yeovil connected to Somerset's network of vibrant market towns and rural areas
- An aspirational workforce with world class skills, helping to grow the competitiveness of Somerset's businesses
- A connected county with high quality and resilient transport and ICT infrastructure
- A housing stock that meets the needs of Somerset's growing and changing population

The Objectives of the Growth Plan and their Delivery are:

- A. Create a more dynamic and growth focused business population with increased value---added and productivity
  - Raise the level of business starts
  - Increase growth aspiration, skills and competence among business leaders
  - Improve productivity and competitiveness

- Encourage diversification into new markets (including export)
  - Attract sustainable inward investment from the UK and overseas
  - Promote supply chain development activity in key sectors
- B. Increase levels of education and skills within the workforce to foster growth and enable residents to access employment opportunities
- Raise proportion of the workforce with NVQ L3+ and 4+ equivalent qualifications
  - Develop STEM skills base to support the growth of key sectors
  - Improve employability through developing generic and work ready skills aligned to Somerset's future economic opportunities
- C. Tackle significant infrastructure deficits and enhance strategic connectivity
- Improve the speed and reliability of access to strategic locations through road and rail improvements, in particular ensuring good connectivity to Bristol and Exeter airports and ensuring that the rail network can support faster movement of freight and passengers, thus helping to reduce pressure on the road and improve journey time resilience
  - Ensure high quality communications infrastructure to the whole county including superfast broadband
    - and mobile connectivity
    - Improve the quality and breadth of Somerset's town centres' offers
    - Alleviate flood risks to enable growth
- D. Enable the delivery of major housing and employment developments that will enable growth
- Unlock local infrastructure to bring forward development
  - Ensure delivery of sufficient quantity, quality and type of employment floorspace
  - Ensure housing supply to accommodate a balanced population

All of these objectives will be achieved whilst maintaining the high quality of the environment, and quality of life in Somerset.

## **South Somerset District Council Economic Development Strategy 2012 to 2015**

### Aims of the Strategy

- To maintain the jobs we have and bring new jobs to our towns and rural centres to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to work
- To encourage the creation of new, high value employment by attracting investment and fostering the growth of small and medium sized companies
- To promote business diversification and innovation to further increase the value of local employment

Population & Employment Growth - *Working with and supporting our existing businesses to ensure that they grow in a sustainable way that will help boost the local economy and provide a broader range of additional jobs for local people*

Retailing - *Use the planning process to preserve the integrity of our town centres, resist the loss of retailing and employment premises within the town and resist out-of-town and edge-of town development*

Agriculture, Food and Drink Sector - *Promote and facilitate the diversification of agricultural and other land based industries. Where possible promote opportunities for economic change by strengthening the market for local food products.*

Sustainable Economic Growth - *Support LEPs in developing these aims and particularly encourage the growth of new businesses in this sector who wish to start up or grow their market*

Infrastructure and Land Supply - *Take a more proactive role in the provision of infrastructure in market towns where appropriate and maintain a balance between the supply and demand of employment land. Work with other appropriate agencies to promote and market new investment sites, available commercial land and buildings to attract and secure inward investment.*

Skills - *Work with our service providing partners to help ensure that an integrated skills development framework is created and maintained.*

## South Somerset Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026

Strategic Priority 15: Improve the diversity and adaptability of businesses (including rural businesses) as we move towards a low carbon economy

- Engage with the Somerset Strategic Partnership to make sure that the Into Somerset organisation will promote South Somerset (including Yeovil, Chard, the other market towns and rural settlements) as a destination for new environmentally friendly and knowledge based businesses;
- Ensure potential inward investors understand and have access to the range of high quality services and support including awareness of the education and training available in South Somerset;
- Set up links with a range of organisations from Somerset and nearby districts and counties necessary to ensure a thriving economy in the area;
- Ensure continued support for the economic regeneration of Yeovil, Chard, the other market towns and rural settlements and their businesses;
- Encourage all towns and villages to gain Transition status with three communities meeting Transition status by 2012;
- support skilled employment in all age ranges but especially in young people and 50+ age group;
- Streamline multi-agency support, advice and grants for all businesses;
- Encourage new businesses in key areas of growth such as low carbon, high technology industries and care services;
- Targeting new economic opportunities to those in most need;
- Work with farmers to increase local food production and distribution to address rising food costs and cut food miles and encourage people to grow their own food for a healthier lifestyle.

## South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028

The Local Plan is founded upon a sustainable economic-led strategy, with the aim to make the district more prosperous and build upon the fact that the South Somerset economy is the most productive and the largest (in terms of both jobs and businesses) in Somerset. A range of growth forecasts were explored and an employment growth figure of 11,250 has been identified as a sustainable target between 2006 and 2028. The Local Plan's approach to balancing the distribution of jobs and homes seeks to ensure more sustainable and self-contained communities that are better placed to offer a range of opportunities to all of their residents. This approach will support the retention of strong, vibrant and healthy communities.

The allocation and distribution of jobs and employment land across the district is set out in a table. This is supported by a combination of quantitative and qualitative need justifications for each settlement. For Martock it states:

Local Plan jobs growth (B Use jobs in brackets)	163 (99)
Employment land required for B Use jobs growth (ha)	0.84
Existing employment land commitments (ha)	1.45
Local Plan additional employment land requirement (ha)	1.74

Quantitative and Qualitative justification for employment land:

- Demand has been identified from four different sources of evidence. The highest figure is derived from the South Somerset Workspace Survey (July 2013) (3.19ha as the highest identified source of demand).
- The 3.19ha is made up of the (unique) need of one specific large employer and other smaller (and more typical) local companies.
- Martock/Bower Hinton has a supply of 1.45 hectares of employment land, with this in mind it is suggested that an additional 1.74 hectares be provided as a minimum in the settlement. This will provide choice and aid self-containment in the settlement.

The Local Plan carries forward a number of employment land sites from the South Somerset Local Plan (1991 – 2011)51. These sites continue to form part of the strategy set out in Policy SS3 and Policy EP1 for employment land delivery through to 2028. They include:

- Proposal ME/MART/2: West of Ringwell Hill, Martock

### **POLICY SS3: DELIVERING NEW EMPLOYMENT LAND**

The Local Plan will assist the delivery of 11,250 jobs as a minimum, and 149.51 hectares of land for economic development between April 2006 and March 2028.

The identification of a B-Use jobs figure for settlements establishes a target in line with the Council's forecast growth for the District over the plan period. Economic development of a main town centre type will be expected to comply with Policy EP11.

Prior to the adoption of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, a permissive approach will be taken when considering employment land proposals in Yeovil (via the SUEs), and 'directions of growth' at the Market Towns. The overall scale of growth (set out below) will be a key consideration in taking this approach, with the emphasis upon maintaining the established settlement hierarchy and ensuring sustainable levels of growth for all settlements. The same key considerations should also apply when considering employment land proposals adjacent to the development area at the Rural Centres.

The jobs target for Rural Settlements will be achieved through sustainable development, likely to be small-scale, which supports a prosperous rural economy and accords with Local Plan policies SS2, EP4 and EP5; and the NPPF.

\* Yeovil, Crewkerne and Ilminster have strategic employment sites which are saved from the previous South Somerset Local Plan and Chard's strategic allocation based around Chard Regeneration Plan also includes employment provision. These sites combined equate to a total of 46.35 hectares, and this figure has been included in the overall floorspace figure cited in Policy SS3 above.

\*\* This figure relates to Lopen Head Nursery.

