

SOUTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN (2006 – 2028)



ADOPTED MARCH 2015



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1. Introduction

What Is The Local Plan?

- 1.1 The South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) is a collection of policies which set out the long term vision and strategic context for managing and accommodating growth within South Somerset up to 2028.
- 1.2 The local plan represents a shift from the previous, rigid approach to development control in South Somerset. Instead it takes a more spatial approach to shaping the future of the district, responding to specific needs and delivering sustainable development that creates positive outcomes for people and places.
- 1.3 The local plan is a statutory, legal document with a status that is confirmed in planning law¹. It forms part of the 'development plan' for South Somerset² and the policies provide a framework against which decisions on the future of the area will be taken. The policies in this local plan replace those previously set out in the South Somerset Local Plan (1991 – 2011), save for those outlined in Appendix 2.
- 1.4 A major part of the local plan is the identification of broad locations for employment and housing growth and accompanying policies for assessing development proposals. All policies include accompanying text, setting out the reason and need for the policy, and how the policy will be delivered and monitored where appropriate. It is important that the local plan be read as a whole. District-wide policies and policies for settlements, for example, elaborate on and add to the overall spatial strategy.
- 1.5 A Proposals Map is published alongside the local plan. It identifies the spatial proposals of the plan, with inset maps showing greater detail for individual settlements.

How Has The Council Prepared The Local Plan?

- 1.6 As required, the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) takes account of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)³ and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)⁴.
- 1.7 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the local plan has been undertaken, as required by Section 29(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as required by the SEA Directive⁵. The SA Report has been published alongside the local plan and assesses the policies against sustainability criteria, which were created in light of the objectives in the South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)⁶. The local plan has been shaped by the SA, which outlines the reasons for selecting

¹ Formal, legal status is given through Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), and Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

² Which can include other formally adopted development plan documents, such as a Site Allocation development plan document, and neighbourhood plans.

³ National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

⁵ National Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014). <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/>

⁶ Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: European Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment" – the SEA Directive.

⁷ Shaping South Somerset A Strategy for Sustainable Communities (2008-2026)

proposals from potential alternatives and the measures needed to prevent, reduce and offset any significant effects of implementing the local plan.

- 1.8 Similarly, the local plan has been subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) as required by the European Directive and Habitats Regulations⁷. Due to the potential impacts on the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA), a Ramsar site⁸, and Brackett's Copse Special Area of Conservation (SAC) an Appropriate Assessment, which forms stage 2 of the HRA, has also been produced. This is published as separate report, alongside the local plan⁹.
- 1.9 Throughout each stage of its preparation the local plan has been reviewed and signed off by the Council's internal Project Management Board, the District Executive Committee and Full Council.
- 1.10 In the future, the local plan will be supported by additional documents, such as the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, and Neighbourhood Plans. Once finalised these will also form part of the Development Plan for South Somerset.
- 1.11 In order to keep the Development Plan up-to-date and responsive to the changing nature of the district, the Council will undertake regular monitoring of the effectiveness of its policies. A comprehensive review of the local plan is programmed to occur within five years, and the Council has committed to a specific 'early review' of policies in relation to housing and employment provision in Wincanton by March 2018.

⁷ EC Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

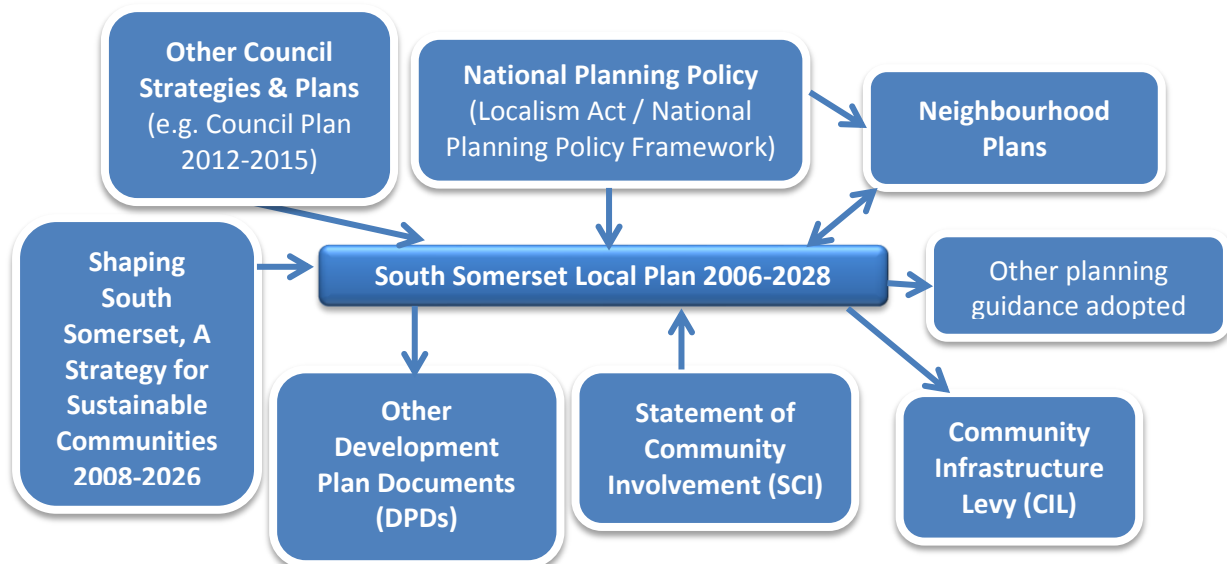
⁸ Wetlands of International importance designated under the RAMSAR Convention