\*\*\* The Council will undertake an early review of Local Plan policy relating to housing and employment provision in Wincanton. This will be in accordance with statutory requirements and completed within three years of the date of adoption of the local plan.

Offices (B1 and A2 uses<sup>164</sup>) are defined as a main town centre use in national guidance. Their location in the town centre is beneficial, on the basis that office buildings tend to be used more intensively than other forms of employment use (based on the average ratio of number of workers to floorspace<sup>166</sup>) and therefore they generate more footfall in the town centre, thereby supporting its vitality and viability. Additionally, focusing office employment in a town centre location provides more people with greater opportunities to use public transport, thereby helping to reduce the need to travel by private car. The displacement of office workers out of the district's town centres needs to be limited in the future, and whilst it is important not to deter economic activity, focusing office based employment growth in town centre locations will deliver greater benefits in terms of the district's overall sustainability, particularly by supporting the vitality and viability of our town centres. In this context, preference is given to out-of-centre sites that are located next to an established industrial estate or business park over other out of centre sites, as this will provide the opportunity to maximise the use of public transport.

### **POLICY EP2: OFFICE DEVELOPMENT**

Proposals for office development should firstly be located within the defined Town Centre. Where this is not possible because a sequential test demonstrates that there is no suitable, available and viable site, office developments may be acceptable on less central sites in the following order:

Edge-of-centre sites (within 300m of the edge of the defined Town Centre) - preference is given firstly to edge-of-centre sites, which are well connected, to the centre by pedestrian access; and

Out-of-centre sites with good access to sustainable transport modes - preference is given firstly to out-of-centre sites that are located next to compatible uses.

The importance of maintaining the existing supply and protecting the overall distribution of employment land should not be underestimated - existing employment sites provide the main supply of employment land and are required to meet the needs of the market by retaining a mix of older, more affordable premises, whilst maintaining a local balance between housing and employment. By protecting employment land, Policy EP3 aims to retain locally accessible employment opportunities, which enable people to live and work in close proximity, aiding self-containment and reducing the need to travel to work by less sustainable travel modes. The retention of employment land and premises is important for job creation and the health of the economy.

### **POLICY EP3: SAFEGUARDING EMPLOYMENT LAND**

Employment land and premises\* will be safeguarded and planning permission will not be granted for development to alternative uses unless it can be demonstrated that the loss would not demonstrably harm the settlement's supply of employment land/premises and/or job opportunities.

Applicants will be expected to submit a marketing statement with the planning application, which demonstrates that the site/premises has been actively marketed for a maximum of 18 months or a period agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to application submission.

Changes of use will not be permitted unless:

The proposed use is compatible with existing surrounding uses and not detrimental to the operation of existing businesses in the area;

Adequate access exists or can be achieved to serve the proposed development;

The proposal would result in significant environmental improvements or enhancements to the character of the area; and

The site is not in an unsustainable location for the land use proposed.

\*Class B1 Business Use, Class B2 General Industrial Use, and Class B8 Storage or Distribution Use of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended.

The District Council supports a viable rural economy and its diversification. Policies EP4: Expansion of Businesses in the Countryside and EP5: Farm Diversification, outline how the planning system will assist in delivering development which will promote the growth of new smaller scale business, expansion of existing businesses and diversification of the rural economy. New economic development in the countryside should be of a scale that is appropriate to the surrounding area and should not lead to undue displacement of workers from nearby Market Towns and Rural Centres, as this will impact on the self-containment of those settlements and the settlement hierarchy.

### **POLICY EP4: EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESSES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Proposals for the expansion of existing businesses in the countryside will be permitted where:

The business has been operating successfully for a minimum of 3 years, and is a viable business;

It is demonstrated that the proposal is needed in this location;

The proposal is of a scale appropriate in this location and appropriate to the existing development;

Existing buildings are reused where possible;

Firstly, use is made of land within the curtilage of the development where possible, and outside of the curtilage only where it is demonstrated that additional land is essential to the needs of the business;

There is no adverse impact on the countryside with regard to scale, character and appearance of new buildings and/or changes of use of land;

There is no adverse impact upon designations for wildlife and conservation reasons, at either local, national or international level; and

The proposed development ensures that the expected nature and volume of traffic generated by the development would not have a detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area and would not compromise the safety and/or function of the road network in terms of both volume and type of traffic generated.

A live/work property is one designed from the outset for dual residential and business use. It may be newly built or converted to create a professional workspace where one or more people can run a business. In planning terms, it has a unique status ('sui generis') as a property 'of its own type' incorporating residential and commercial use. Locally it is felt that live/work units are not necessary and normal residences with the right configuration (spare bedroom, large garage or large garden shed) provide a more flexible and cheaper work base until such time as the enterprise outgrows its premises. In this case one would normally wish to see it located in more appropriate premises and locations.

### **POLICY EP7: NEW BUILD LIVE/WORK UNITS**

New build live/work units will not be allowed in locations where residential development would not normally be permitted.

Martock is identified as a Rural Centre in the LOCAL PLAN Settlement Hierarchy. It functions as a Local Centre in retail terms, having a range of small shops of a local nature serving a small catchment, such as a small supermarket, newsagents, a sub-post office or pharmacy. The retail hierarchy (Policy EP9) will determine how new net growth will be distributed over the plan period. Yeovil will be the main focus for new retail and leisure investment and the Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres will accommodate development which will maintain their retail and service role and support their position in the retail hierarchy.

**POLICY EP9: RETAIL HIERARCHY**

Yeovil is the principle town centre in South Somerset. Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton are Market Towns in retail terms. Ansford/Castle Cary, Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton are District Centres in retail terms and Bruton, Ilchester, **Martock**, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hamdon are Local Centres in retail terms.

The development of main town centre uses in Yeovil, the Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres should be of a scale that is commensurate with the settlement role and function, and does not unbalance the town centre hierarchy.

The rural nature of the district and the size of its smaller centres, justifies a need to also look at the impact of any significant in-centre proposals, as these could also detract from the High Street and have an impact on its viability. LDF PMB paper 'Managing the Scale of Retail Development - A Methodology for Establishing a Local Retail Floorspace Threshold Policy for Impact Assessments' outlines the methodology for establishing a local threshold for impact assessments. The thresholds do not imply that anything above them are of an inappropriate scale and should not be awarded planning permission, but simply that anything at or above these would need to demonstrate that there would not be a significant adverse impact. Where there is clear evidence that a proposal is likely to lead to significant adverse impacts, applications should be refused. The health of town centres (including vitality and viability indicators) and town centre or retail strategies should be considered as part of the assessment.

**POLICY EP12: FLOORSPACE THRESHOLD FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

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

Retail Hierarchy Settlement Classification	South Somerset Settlements	Retail Floorspace Threshold (gross)
Principal Centre	Yeovil	2,500 sq m
Market Towns	Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster & Wincanton	750 sq m
	Langport/Huish Episcopi	500 sq m
District Centres	Ansford/Castle Cary & Somerton	250 sq m
	Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton & Stoke sub Hamdon	250 sq m

Proposals for retail developments up to and including the above floorspace thresholds will generally be regarded as being of a scale that would not result in significant adverse impacts.

Where Impact Assessments present evidence of significant adverse impacts on an existing town centre, development will be refused.

Primary Shopping Frontages are at the heart of the town centre, they contain streets that are dominated by shops and have the greatest pedestrian footfall. It is considered important to retain the function of Primary Shopping Frontages as dominant shopping areas, as large numbers of shops in close proximity to each other are important to the attractiveness of the centre and its convenience to shoppers.

There will be support for a diverse range of uses (such as residential or office space), particularly where it uses the upper floorspace in town centres or where it will benefit the vitality and viability of the district's town centres at all times of the day, but in order to maintain a core shopping area within the town centre, Primary Shopping Frontages will be protected. As required in the NPPF, Primary Shopping Frontages have been

identified for Yeovil, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Langport and Somerton and these are shown on the Inset Maps. An early review of these existing frontages is proposed to reflect the importance of maintaining a core shopping area in these settlements and **new Primary Shopping Frontages will be identified in the remaining Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres where appropriate**. There is also a **requirement under the NPPF to identify Secondary Shopping Frontages** and this too will be considered as part of the review.

#### **POLICY EP13: PROTECTION OF RETAIL FRONTAGES**

Development proposals resulting in the change of use from retail (class A1 of the use classes order) to non-retail on ground floors within the defined Primary Shopping Frontages will be permitted, except where the number or coalescence of such uses would undermine the dominant retail function.

In order to guide decisions relating to actual numbers and/or coalescence and the impact resulting the following criteria will be taken into account:

The location and prominence of the premises within the shopping frontage;

The floorspace and length of frontage of the premises;

The number, distribution and proximity to other non-A1 use class premises (or with consent for such use) within the frontage in question and throughout the town centre;

The character and nature of the use proposed, including the level of pedestrian activity associated with it;

The level of vacancies; and

Whether the proposed use would give rise to noise, smell or other environmental problem.

South Somerset's 'product' is based primarily on the quality of its environment and charming market towns and villages, which offers much for the short stay tourist who generally seeks activities related to their hobbies and interests, and who require access to the countryside and locally distinctive cultural and historic activities. The Council recognises that the gains that can be made from tourism need to be maximised in a way which both benefits the 'consumer' and the local population, particularly in rural areas where shops, services and employment opportunities are continuing to decline and farmers have to diversify their businesses to remain viable.

To improve South Somerset's tourism-offer and to extend the tourism season, support will be given to sustainable tourism developments that benefit businesses, communities and visitors, subject to their scale and location. Major new tourism proposals should be assessed in terms of overall sustainable development objectives. These objectives include:

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

Where proposals would result in the creation of accommodation that is capable of being occupied for residential purposes on a permanent basis, the council will impose conditions on any permission granted specifying its use as holiday accommodation only.

#### **POLICY EP8: NEW AND ENHANCED TOURIST FACILITIES**

In order to sustain the vitality and viability of tourism in the district, new and enhanced tourist facilities will be supported where:

They are of a scale appropriate to the size and function of the settlement within which they are to be located;

The proposal ensures that the district's tourist assets and facilities are accessible through sustainable modes of travel including cycling and walking;

They do not harm the district's environmental, cultural or heritage assets;

They ensure the continued protection and resilience of the district's designated nature conservation features;  
They benefit the local community through access to facilities and services; and  
There is no adverse impact on Natura 2000 and other internationally and nationally designated sites  
There must be an identified need for tourist facilities in the open countryside, which is not met by existing facilities.

## South Somerset Monitoring Report 2016

The Annual Monitoring Report represents an opportunity to provide an update on important information across a series of issues.

Summary of key economic issues:

- South Somerset's Functional Economic Area extends along the A303 corridor.
- Total number of jobs in South Somerset (which includes self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces) was 82,000 in 2015.
- The 'Public administration, education and health sector' is the largest employer in South Somerset. Although the 'manufacturing' sector is a significant employer.
- In 2015, Manufacturing generated £785 million to the South Somerset economy. This sector's economic value has grown by over 25% since 2001.
- The number of enterprises in South Somerset has grown since 2010, but only steadily. The agricultural sector has the largest number of enterprises. Manufacturing, whilst the most valuable sector to the economy only has the third highest number of enterprises.
- In 2015, 98% of all businesses employed fewer than 50 employees. This Shows South Somerset's reliance on Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs).
- Economic activity rates are at their highest recorded levels. In 2015, 85,600 people were economically active, which represents 84% of the population.
- Gross weekly wages for both males and females are lower than the national and regional average.
- The number of claimants in South Somerset is at the lowest level since 2001.

## Delivering Employment Land and Economic Growth (Policy SS3)

Summary of key issues:

- South Somerset's employment monitoring database is not currently fit for purpose.
- Data is not sufficiently robust to provide an acceptable analysis at time of writing.
- A review of employment land is taking place as part of wider Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment.
- Council proposes to table a separate Employment Monitoring Report by December 2016.
- All future annual monitoring reports will incorporate monitoring of employment land and premises.

The Annual Monitoring Report represents an opportunity to provide an update on important information across a series of issues.

Summary of key retail issues:

- The future of the high street remains uncertain. With challenging conditions for both local and national retailers.
- Yeovil remains most important retail centre within the district. But the town centre faces competition from out-of-town retail estates and adjacent retail estates including in West Dorset.
- Vacancy rates in Yeovil town centre have increased since 2006 and recessionary impacts have been felt within the town centre and Primary Shopping Area.

Future plans for the regeneration of Yeovil Town Centre are integral to the Council's "Investing in Infrastructure" programme. Further investment in the town centre needs to be co-ordinated to ensure the town remains its vitality.

## Renewable Energy

### National Planning Policy Framework

Section 10 of the NPPF is concerned with *meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change*.<sup>50</sup>

Paragraph 93 highlights that planning plays a key role in helping to secure reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

In terms of energy efficiency and carbon emission the following paragraphs are relevant:

95. *To support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should:*

- *plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions;*
- *actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; and*
- *when setting any local requirement for a building's sustainability, do so in a way consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards.*

96. *In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:*

- *comply with adopted Local Plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and*
- *take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.*

In respect of renewable energy, the NPPF goes on to say:

97. *To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should:*

- *have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;*
- *design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;*
- *consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources;*
- *support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside such areas being taken forward through neighbourhood planning; and*
- *identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.*

### National Planning Practice Guidance

To amplify the NPPF guidance, the National Planning Practice Guidance online resource includes guidance on the bigger picture of climate change, as well as renewable energy and low carbon development.

To set the context with climate change:

Guidance > Climate change > Why is it important for planning to consider climate change?<sup>51</sup>

001. *In addition to supporting the delivery of appropriately sited green energy, effective spatial planning is an important part of a successful response to climate change as it can influence the emission of greenhouse gases. In doing so, local planning authorities should ensure that protecting the local environment is properly considered alongside the broader issues of protecting the global environment. Planning can also help increase resilience to climate change impact through the location, mix and design of development.*

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<sup>50</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/10-meeting-the-challenge-of-climate-change-flooding-and-coastal-change/>

<sup>51</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/climate-change/>

*Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. To be found sound, Local Plans will need to reflect this principle and enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework. These include the requirements for local authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in line with the provisions and objectives of the Climate Change Act 2008, and co-operate to deliver strategic priorities which include climate change.*

*In addition to the statutory requirement to take the Framework into account in the preparation of Local Plans, there is a statutory duty on local planning authorities to include policies in their Local Plan designed to tackle climate change and its impacts. This complements the sustainable development duty on plan-makers and the expectation that neighbourhood plans will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises that responding to climate change is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.*

More specifically concerning renewable and low carbon energy, another section of the Guidance contains information in relation to developing a strategy for renewable and low carbon energy.