⁹ Habitats Regulation Assessment and Appropriate Assessment: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/evidence-base/district-wide-documents/>

Policy Context

- 1.12 The role of the local plan is to set out a spatial strategy and policy agenda in the context of national policy as well as other strategies and programmes at District County, and Sub-regional level. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) and other policy documents.

Figure 1: Relationship between local plan and other policy documents



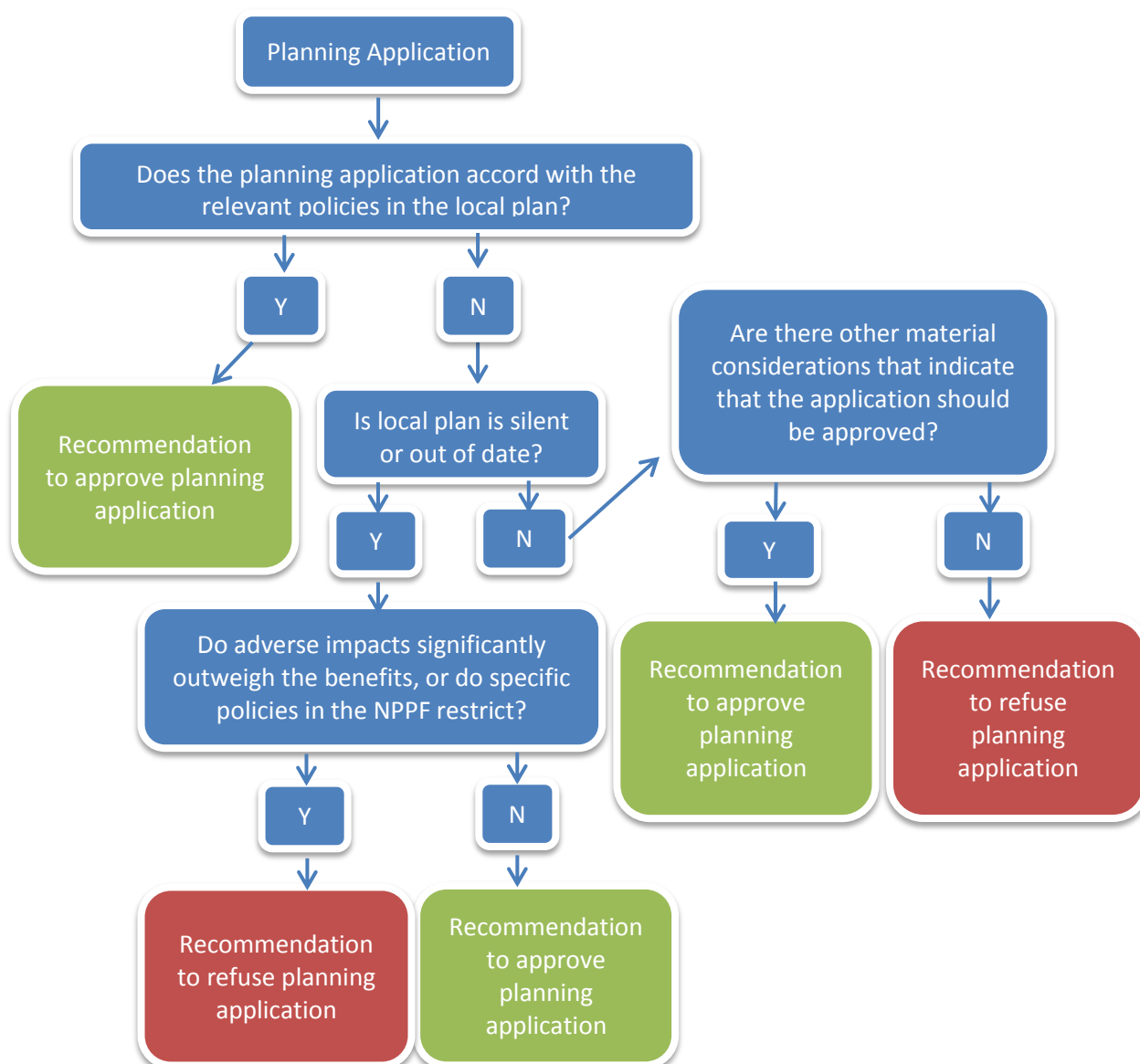
National Context

- 1.13 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a simplified framework which local authorities and local communities can use to shape their areas and identify priorities. The NPPF needs to be read in conjunction with other national policy statements for major infrastructure, energy, travellers' sites and waste.
- 1.14 A local plan must have regard to the NPPF and must be in general conformity with its principles. The local plan provides the opportunity to build upon the intentions in the NPPF and provide a more local perspective on how to address unique challenges and opportunities.
- 1.15 When a local plan is adopted, it forms part of the development plan, and becomes the starting point for decision-taking. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 1.16 Importantly, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where development accords with an up-to-date local plan it should be approved; where development conflicts it should be refused unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is however, a material consideration in decision-making¹⁰.