Guidance > Renewable and low carbon energy > Developing a strategy for renewable and low carbon energy<sup>52</sup>  
003. *The National Planning Policy Framework explains that all communities have a responsibility to help increase the use and supply of green energy, but this does not mean that the need for renewable energy automatically overrides environmental protections and the planning concerns of local communities. As with other types of development, it is important that the planning concerns of local communities are properly heard in matters that directly affect them.*

*Local and neighbourhood plans are the key to delivering development that has the backing of local communities. When drawing up a Local Plan local planning authorities should first consider what the local potential is for renewable and low carbon energy generation. In considering that potential, the matters local planning authorities should think about include:*

- *the range of technologies that could be accommodated and the policies needed to encourage their development in the right places;*
- *the costs of many renewable energy technologies are falling, potentially increasing their attractiveness and the number of proposals;*
- *different technologies have different impacts and the impacts can vary by place;*
- *the UK has legal commitments to cut greenhouse gases and meet increased energy demand from renewable sources. Whilst local authorities should design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development, there is no quota which the Local Plan has to deliver.*

004. *What is the role for community led renewable energy initiatives?*

*Community initiatives are likely to play an increasingly important role and should be encouraged as a way of providing positive local benefit from renewable energy development. Further information for communities interested in developing their own initiatives is provided by the Department of Energy and Climate Change. Local planning authorities may wish to establish policies which give positive weight to renewable and low carbon energy initiatives which have clear evidence of local community involvement and leadership.*

*Neighbourhood plans are an opportunity for communities to plan for community led renewable energy developments. Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders can be used to grant planning permission for renewable energy development. To support community based initiatives a local planning authority should set out clearly any strategic policies that those producing neighbourhood plans or Orders will need to consider when developing proposals that address renewable energy development. Local planning authorities should also share relevant evidence that may assist those producing a neighbourhood plan or Order,*

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<sup>52</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy/>

*as part of their duty to advise or assist. As part of a neighbourhood plan, communities can also look at developing a community energy plan to underpin the neighbourhood plan.*

Suitable areas for wind energy development will need to have been allocated clearly in a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan.

*“When determining planning applications for wind energy development involving one or more wind turbines, local planning authorities should only grant planning permission if: · the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan; and · following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.*

*Maps showing the wind resource as favourable to wind turbines, or similar, will not be sufficient. Whether a proposal has the backing of the affected local community is a planning judgement for the local planning authority.”<sup>53</sup>*

Further parts of the Guidance deal with particular considerations for specific types of renewable and low carbon energy technologies, these being hydropower, active solar technology (photo-voltaics and solar water heating), solar farms and wind turbines.

Guidance > Renewable and low carbon energy > Particular planning considerations for hydropower, active solar technology, solar farms and wind turbines<sup>54</sup>

*011. What are the particular planning considerations that relate to Hydropower?*

*Planning applications for hydropower should normally be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment. Early engagement with the local planning authority and the Environment Agency will help to identify the potential planning issues, which are likely to be highly specific to the location. Advice on environmental protection for new hydropower schemes has been published by the Environment Agency.*

*012. What are the particular planning considerations that relate to Active solar technology (Photovoltaic and Solar Water Heating)?*

*Active solar technology, (photovoltaic and solar water heating) on or related to a particular building is often permitted development (which does not require a planning application) provided the installation is not of an unusual design, or does not involve a listed building, and is not in a designated area.*

*Where a planning application is required, factors to bear in mind include:*

- *the importance of siting systems in situations where they can collect the most energy from the sun;*
- *need for sufficient area of solar modules to produce the required energy output from the system;*
- *the effect on a protected area such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or other designated areas;*
- *the colour and appearance of the modules, particularly if not a standard design.*

*013. What are the particular planning considerations that relate to large scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic Farms?*

*The deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes. However, the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively.*

*Particular factors a local planning authority will need to consider include:*

- *encouraging the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value;*
- *where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and*

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<sup>53</sup> Written Statement made by: Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Greg Clark) on 18 Jun 2015.

<sup>54</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy/particular-planning-considerations-for-hydropower-active-solar-technology-solar-farms-and-wind-turbines/>

*(ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays. (See also a speech by the Minister for Energy and Climate Change, the Rt Hon Gregory Barker MP, to the solar PV industry on 25 April 2013).*

- *that solar farms are normally temporary structures and planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use;*
- *the proposal's visual impact, the effect on landscape of glint and glare (see guidance on landscape assessment) and on neighbouring uses and aircraft safety;*
- *the extent to which there may be additional impacts if solar arrays follow the daily movement of the sun;*
- *the need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing;*
- *great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting. As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence, but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large scale solar farms on such assets. Depending on their scale, design and prominence, a large scale solar farm within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset;*
- *the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges;*
- *the energy generating potential, which can vary for a number of reasons including, latitude and aspect.*

*The approach to assessing cumulative landscape and visual impact of large scale solar farms is likely to be the same as assessing the impact of wind turbines. However, in the case of ground-mounted solar panels it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography the area of a zone of visual influence could be zero.*

Finally, 'What are the particular planning considerations that relate to wind turbines' is dealt with at paragraph 014 in the format of a series of questions, that then link to extensive detailed advice on different aspects of wind turbine development.<sup>55</sup>

*The following questions should be considered when determining applications for wind turbines:*

- *How are noise impacts of wind turbines assessed?*
- *Is safety an issue when wind turbine applications are assessed?*
- *Is interference with electromagnetic transmissions an issue for wind turbine applications?*
- *How can the risk of wind turbines be assessed for ecology?*
- *How should heritage be taken into account in assessing wind turbine applications?*
- *Is shadow flicker and reflected light an issue for wind turbine applications?*
- *How to assess the likely energy output of a wind turbine?*
- *How should cumulative landscape and visual impacts from wind turbines be assessed?*
- *What information is needed to assess cumulative landscape and visual impacts of wind turbines?*
- *Decommissioning wind turbines*

Design of buildings is also a consideration in relation to energy efficiency and this is also dealt with in the Planning Practice Guidance.

Guidance > Design > What planning objectives can good design help achieve?<sup>56</sup>

*013. Planning should promote efficient use of natural resources*

*The structure, layout and design of places can help reduce their resource requirements in terms of energy demands, water and land take, and help to sustain natural ecosystems. Having a mix of uses and facilities within a neighbourhood can reduce travel demand and energy demands.*

*Ensuring a place is durable and adaptable will help make it less resource hungry over time. For example the layout of infrastructure servicing development (including water supply, sewerage, drainage, gas, electricity,*

<sup>55</sup> [http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy/particular-planning-considerations-for-hydropower-active-solar-technology-solar-farms-and-wind-turbines/#paragraph\\_014](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy/particular-planning-considerations-for-hydropower-active-solar-technology-solar-farms-and-wind-turbines/#paragraph_014)

<sup>56</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/design/what-planning-objectives-can-good-design-help-achieve/>

*cable, telephone, roads, footpaths, cycle ways and parks) should take account of foreseeable changes in demand to reduce the need for expensive future changes.*

*The layout and design of buildings and planting can reduce energy and water use and mitigate against flooding, pollution and over-heating.*

*Passive solar design is the siting and design of buildings to maximise the use of the sun's energy for heating and cooling. Passive solar design takes advantage of natural characteristics in building materials and air to help reduce the additional energy needed for heating and cooling. Policies can encourage sites to be planned to permit good solar access to as many buildings as possible. The potential benefits of passive solar design can only be realised by careful siting and layout. For example, access roads could predominantly run east-west, with local distributors running north-south and glazing minimised on north facing elevations to reduce heat loss.*