¹⁰ See Sections 19(2)(a) and 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 1.17 The NPPF is clear that the “overarching purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development” (Paragraph 6). It goes on to describe the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental; advocating that the planning system must perform a number of roles:
- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
 - a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 1.18 To achieve sustainable development, the NPPF has, at its heart, “a presumption in favour of sustainable development” (Paragraph 14) which applies to both local plan-making and decision-taking.
- 1.19 The expectation when producing local plans is that local authorities should deliver sustainable development by positively meeting their objectively assessed needs. During decision-taking, local authorities should realise sustainable development by approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent, or out-of-date, grant permission unless impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or specific sections of the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.
- 1.20 This is a key determinant in the implementation and delivery of the local plan. Development applications will need to clearly show how they comply with local plan policies and, if they do not, show how the benefits of the proposal outweigh the impacts. In addition, it is likely that during the lifespan of the local plan that there will be occasions where it is silent on a particular issue, or is deemed out-of-date. In this instance it will need to be shown that adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme. The flow diagram set out below outlines the decision-making process in simple terms.

Figure 2: Simplified flow diagram for how planning applications will be considered against the local plan



- 1.21 The NPPF also helps facilitate the Government's aspiration for communities to produce Neighbourhood Plans to shape their own areas¹¹. 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; 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.
- 1.22 The Council supports communities seeking to put in place Neighbourhood Plans but recognises that there is a significant amount of time and effort involved in creating one. The Council advises that communities fully analyse the policies set out in the local plan to see whether their aspirations can be achieved through these existing

¹¹ In relation to neighbourhood plans, via section 38B and C and paragraph 8(2) of new Schedule 4B to the 2004 Act (inserted by the Localism Act 2011 section 116 and Schedules 9 and 10).

means. If communities wish to progress with a Neighbourhood Plan the Council will provide 'arms-length' support to ensure that statutory requirements and Government policy are met.

Sub-Regional Context

- 1.23 In producing the local plan, the Council has sought to be aspirational but realistic. Whilst defining the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change it is a requirement to liaise with different organisations to ensure that strategic priorities that cross local authority boundaries are understood and solutions co-ordinated. This is known as the "Duty to Co-operate"¹².
- 1.24 It has been shown that South Somerset has met its duty to co-operate by working with others (especially Somerset County Council and neighbouring district councils) to develop a common evidence base where appropriate, and resolve issues of shared interest. This work has demonstrated that South Somerset can meet its development requirements within its own district¹³.
- 1.25 During the implementation of the local plan, monitoring and further engagement with the same bodies and organisations will ensure that the co-operation is continuous and can highlight any varying requirements or emerging issues that could be addressed through the reviews of the local plan.
- 1.26 Elsewhere at the sub-regional level, the Council continues to influence and implement the objectives established by the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HoSW LEP). The HoSW LEP, formed in June 2011, has produced a Strategic Economic Plan¹⁴ and secured a Growth Deal¹⁵ with Government that provides a further sub-regional tier of planned investment, growth and change.
- 1.27 In order to bring about effective changes in the area, it will be necessary for local aims to be in step with those of the LEP (and vice versa). As a relatively new organisation, there remains the opportunity to express upon the LEP the ambition and possibility within South Somerset and ensure that the local opportunities are capitalised upon.

Local Context

- 1.28 The local plan replaces most of the 'saved' policies and proposals in the South Somerset Local Plan 1991-2011. Appendix 2 includes a list of all those replaced policies and proposals.
- 1.29 The appendix also shows those policies and proposals to remain saved because they continue to be in conformity with the NPPF but provide locally specific definition on unique issues in South Somerset.

¹² Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011)

¹³ South Somerset District Council Duty to Co-operate Report (March 2014)

¹⁴ Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership – Strategic Economic Plan 2014 - 2030 (March 2014):

<http://www.heartofswlep.co.uk/sites/default/files/user-88/SEP-%20Final%20draft%2031-03-14-website.pdf>

¹⁵ Heart of the South West Local Enterprise – Growth Deal 2014/2015 (March 2014):

<http://www.heartofswlep.co.uk/sites/default/files/user-1/Growth%20Deal%202015%20Heart%20of%20SW-Final%203-4.pdf>