*Passive solar design principles can be applied equally effectively in housing and commercial developments. It is important that passive design considers the potential for overheating in the summer, as well as reducing need for heating in the winter.*

*A range of design solutions can be considered to help avoid overheating and the need for air conditioning. For example, high levels of thermal mass, maximising natural ventilation, passive cooling using planting for shade, roof overhangs to provide shade for high-sun angles, and smart glazing materials. The urban heat island effect can be reduced by, for example, allowing sufficient space between buildings, tree planting, shading and street layouts which encourage air flow and using light and reflective surfaces or vegetation on buildings.*

## **South Somerset Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026**

Strategic Priority 30: Produce 20% of the district's electricity and heat from renewable sources by 2015

- Encourage a range of schemes producing electricity and heat from renewable sources including Combined Heat and Power, Wind Farms and Landfill Gas;
- Incentivise small community/neighbourhood/individual heat and electricity schemes;
- Ensure new housing and business developments include schemes for producing electricity and heat from renewable sources;
- Foster new businesses that want to take advantage of proximity to schemes for producing electricity and heat from renewable sources.

## **South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028**

National policy strongly supports renewable and low carbon energy, with the UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009) setting a target of 15% of energy consumption to come from renewable sources by 2020.

Policy EQ1 fully supports the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy, consistent with national policy. However, in some cases there may be unacceptable impacts that could preclude renewable and low carbon energy development, such as large wind turbines on bird flight paths in or around the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar, and impact upon protected landscapes such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB),<sup>261</sup> or designated heritage assets. The Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Somerset Levels and Moors makes clear that wind farm developments are likely to be unacceptable within 800 metres of the internationally designated sites.

### **POLICY EQ1: ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IN SOUTH SOMERSET**

The Council will support proposals for new development where they have demonstrated how climate change mitigation and adaptation will be delivered, through inclusion of the following measures (as appropriate).

New development will ensure that carbon dioxide emissions are minimised through energy efficiency measures, renewable and low carbon energy, and where necessary Allowable Solutions; The following sustainable construction standards will be required, unless it is proven not to be feasible or viable:

- o Code for Sustainable Homes level 4 from 2013 (or as amended by future Government policy, regulations and/or legislation);
- o Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 from 2016 (or as amended by future Government policy, regulations and/or legislation);

o BREEAM rating of 'excellent' for non-domestic buildings.

Development of renewable and low carbon energy generation will be encouraged and permitted, providing there are no significant adverse impacts upon residential and visual amenity, landscape character, designated heritage assets, and biodiversity. The presence of several airfields in South Somerset will mean the impacts of wind turbines upon electromagnetic interference and aviation radar will be a particular consideration; Developers must demonstrate that proposed wind turbines do not pose a risk to bat populations, and will not pose a barrier risk to migratory bird species, in particular to birds moving from key sites such as the Severn Estuary;

Development will be directed away from medium and high flood risk areas through using South Somerset's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as the basis for applying the Sequential Test. The area of search to which the Sequential Test will apply will be South Somerset wide, unless adequately justified otherwise in relation to the circumstances of the proposal;

Where appropriate, the Exception Test can be applied if this is consistent with wider sustainability objectives; Development should reduce and manage the impact of flood risk by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems, and through appropriate layout, design, and choice of materials;

Climate change should be considered in the design of new development, incorporating measures such as solar orientation, maximising natural shade and cooling, water efficiency and flood resilience;

Susceptibility to climate change should be taken into account on all proposals to develop sites with biodiversity interest.

## Minerals and Waste

This section seeks to provide relevant extracts from the strategic framework and the local policies that are already in place or 'emerging' from recent reviews.

### **Responsibilities for planning for minerals and waste planning**

Somerset County Council (DCC) is the Minerals Planning Authority responsible for determining the following types of development: including mineral exploration, extraction, processing, tipping of mineral waste, construction or erection of plant or buildings at a minerals site, oil and gas exploration and development, variation 3 of conditions attached to a minerals consent, consolidation of one or more planning permissions, review of old mineral permissions. As the MPA it also produces the Minerals

DCC is also the Waste Planning Authority (WPA) responsible for determining the following types of development: including scrap yards, clinical and other types of waste incinerator, landfill and land raising sites, waste storage facilities, sewage treatment plants, dredging tips, recycling and waste reception centres, GRP kiosks which house equipment for sewage undertakers, composting schemes, waste processing and composting plant, concrete crushing and blacktop reprocessing facilities. As WPA it is also responsible for producing the Waste Local Plan.

## Minerals

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

*"Minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and our quality of life. It is therefore important that there is a sufficient supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. However, since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, it is important to make best use of them to secure their long-term conservation."<sup>57</sup>*

*"When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:*

- *give great weight to the benefits of the mineral extraction, including to the economy;*
- *as far as is practical, provide for the maintenance of land-banks of non-energy minerals from outside National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and World Heritage sites, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas*
- *ensure, in granting planning permission for mineral development, that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment, human health or aviation safety, and take into account the cumulative effect of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or from a number of sites in a locality*
- *ensure that any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions and any blasting vibrations are controlled, mitigated or removed at source,<sup>31</sup> and establish appropriate noise limits for extraction in proximity to noise sensitive properties*
- *not grant planning permission for peat extraction from new or extended sites;*
- *provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity to be carried out to high environmental standards, through the application of appropriate conditions, where necessary. Bonds or other financial guarantees to underpin planning conditions should only be sought in exceptional circumstances*
- *not normally permit other development proposals in mineral safeguarding areas where they might constrain potential future use for these purposes;*
- *consider how to meet any demand for small-scale extraction of building stone at, or close to, relic quarries needed for the repair of heritage assets, taking account of the need to protect designated sites*

<sup>57</sup> Page 32, para.142, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG, 2012

- *recognise the small-scale nature and impact of building and roofing stone quarries, and the need for a flexible approach to the potentially long duration of planning permissions reflecting the intermittent or low rate of working at many sites*<sup>58</sup>

## National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance, published by DCLG, provides supplementary guidance to the NPPF<sup>59</sup>. A number of recent and relevant revisions to the guidance regarding mineral extraction and the planning process have been published. These include guidance specifically about hydro-carbon extraction:

*“The exploratory, appraisal or production phase of hydrocarbon extraction can only take place in areas where the Department of Energy and Climate Change have issued a licence under the Petroleum Act 1998 (Petroleum Licence).”*<sup>60</sup>

*“Planning permission is required for each phase of hydrocarbon extraction, although some initial seismic work may have deemed planning consent under Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.”*<sup>61</sup>

*“The exploratory phase seeks to acquire geological data to establish whether hydrocarbons are present. It may involve seismic surveys, exploratory drilling and, in the case of shale gas, hydraulic fracturing.”*<sup>62</sup>

## Somerset Minerals Plan

Objective A - To ensure that Somerset is able to provide an adequate and steady supply of minerals, contributing to national, regional and local requirements without compromising the natural and historic environment, supporting in particular:

- the county’s nationally important role in crushed rock supply;
- the production of recycled and secondary aggregates;
- the supply of local building stone to maintain and enhance the county's historic environment; and
- co-operation with Devon County Council in sand and gravel supply.

Objective B - To protect local communities in Somerset from unacceptable adverse impacts of minerals extraction and transportation, whilst recognising the employment opportunities linked with minerals extraction and the positive economic impacts that the minerals industry can have in Somerset.