4. Delivering Sustainable Development

Overview

- 4.1 The principles of 'sustainable development' are central to the planning system. A common definition of sustainable development is *"development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*⁴³.
- 4.2 As noted in Chapter 1, the NPPF sets out a *"presumption in favour of sustainable development"* and recommends that policies in a local plan should follow this presumption.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 4.3 The Framework recognises that sustainable development is about change for the better. It is about positive growth, making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly. They are mutually dependent.
- 4.4 In line with Government policy advice, the Council has adopted a positive approach in seeking to meet the objectively assessed development needs of the district. The policies in the local plan provide a clear framework to guide development that creates positive, sustainable growth, therefore following the presumption in favour of sustainable development, enabling proposals that accord with the local plan to be approved without delay. This policy is therefore at the heart of decision making when assessing planning applications.
- 4.5 The NPPF confirms the statutory status of the local plan as the starting point for decision-making. To this effect, development that accords with an up-to-date local plan should be approved, and development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF, with its presumption in favour of sustainable development, is a material consideration in determining planning applications.
- 4.6 There may be instances where the local plan is silent or, in future years, policies may become out of date. To enable the Council to continue to take a sustainable, positive approach to decision making, applicants will need to assist by submitting evidence that demonstrates how proposed development accords with the local plan, and how the benefits of the proposal outweigh any adverse impacts. Where proposed development does not accord with the local plan the onus will be upon the applicant to show how material considerations indicate that the scheme should not be refused.

⁴³ World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

POLICY SD1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

When considering development proposals the Council will take a proactive approach to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and seek to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions within the District.

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 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 or refused.

Where necessary the Council will work with applicants to improve proposals so that they are capable of being approved.

Delivery

4.7 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy SD1:

- South Somerset District Council; and
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Grant application within relevant target dates	Approved applications within target dates unless there are mitigating circumstances

5. Settlement Strategy

Overview

- 5.1 The settlement strategy for South Somerset consists of two key elements:-
- A hierarchy of settlements identified on the basis of their current and potential role and function, with future growth concentrated at the higher end of the hierarchy; and
 - An established scale of growth for employment and housing and associated land uses for the main settlements identified within the hierarchy.

Settlement Hierarchy

- 5.2 The local plan makes clear spatial choices about where development should go in broad terms and identifies broad strategic locations for new development reflecting sustainable development principles.
- 5.3 In planning for new growth for both employment and housing there needs to be evidence of demand and need for the growth proposed and it should be located to develop and support mixed and sustainable communities, reflecting the spatial vision for local areas. New development also needs to be accessible by all forms of transport wherever practical, designed to reflect advances in technology for renewable and low carbon forms of energy, be able to address any physical constraints and provide any additional necessary infrastructure.
- 5.4 The South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study⁴⁴ was commissioned by the Council to:
- Develop a methodology to identify the current role and functional relationship of settlements and their potential future roles; and
 - Provide recommendations on settlement classification.
- 5.5 The methodology provided a statistical analysis of employment, housing, retail and community use provision within settlements and evidence of sustainable travel opportunities and self-containment (people living and working in the same place). Key indicators considered were:
- Settlements with a strong employment role;
 - Identifying important retail and community services centres; and
 - Sustainable travel opportunities and self-containment.
- 5.6 Population forecasts, employment growth and other anticipated changes have also been looked at to see how these indicators might change in the future.
- 5.7 The study reflected on previous evidence developed as part of the now revoked Regional Spatial Strategy. It underlined the Council's understanding that in terms of the scale of housing supply and economic activity; extent of travel to work and retail catchments; and provision of leisure, cultural, and transport services – Yeovil remains the principal settlement within South Somerset.
- 5.8 Accordingly, the main focus of the study was to identify the hierarchy of the lower tier settlements in the district. The outcome was a recommendation for settlements (known as Market Towns) to accommodate growth which has a wider than local

⁴⁴ Settlement Role and Function Study, Baker Associates (April 2009)

significance, and other settlements (known as Rural Centres) to meet growth which would cater more to local needs and nearby small settlements.

- 5.9 The Market Towns are identified as having a strong employment, retail and community role and were identified as:
- Chard;
 - Crewkerne;
 - Ilminster;
 - Wincanton;
 - Somerton;
 - Langport/Huish Episcopi; and
 - Ansford/Castle Cary.
- 5.10 Other settlements with a defined retail and community role were put forward as Rural Centres and identified as:
- Ilchester;
 - South Petherton;
 - Martock /Bower Hinton;
 - Bruton;
 - Milborne Port; and
 - Stoke Sub Hamdon.
- 5.11 All other settlements would be considered to be within open countryside and identified in generic terms as 'Rural Settlements'.
- 5.12 This hierarchy forms the basis of the local plan as it is considered that the bulk of growth outside Yeovil should be in the Market Towns and Rural Centres in order to take advantage of employment and service opportunities available in these places, minimise the infrastructure investment required across the district, and increase the level of self-containment.
- 5.13 Alongside this study, it is important to ensure that the most sustainable options for growth were considered. Sustainability Appraisal of alternative settlement strategy options have been undertaken to ensure that the strategy is appropriate in terms of environmental, economic and social implications, and cost, benefit and risks. The Sustainability Appraisal for the whole local plan, including its policies, can be found within the local plan evidence base.

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).