Objective C - To avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of valuable mineral resources by other types of development, recognising that there may be competing development uses in some locations.

Objective D - To ensure that operational mineral sites are restored to high environmental standards at the earliest possible opportunity, thereby achieving environmental, social and economic gains from mineral development and strengthening local ecological networks.

Objective E - To protect the environment and local communities in Somerset from unacceptable adverse impacts of any proposal for oil and gas development, whilst recognising the national commitment to maintain and enhance energy security in the UK.

Objective F - To protect the county’s water resources from unacceptable adverse impacts associated with mineral development.

Objective G - To minimise the adverse impacts from minerals transportation on the road network and maximise opportunities for the movement of minerals by rail or water. Objective H To protect the natural and historic environment of Somerset from unacceptable adverse impacts associated with minerals extraction and transportation, and reduce the impacts of mineral development on climate change.

Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

When considering mineral development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants and local communities to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate

<sup>58</sup> Page 34, para.144, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG, 2012

<sup>59</sup> NPPF = National Planning Policy Framework

<sup>60</sup> Planning Practice Guidance Para: 104 Ref ID: 27-104-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

<sup>61</sup> Planning Practice Guidance, Para:093 Ref: 27-093-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

<sup>62</sup> Planning Practice Guidance, Para:095 Ref: 27-095-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

## **Waste & Recycling**

### **EU Targets**

EU Legislation has laid down a whole series of targets, via EU directives, for the reduction of waste and recycling.

#### Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC)

This Directive - Aims to prevent or reduce the adverse effects of the landfill of wastes on the environment.

Targets - Reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill (UK) by:

50% by 2013

75% by 2020

#### Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)

This Directive - Aims to protect the environment and human health through the prevention of harmful effects of waste generation and waste management.

Targets:

Household Waste:

50% by weight recycled by 2020

Construction and Demolition Waste:

70% by weight recycled by 2020

#### WEEE Directive (2002/95/EC)

This Directive - Aims to prevent Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment and in addition; to encourage reuse, recycling and other forms of recovery of such wastes to avoid disposal.

Targets - Producer responsibility targets have been set for all categories of WEEE noted in the implications column.

Targets for household appliances are shown below;

Minimum annual recovery targets:

80% - Large household appliances

70% - Small household appliances

Minimum annual recycling and reuse targets:

75% - Large household appliances

#### Batteries Directive (2006/66/EC)

This Directive - Prohibits certain batteries from the market place where they contain a certain mercury or cadmium content, and establishes rules for the collection, recycling, treatment and disposal of batteries and accumulators.

Targets for EU Member States

Must achieve a collection rate for portable batteries of:

45% by 2016

A recycling rate (for collected batteries) of between 50% - 75% depending on the type.

UK targets (collection):

25% by 2012 (as EU target)

#### Waste Incineration Directive (2000/76/EC)

This Directive - Aims to prevent or reduce, air, water and soil pollution, as well as any risk to human health, resulting from the incineration of waste.

Targets - This Directive does not contain a specific target but does impose operating and emissions limits.

#### Packaging & Packaging Waste Directive (1994/62/EC)

This Directive Aims: to limit the production of packaging waste and promote reuse, recycling and recovery regardless of origin i.e. households, commercial or industrial.

Targets: By 2008, between 55% & 80% by weight of packaging recycled of which:

60% - Glass paper and board

50% - Metals

22.5% - Plastics

15% - Wood

## Waste Management Plan for England

In 2013 the Government published a new Waste Management Plan for England that fulfilled the requirement in Article 28 of the revised EU Waste Framework Directive<sup>2</sup> (WFD). Article 28 requires that Member States ensure that their competent authorities establish one or more waste management plans covering all of their territory.

*“The Waste Management Plan for England is a high level document which is non-site specific. It provides an analysis of the current waste management situation in England, and evaluates how it will support implementation of the objectives and provisions of the revised WFD.”*<sup>63</sup> Most pertinent perhaps of this Plan is the objective for:

Measures to be taken to ensure that by 2020:

*“(a) at least 50% by weight of waste from households is prepared for re-use or recycled*

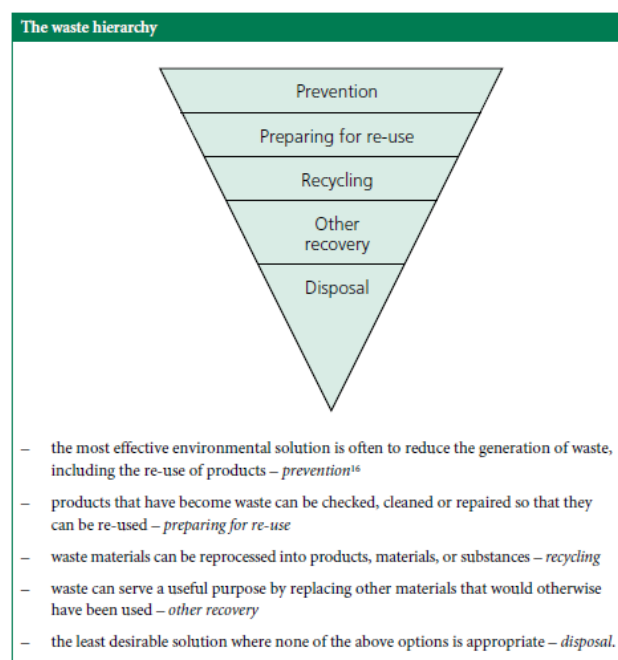
*(b) at least 70% by weight of construction and demolition waste is subjected to material recovery”*<sup>64</sup>

The **National Planning Policy for Waste** was published in 2014. It sets out detailed waste planning guidelines for the waste authorities and local planning authorities. It includes guidance on:

- ensuring that the planned provision of new capacity and its spatial distribution is based on robust analysis
- identifying sufficient opportunities to meet the identified needs of their area for the management of waste streams
- identifying, in their Local Plans, sites and/or areas for new or enhanced waste management facilities in appropriate locations.
- Determining planning applications

Paragraph 8 of National Planning Policy for Waste, requires local planning authorities to ensure:

- *there is not an unacceptable impact of proposed non-waste development on existing waste management facilities that would prejudice the operation of the facility or the implementation of the **Waste Hierarchy**;*
- *non-waste development makes sufficient provision for waste management and promotes good design to secure the integration of waste management facilities or local landscape. This includes adequate storage facilities for residential dwellings; and*
- *the operation of development maximises opportunities for the reuse and recovery of materials which minimises off-site disposal, or treatment.*



<sup>63</sup> Page 2, Waste Management Plan for England, DEFRA, Dec 2013

<sup>64</sup> Page 4, Waste Management Plan for England, DEFRA, Dec 2013

## South Somerset Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026

Strategic Priority 29: Year on year reduction of residual waste

- Identify levels of business waste and set targets for reduction;
- Endorsing an economically viable business waste recycling market;
- Encourage businesses and manufacturers to produce less packaging with goods or use recyclable/reusable options;
- Encourage individuals and communities to use more recyclable/reusable bags and packaging;
- Strive to improve the South Somerset doorstep recycling collection scheme by increasing range of items collected where viable;
- Work with a range of businesses, including restaurants and schools, to use waste, including food waste, for local renewable energy production.

### Somerset Waste Core Strategy 2013 (under review)

The vision for sustainable waste management in Somerset is a culture in which communities participate in waste prevention and in which unavoidable waste is managed as a valuable resource in innovative ways that:

- strengthen the economic well-being of Somerset;
- protect the county's unique environment and human health; and
- reduce carbon emissions from waste management.

By 2016 the facilities should be in place for a step-change in the management of biodegradable waste and for a major shift from landfilling to recovery of residual waste after recycling and reuse. By 2028 the facilities should be in place for Somerset to minimise the amount of waste sent for disposal to landfill to the small fraction of waste that remains after treatment, the materials used for landfill cover and certain hazardous wastes

Objective A - To encourage waste prevention as a priority from the outset and throughout the life of new developments.

Objective B - To support the delivery of waste management development in appropriate locations in accordance with the Vision and Plan Objectives, ensuring that existing and new communities are well served by appropriate waste management infrastructure.

Objective C - To identify and, where possible, minimise the adverse impacts of waste transport. Relevant measures will include (but not be limited to):

- supporting the use of more sustainable modes of transportation where practicable;
- increasing the efficiency of waste transport; and
- reducing the need to transport waste significant distances, whilst recognising the importance of finding an optimum balance between costs in environmental, social and economic terms.

Objective D - To support the delivery of waste management infrastructure that is integrated with other forms of development. Opportunities should be taken, in particular, to enable local use to be made of any power and/or heat generated from energy recovery processes.

Objective E - To empower local communities to become more involved in the management of waste as a resource. Relevant measures will include (but not be limited to):

- supporting the delivery of the Somerset Waste Partnership's municipal waste management strategy;
- working with the District and Borough planning authorities to support the provision of adequate facilities for storage and sorting of waste in new development; and
- maximising the environmental, economic and social benefits for local communities from waste management development.

Objective F - To encourage the development and innovation of waste management technologies that encourage more waste to be diverted away from landfill and driven up the waste hierarchy, noting that economic viability and value for money will be important factors in the delivery of appropriate solutions.

Objective G - To safeguard and expand existing waste management facilities, where appropriate, provided that they support the delivery of the Plan Objectives and the waste to resources agenda.

Objective H - To protect and enhance Somerset's unique natural and historic environment when considering the planning for and development of waste management facilities, the decommissioning of facilities when their operational life ends and the subsequent restoration of land.

Objective I - To ensure that the quality of life and health and safety of communities are taken into account when considering the planning and development of waste management facilities, the decommissioning of facilities when their operational life ends and the subsequent restoration of land. OBJECTIVE J To reduce carbon emissions from waste management and encourage development that helps to mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its effects.

#### Policy WCS1: Waste Prevention

Somerset County Council, as Waste Planning Authority, will work with local residents, businesses and other partners to maximise the scope for waste prevention.

- a) For proposed development, this will mean working with Local Planning Authorities to promote and require the following supporting information to be submitted with planning applications:
  - A site waste management statement for the construction of minor development (less than 10 dwellings or where the floorspace to be created by the development is less than 1000m<sup>2</sup>); or
  - A site waste management plan for the construction of 10 or more dwellings or where the floor space to be created by the development is 1000m<sup>2</sup> or more; or
  - A site waste management strategy for the construction of large-scale major projects (200 or more dwellings or where the development covers more than 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>) or for multi-site projects within the same application.
- b) On completion of development, this will mean supporting the Somerset Waste Partnership in its work on waste minimisation including, but not limited to, the delivery of its municipal waste management strategy and its work with the supply chain to reduce the negative impacts of packaging.

#### Policy WCS2: Recycling and Reuse

Planning permission will be granted for waste management development that will maximise reuse and/or recycling of waste subject to the applicant demonstrating that the proposed development will, in particular, be in accordance with Development Management Policies 1-9. Temporary storage and access During the planning stages of residential and non-residential development, Somerset County Council (as Waste Planning Authority) will encourage the provision of adequate space and facilities – both within buildings and externally - that enables effective separation, temporary storage and collection of waste. To do this, the County Council will:

- a) work with the Somerset Waste Partnership to encourage developers to provide adequate space and facilities for waste separation and storage and access for waste collection in new and existing developments;
- b) encourage District and Borough planning authorities to include relevant development management policies, conditions and/or guidance on waste separation and storage and access for waste collection; and
- c) require effective access to be provided, via its highway standards, throughout new development for waste collection and recycling vehicles. Recycling and reuse of inert waste Applications for all types of development should demonstrate that viable opportunities to minimise construction and demolition waste disposal will be taken, making use of existing industry codes of practice and protocols, site waste management plans (as detailed in strategic policy WCS1) and relevant permits and exemptions issued by the Environment Agency. Before considering inert landfill disposal, inert waste that cannot be reused or recycled on-site should be diverted off-site for recycling and/or the following beneficial uses, subject to the general considerations mentioned above:

- a) the restoration of quarries and other excavation sites (excluding peat sites);
- b) other uses with clear benefits to the local community and environment; or
- c) other facilities that will facilitate such positive use

#### Policy WCS3: Other Recovery

Planning permission will be granted for proposed waste management development that will maximise other recovery from waste, subject to the applicant demonstrating that the proposed development:

- a) will not treat waste that could viably be recycled or composted;
- b) will facilitate the recovery of energy from waste; and
- c) will, in particular, be in accordance with Development Management Policies 1-9. Indicative requirements for residual waste treatment are approximately: d) 93,000 tonnes of residual municipal solid waste; and e) 103,500 tonnes of residual commercial and industrial waste. Indicative requirements will be updated via annual monitoring work.

#### Policy WCS4: Disposal

Planning permission will not be granted for any form of landfill development unless the applicant demonstrates that:

- a) the waste cannot be managed in a more sustainable way through diversion up the waste hierarchy; and
- b) the proposed development will, in particular, be in accordance with Development Management Policies 1-9. Inert landfill development Planning permission may be granted for inert landfill development subject to the applicant demonstrating that the proposal:
- c) is restoration-led, enabling an area of land to be used more effectively or for another purpose; for example, for agriculture, nature conservation or built development; or
- d) provides justified visual or acoustic screening; and
- e) uses the minimum amount of waste to achieve the stated purpose, depositing inert waste only

#### Policy WCS5: Location of Strategic Waste Sites

Strategic waste sites will be allocated within the zones shown in the Key Diagram on page 133.

Planning permission for strategic waste management proposals will be granted according to the following sequence:

- 1) an allocated site in a zone;
- 2) an unallocated site in a zone;
- 3) an existing permitted waste management site outside the zones. In respect of tiers 2 and 3 in the above sequence, this will be subject to the applicant demonstrating that:
  - a) there are no suitable tier 1 sites available if the proposal is on a tier 2 site and there are no suitable tier 1 or tier 2 sites available if the proposal is on a tier 3 site; and
  - b) the site is well located to the source of the waste(s) and with good access to Somerset's strategic transport network; and
  - c) the site is of sufficient area (as a guide, at least 2ha) to promote the colocation of complimentary activities and provide the potential to accommodate a range of waste management technologies. Other locations will not be permitted unless the applicant demonstrates that the proposal complies with criteria a, b and c above and there is an over-riding need for the proposed development in that location

#### Policy DM1: Basic Location Principles

Planning permission will be granted for waste management development at locations that are well connected to the strategic transport network, which adhere to the principles of sustainable development and which support delivery of strategic policies WCS 2-5. Waste management development will normally be located on the following types of site (these are not listed in order of preference):

- a) existing waste management sites, sites with planning permission for waste management facilities and sites allocated for waste-related uses;
- b) land in existing general industrial use (B2 use class) or in existing storage and distribution use (B8 use class);
- c) land allocated for B2 and B8 purposes in a Local Plan or Development Plan Document;
- d) previously developed land;
- e) within or adjacent to redundant agricultural or forestry buildings (for composting and anaerobic digestion facilities only);
- f) current minerals workings (for aggregates recycling only). The use of unallocated greenfield land will be strictly controlled and limited in accordance with the Development Plan.