Yeovil

- 5.14 The evidence base relating to the size and scale of housing supply and economic activity; the extent of travel to work patterns and retail catchments; and the extent of leisure, cultural, and transport services highlights that Yeovil remains the principal settlement within South Somerset. Accordingly, most new development is proposed at Yeovil.
- 5.15 Yeovil can deliver further development sustainably and promote a better balance between jobs growth and where people choose to live. A critical mass, economies of scale and better use of existing infrastructure can be secured through Yeovil's continued designation as the primary focus for growth in this local plan.
- 5.16 Yeovil already acts as the focal point for economic activity in the district and has good manufacturing links with high tech industries and advanced engineering, building upon the strong links to the aeronautical industry. Growth in these sectors and in green technologies features prominently in the HOSW Local Economic Partnership's proposals for the town as defined in the Strategic Economic Plan and Growth Deal.

Market Towns

- 5.17 Outside Yeovil, there is to be more limited growth in those other larger settlements within the district which act as focal points for their area. These are identified as Market Towns and Rural Centres.
- 5.18 Market Towns should provide locally significant development and meet the following criteria:-
- Have an existing concentration of business and employment with potential for expansion;
 - Have shopping, cultural, faith, educational, health and public services; and

- Have sustainable transport potential.
- 5.19 Classifying a place as a 'Market Town' has been achieved through identifying the range of important roles a settlement fulfills in their local setting, in particular, where they provide jobs and services for their residents, and the residents of the surrounding areas and elsewhere⁴⁵. These towns are the focal points for locally significant development including the bulk of the district's housing provision outside Yeovil. This growth aims to increase the self- containment of these settlements and enhance their service role, reflecting the aspirations of national policy in promoting stronger communities.
- 5.20 The types of Market Town do differ across the district, due to their current level of services, facilities and economic activity. Therefore, two tiers of market town have been identified: Primary Market Towns and Local Market Towns. The scale of future growth allocated to these two tiers is proportionate, with the larger Primary Market Towns planned to receive a higher level of growth, and the smaller Local Market Towns a lower level of growth. The specific amounts are set out in Policy SS5.

Rural Centres

- 5.21 Development in smaller but still sizeable settlements is likely to be less sustainable and so should be geared to meet local needs and address affordable housing issues. Small scale economic activity is not considered out of keeping in these settlements in order to:
- Support economic activity that is appropriate to the scale of the settlement;
 - Extend the range of services to better meet the needs of the settlement and immediate surrounds; and
 - Meet identified local needs.
- 5.22 These settlements are referred to as Rural Centres.

Rural Settlements

Overview

- 5.23 Rural Settlements are considered as locations where there will be a presumption against development unless key sustainability criteria can be met. This is explained in Policy SS2. These settlements will no longer have identified development areas and will be considered to be within the open countryside for planning purposes.
- 5.24 This approach does not preclude development; indeed the NPPF promotes sustainable development in rural areas, with housing and employment to be located where it enhances or maintains the vitality of rural communities.
- 5.25 Future delivery of housing and economic activity in rural locations needs to carefully balance the sustaining of communities against protecting and enhancing the rural environment. The rural lifestyle provided by the many small villages and hamlets in South Somerset is one of the unique qualities of the district, and in turn, creates a range of challenges and opportunities that require delicate management.
- 5.26 Evidence indicates that rural areas experience higher property prices and corresponding issues associated with housing affordability. These areas are usually populated by an increasingly aged population, and can suffer from socio-economic effects stemming from rural isolation, a low-wage economy, and poor transport

⁴⁵ Settlement Role and Function Study, Baker Associates (April 2009)

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⁴⁵ Settlement Role and Function Study, Baker Associates (April 2009)

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

- 5.27 Reflecting on the Taylor Review (2008)⁴⁶ and the NPPF, it is clear that a thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship. Rural housing plays a crucial role in maintaining the viability of these local facilities.
- 5.28 Furthermore, it is important that planning does not pre-determine the future of rural communities by only assessing communities as they are now and not what they could be. In too many places this approach writes off rural communities in a 'sustainability trap' where development can only occur in places already considered to be in narrow terms 'sustainable'. The question that should be asked is: "*how will development add to or diminish the sustainability of this community?*". This requires a better balance of social, economic, and environmental factors together to form a long term vision for all scales of communities.
- 5.29 Policy SS2 seeks to ensure the development needs of Rural Settlements can be met, whilst restricting the scale of such growth to be consistent with the spatial strategy of focusing development at Yeovil, the Market Towns, and the Rural Centres.
- 5.30 The Rural Settlements tier of the settlement hierarchy covers a range of settlements that vary widely in size, role, function, local priorities, and constraints. Therefore, the interpretation of Policy SS2 will depend on applying these factors in considering proposals at each individual settlement; for example a proposal that is acceptable in one of the larger Rural Settlements such as Templecombe, which has a relatively strong employment function and good sustainable transport links with the presence of a railway station, will be different to a smaller Rural Settlement such as Compton Dundon which does not have these features.
- 5.31 Applications for new development in Rural Settlements will need to include necessary supporting evidence to justify that the criteria of Policy SS2 have been met. Such proposals should be based upon meeting the needs of the Rural Settlement in question, and should undergo early engagement and preferably demonstrate support from the community, consistent with the Government's 'localism' agenda. Clearly the more types of development a proposal contains the more broad based a case can be made for sustainable development.
- 5.32 Given that Policy SS2 is starting from the premise of no development unless certain conditions are met, the evidence for development being of a strong sustainable nature is particularly important to provide. Furthermore the local community is best placed to determine local need and what will make their settlement more sustainable and there will be an expectation that development proposals have either come from the local community, or been tested and checked through local consultation and engagement.
- 5.33 There may be occasions when nearby settlements effectively provide local services for each other, acting as a 'cluster', meaning a case can be made for development in one settlement to meet the needs of the cluster. In these cases, clear evidence of the functional service relationship between the settlements will be needed.