#### Policy DM2: Sustainable Construction and Design

Planning permission will be granted for waste management development subject to the applicant demonstrating a commitment to sustainable construction and design. Proposals will be considered favourably where they incorporate measures to:

- a) contribute positively to the character and quality of the area, taking into account landform, historic environment, layout, building orientation and materials, massing, height, density and landscaping;
- b) minimise the development's carbon footprint;
- c) incorporate energy and water efficient design strategies;

- d) prioritise the use of sustainable urban drainage systems;
- e) adapt to changing climate conditions;
- f) minimise waste production and maximise re-use or recycling of materials. Where feasible, proposals for waste management development should include the following: g) opportunities for decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy supply to the development to minimise carbon emissions; and h) proposals for local use to be made of energy generated from the proposed development to maximise the efficiency of the proposed development.

#### Policy DM3: Impacts on The Environment and Local Communities

Planning permission will be granted for waste management development subject to the applicant demonstrating that the proposed development will not generate:

- a) significant adverse impacts from noise, dust, vibration, odour, emissions, illumination, visual intrusion or traffic to adjoining land uses and users and those in close proximity to the development;
- b) significant adverse impacts on a public right of way or visual amenity; and
- c) unacceptable cumulative impacts.

When determining a waste planning application, the level of protection afforded to an environmental or heritage asset will be proportional to its significance including, but not limited to, its statutory designation. Sites and features of local and regional importance Planning permission for waste management development that would have a significant adverse impact on the integrity, character and/or setting of the following sites and features of local and regional importance:

- a) ancient woodlands, local nature reserves and local wildlife sites;
- b) special landscape areas and landscape features of importance;
- c) designated conservation areas;
- d) regionally-important geological sites;
- e) areas of high archaeological potential;
- f) sites with potential archaeological interest;
- g) habitats and species, including those listed in UK and local Biodiversity Action Plans and Somerset Priority Species List;
- h) wildlife habitat corridors, including linear features and 'stepping stones';
- i) best and most versatile agricultural land; and j) existing and planned green infrastructure such as playing fields and parks will only be granted if the applicant demonstrates that:
- k) the benefits of the development outweigh the adverse impacts; and
- l) the proposal includes adequate measures to mitigate adverse impacts or, as a last resort, proportionately compensate for or offset any loss of conservation value and damage to heritage asset, supported by appropriate archaeological evaluation of the significance of the heritage asset; and/or m) the proposal includes adequate measures to mitigate adverse impacts or, as a last resort, proportionately compensate for or offset any loss of biodiversity, supported by appropriate ecological assessment.

#### Policy DM4: Site Restoration and Aftercare

Planning permission for waste management development which does not constitute a permanent use of land will only be granted where acceptable restoration and aftercare measures will be implemented at the earliest practicable opportunity, either in a phased manner during operation or immediately on completion of the operational life of the development.

#### Policy DM5: Safeguarding Waste Management Sites

Existing waste management sites, sites with planning permission for waste management facilities and sites allocated for waste-related uses will be safeguarded. Proposals for non-waste development on or adjacent to these sites will be opposed unless it can be clearly demonstrated that: a) the operation of any existing waste management facility is not, or will not be, detrimentally affected and the development proposal would not suffer unacceptable adverse impacts as a result of the operation of the waste management facility; or b) there is an overriding need for the development in that location

#### Policy DM6: Waste Transport

Planning permission will be granted for waste management development subject to the applicant demonstrating that:

- a) the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on Somerset's local and strategic transport networks; or adequate and deliverable measures to mitigate such an impact are integrated within the proposal. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will be required for development that will generate significant transport movements; and
- b) suitable access to the development is deliverable; and
- c) alternatives to road transport for waste have been adequately explored and will be pursued if they are demonstrated to be practicable and beneficial. In addition, for proposals located outside the zones in the key diagram, applicants will be required to demonstrate that the proposed development is well connected (via suitable transport routes) to the community or business(es) that the development is intended to serve.

#### Policy DM7: Water Resources

Planning permission for waste management development will be granted subject to the applicant demonstrating that:

- a) adequate provision has been made to protect ground, surface and coastal water quality; and
- b) the proposed development will not have an unacceptable impact on the volumes, direction and rates of flow of ground and surface water; and
- c) the proposed development will not exacerbate flood risk. Flood Risk Assessments will be required for waste management development in areas at risk of flooding or where the development may lead to flooding elsewhere.

#### Policy DM8: Waste Water Treatment

Planning permission for waste water storage, pumping and treatment development will be granted subject to the applicant demonstrating that proposals:

- a) avoid the unnecessary use of areas at risk from flooding;
- b) establish links to existing sewerage infrastructure where possible; and
- c) have access to a suitable outlet for discharge of treated water, recognising the need to minimise pumping and the capacity of the outlet to accommodate discharges.

Applicants will be encouraged to explore opportunities for co-treatment of sewage sludge with other organic material.

## Appendix A

The following strategy documents have been referred to in the preparation of this report:

Asset Management Strategy 2014 – 2017, South Somerset District Council, 2014  
Cycling Strategy (part of the Active Travel Strategy), Somerset County Council, August 2012  
Economic Development Strategy, South Somerset District Council 2012 to 2015, March 2013  
Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Report, South Somerset District Council, February 2017  
National Character Area Profiles, Natural England,  
NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group Strategy 2014-2019, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, May 2014  
Open Space Strategy 2011 - 2015, South Somerset District Council, 2010  
Parking Strategy, Somerset County Council, September 2013  
Peripheral Landscape Study – Martock, South Somerset District Council, June 2008  
Private Sector Housing Strategy 2015-19, South Somerset District Council, June 2015  
Rural Housing Action Plan 2016-18, South Somerset District Council, 2016  
Shaping South Somerset, Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026, South Somerset Together, 2008  
Somerset Economic Strategy, Somerset Strategic Partnership, 2011-15  
Somerset Financial Inclusion Strategy, 2014-2018, Somerset authorities, August 2014  
Somerset Growth Plan 2014-2020, Operational Document, January 2014  
Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2013 – 18, Somerset County Council, 2012  
Somerset Major Sports Facilities Strategy, KK&P, March 2013  
Somerset’s Future Transport Plan 2011 – 2026, Somerset County Council 2011  
South Somerset Authority Monitoring Report, September 2016  
South Somerset Historic Environment Strategy Draft, South Somerset District Council, October 2016  
South Somerset Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update 2015/16, Somerset District Council, January 2016  
South Somerset Local Biodiversity Action Plan, May 2008  
South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028), South Somerset District Council, March 2015  
South Somerset Local Plan, Housing Monitoring Report 2012 -2013, South Somerset District Council, January 2014  
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 SFRA - Final Report, Halcrow for South Somerset District Council, August 2008  
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), South Somerset District Council, 2013  
Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report, Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset & Taunton Deane, JG Consulting, October 2016  
Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessments, Fordham Research, February 2009  
Walking Strategy (part of the Active Travel Strategy), Somerset County Council, August 2012  
Wild Somerset, The Somerset Biodiversity Strategy 2008 – 2018, Somerset Biodiversity Partnership, May 2008