⁴⁶ Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (2008)

- 5.34 The following sub-headings provide further explanation on meeting the three key criteria for the types of development that will be appropriate in Rural Settlements i.e. employment, local services and housing.

Employment Opportunities

- 5.35 The NPPF⁴⁷ states that policies should support sustainable economic growth in rural areas to help overcome the unfulfilled economic potential in rural communities, tackle an over-reliance on traditional low paid employment and under-employment, and help limit skilled workers having to move elsewhere for work. The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership has identified rural enterprise as a key workstream working in conjunction with the Rural Growth Network.
- 5.36 Some examples of employment opportunities that are likely to be acceptable in Rural Settlements include starter units to support individuals or small companies, workshops, and businesses that require a rural location e.g. farm diversification, tourism (see Policy EP5 and EP7 and EP8 for further detail).
- 5.37 The scale of employment development that is acceptable in Rural Settlements will vary depending on the size and nature of each settlement. Policies EP4 and EP5 provide further detail on how applications for economic development in the countryside will be assessed.

Local Services and Facilities

- 5.38 Accessible local services that meet community needs and support well-being are vital to creating strong, vibrant and healthy communities. The NPPF⁴⁸ supports the delivery and safeguarding of community facilities and services allowing established facilities to develop and modernise.
- 5.39 Policy SS2 therefore generally supports proposals to create or enhance community facilities and services in Rural Settlements – this could include local shops; community halls; pubs; health and social care facilities; cultural, sports, recreation, faith and education facilities. It should be noted that there is a clear link between the provision of housing and employment and securing current and future facilities and services. The inter-relationship should be clearly explained in any application for development in Rural Settlements.

Housing

- 5.40 The NPPF states that policies should take into account the need to provide housing in rural areas, in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability; and although the focus should be on existing towns and identified service centres, some new housing should be provided to meet identified local need in other villages⁴⁹.
- 5.41 It is important to ensure that the occupiers of new homes in Rural Settlements are able to live as sustainably as possible by having easy access to basic facilities that provide for their day to day needs. Therefore, new housing development should

⁴⁷ NPPF Paragraph 28 (March 2012)

⁴⁸ NPPF Paragraph 69 – 78 (March 2012)

⁴⁹ NPPF Paragraph 54 – 55 (March 2012)

only be located in those Rural Settlements that offer a range (i.e. two or more) of the following services, or that provide these within a cluster of settlements:-

- local convenience shop;
- post office;
- pub;
- children's play area/sports pitch;
- village hall/community centre;
- health centre;
- faith facility; and
- primary school.

- 5.42 In simple terms it is not realistic to expect a small hamlet with few services to be made a more sustainable location through new development.
- 5.43 Housing proposals should also, where possible, demonstrate how they would support existing facilities. The NPPF states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.
- 5.44 Housing proposals will need to fully explain how they contribute to meeting local need. This could be via delivering affordable housing, low cost market housing, or a different form or type of housing which is in limited supply for locals (e.g. small bungalows for elderly local households to move to and remain in the village, or two bedroom accommodation for young households). It will generally be expected that affordable housing is included as part of housing schemes proposed at Rural Settlements. The NPPF gives greater flexibility for local councils to set their own approach to delivering housing in rural areas. This includes considering whether allowing some market housing would enable the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.
- 5.45 Residential proposals in Rural Settlements will be expected to achieve a better overall variety of housing in the settlement and result in a more balanced community with better prospects for local people to obtain affordable housing and/or access a wider range of market housing and have regard to Policy HG5, Policy HG3 and Policy HG4.
- 5.46 Policy SS5 sets out the scale of housing development that should be delivered in the Rural Settlements tier of the settlement hierarchy.

POLICY SS2: DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL SETTLEMENTS

Development in Rural Settlements (not Market Towns or Rural Centres) will be strictly controlled and limited to that which:

- Provides employment opportunities appropriate to the scale of the settlement; and/or
- Creates or enhances community facilities and services to serve the settlement; and/or
- Meets identified housing need, particularly for affordable housing.

Development will be permitted where it is commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, provides for one or more of the types of development above, and increases the sustainability of a settlement in general.

Proposals should be consistent with relevant community led plans, and should generally have the support of the local community following robust engagement and consultation.

Proposals for housing development should only be permitted in Rural Settlements that have access to two or more key services listed at Paragraph 5.41.

Delivery

5.47 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy SS2:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners; and
- Registered Providers.

Monitoring Indicator	Target
Net additional dwellings in Rural Settlements.	At least 2,242 dwellings built in Rural Settlements over the local plan period.
Housing developments in Rural Settlements.	New dwellings only permitted in Rural Settlements with two or more key services.
Level of community facilities or services in Rural Settlements (Rural Services Survey).	Addition of new community facilities and services in association with development.
Delivery of employment in Rural Settlements.	Approximately 1181 jobs to be delivered over the local plan period.

Local Market Towns – Ansford/Castle Cary

Spatial Portrait

- 7.103 The settlements of Ansford and Castle Cary lie adjacent to each other on the southern edge of the Somerset Levels beside the River Cary. Ansford/Castle Cary has a rich historic environment that has been recognised by the towns four designated Conservation Areas and many Listed Buildings including most notably the Grade II* listed All Saints Church. The area around the settlement has high archaeological potential and the remains of a motte and bailey castle.



Castle Cary High Street

- 7.104 The combined settlements have a population of 3,421¹²⁸. The isolated nature of the town and its largely rural surroundings mean that it serves a more strategic service role than expected.
- 7.105 The town supports a full range of services including a secondary school, doctor's surgery, pharmacy, dentist, library, bank, convenience store, post office and public houses. The town's economically active population is half that of the town's total population and largely matches the town's 1,200 jobs¹²⁹. The town's major employers are based on the Torbay Road Industrial estate and include Centaur Services, Royal Canin and Snell 2000 Ltd. Travel to work data shows that 54% of the population 'out commute' and that this is principally to Yeovil, Wincanton and Bruton.

¹²⁸ ONS Mid 2010 estimate - Urban Area

¹²⁹ BRES Employment data 2010

- 7.106 The town centre provides quality shopping with many niche and independent traders and a range of supplementary services. It is accessible by bus and has parking provision but there is congestion at peak times on Fore Street. The choice of convenience shopping is limited. The town centre is liable to flooding.
- 7.107 To the north of the town Ansford/Castle Cary benefits from access to its railway station located on the West of England and Heart of Wessex lines.

Local Aspirations

- 7.108 Consultation in 2005 for the Castle Cary and Ansford Community Plan (CanPlan) identified a number of issues for action including better facilities for young people; better traffic flow through the town; the resolution of parking problems (without charging); affordable housing for young families; only small scale appropriate industrial, retail and business development; maintaining the quality of the local environment; and improving the Market House to provide a comfortable multi-use centre for the whole community.
- 7.109 There is a local aspiration for employment opportunities such as light and high tech industry to increase settlement self-containment, one-bedroom and a range of family housing to address current imbalance in housing type and size, improvements to road and drainage infrastructure (including parking and the alleviation of congestion) and the protection of retail and educational facilities.
- 7.110 Rail connections are excellent in Ansford/Castle Cary, but road connections much less so. The town remains an important local employment centre in the East of South Somerset but employment land is now scarce and a small supply needs to be maintained and brought forward. The town enjoys a positive retail experience dependent on local niche businesses and attracts trade from a wide area. The town is dependent on local major employers and ongoing diversification of employment and growth opportunities for small and medium enterprises are to be encouraged.

What Will The Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

- 7.111 The South Somerset Role and Function Study (April 2009) identifies Ansford/Castle Cary as performing an employment function and identified retail and community role for the town and surrounding area. Ansford/Castle Cary is designated as a Local Market Town in this local plan and such a designation will enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role. In recognition of its small scale and nature, along with Somerton and Langport/Huish Episcopi is identified as a Local Market Town with a reduced scale of growth to match.

Housing

- 7.112 To maintain the town's service role, Ansford/Castle Cary is expected to deliver at least 374 new dwellings over the plan period. As shown in Table 1, existing commitments amount to 156 dwellings (April 2012), albeit completions remain low at just 42. However, based upon commitments, it leaves a further 218 dwellings to be accommodated over the plan period. It should be noted that the planning permission for the BMI site, Cumnock Lane has recently lapsed and although it can't be considered a commitment at this present time there is an expectation that

this important brownfield site will be developed within the plan period and thereby reduce the future housing target by a further 89 dwellings. The phasing policy SS7 would be a key mechanism in addressing early delivery of this brownfield site prior to the greenfield direction for growth.

- 7.113 The additional level of growth reflects the town's role and function within the district's settlement hierarchy. This level of provision will support the town centre business role and help support community facilities such as the local secondary school and health centre.

Employment

- 7.114 To support the provision of an anticipated 273 jobs, there is a need for approximately 18.97 hectares of employment land in Ansford/Castle Cary over the local plan period. This includes 10.07 hectares of employment land which already exists or is committed. This leaves 8.9 hectares to be delivered during the plan period. Since the start of the plan period in 2006, there has been approximately 9ha of employment land delivered in the town through the building of the Royal Canin pet food factory in 2008 on a saved allocation from the previous local plan. Following consideration of four separate sources of evidence, it is clear that local employers require additional employment land during the plan period for expansion and/or relocation. This has informed the decision to identify a further 8.9 hectares. The Council's monitoring processes will record delivery of this additional employment land in the town. Given that the seemingly high requirement for employment land in Ansford/Castle Cary is linked to the need articulated by two specific companies, there will be a requirement to continuously monitor these companies' requirements. In the event that a position emerges within the Plan period that the need is no longer required, then the Council will undertake a priority review of the employment requirement for the town. This would be a key priority on the Local Development Scheme in subsequent reviews.

Retail

- 7.115 The South Somerset Retail Capacity Study update (2010) indicates that the ability to significantly increase the amount of comparison goods floorspace for Ansford/Castle Cary will be constrained by its size, natural catchment area and level of commercial market interest. Orientated towards a top-up food shopping function, in principle, it would be beneficial to increase the level of retention of main/bulk-food shopping trips. However like the comparison retail sector, the natural catchment and expenditure capacity of the centre will limit the potential for large-scale additional provision and there will also be concerns over the impact on existing retail provision. Therefore, for both convenience and comparison retailing, a general strategic approach for Ansford/Castle Cary is recommended which acknowledges the need to retain shopping trips within the town and supports proposals that increase retention via the promotion of realistic proposals.
- 7.116 The town centre is considered vulnerable to potential out of centre retail development by virtue of the fact that it does not possess an anchor store and contains many small size outlets. It is considered appropriate to have a local retail impact threshold of 250 sq meters above which any retail proposal would be required to provide an impact assessment.

Infrastructure

- 7.117 The Council's Infrastructure Plan¹³⁰ demonstrates that these proposals are deliverable and that the necessary social, physical and green infrastructure is provided to support the proposed development. A road link between Station Road and Torbay Road has been identified as appropriate for the implementation development in the strategic direction of growth. Submissions to the Council have indicated that it is viable and deliverable.

Education

- 7.118 Capacity issues have been identified at Castle Cary Primary School and opportunities for expansion at the current site are very limited. A new primary school would therefore be required to accommodate future substantial growth.

Flood Risk

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

Direction of Growth

- 7.120 A North West direction of growth has been found to be the most sustainable location for Ansford/Castle Cary's future expansion of housing, employment and education proposals. A North West direction for growth has the advantages of being well related to existing employment opportunities, the town centre, the town's Schools and is located on land that will have the least impact in respect of peripheral landscape¹³¹. A road link between Station Road and Torbay Road will be expected to be provided to improve access and egress to new and existing employment and better integration of the development within the town.

¹³⁰ Infrastructure Plan (2012)

¹³¹ Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2012)

POLICY LMT1: ANSFORD / CASTLE CARY DIRECTION OF GROWTH AND LINK ROAD

The direction of strategic growth (for housing, employment & education) will be north of Torbay Road and East and West of Station Road. As part of any expansion within the direction for growth, a road will be expected to be provided between Station Road & Torbay Road prior to completion of the expansion.

Delivery

7.121 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Ansford/Castle Cary:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Somerset County Council;
- Town and Parish Councils; and
- Developers and Landowners

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Net additional housing in Ansford/Castle Cary	At least 374 dwellings between 2006 and 2028.
Amount of employment land delivered in Ansford/Castle Cary	18.97 ha of employment land between 2006 and 2028.
The provision of appropriate road improvements	Delivery of a link road between Torbay Road and Station Road before completion of development proposal
The provision of a new Primary School at Ansford / Castle Cary	Deliver one new primary school

Delivering Employment Land in the Countryside

- 9.36 In the context of protecting the countryside, national policy supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas.¹⁷³ Policy SS2: Development in Rural Settlements outlines the strategic approach to job creation in Rural Settlements and Policy SS3: Delivering New Employment Land identifies the amount of land to be delivered for economic development in these settlements over the remainder of the Plan period¹⁷⁴.
- 9.37 The Council supports a viable rural economy and its diversification, the district's Sustainable Community Strategy seeks to deliver a raised quality of life in rural areas by promoting thriving, inclusive and locally distinctive rural economies. 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.
- 9.38 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.

Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside

- 9.39 There are many businesses located in the countryside that provide a valuable source of local employment. These businesses have often made significant investments in existing sites and have limited relocation choices. Relocation may not be a desirable option for not only can it affect the individual business concerned in terms of its continuity and staff retention, but it can also result in the loss of jobs which may have been the most sustainable option for providing local employment in a particular rural area.
- 9.40 It is clear from the settlement strategy that away from Yeovil and the strategic employment sites located in the Market Towns, opportunities for significant job growth are likely to be generally more limited to a level of provision that supports the role and function of settlements. The development of employment generating activities throughout the countryside would be contrary to the strategy, as it would lead to unsustainable forms of development, but the expansion of existing, established rural businesses is supported as it is important not to jeopardise rural enterprise. Any proposed development must not adversely impact on the countryside, as national policy is clear that protection of the countryside is an overarching aim.
- 9.41 A business will need to demonstrate that it has operated successfully for a minimum of 3 years to ensure that it has an established presence in the particular area. The business will also need to demonstrate that it is viable and has reasonable prospects of remaining so. These requirements are to ensure that development does not lead to the proliferation of businesses and employment land in the countryside, when such development should be directed towards the Market Towns or Rural Centres.

¹⁷³ NPPF - Paragraph 28

¹⁷⁴ Policy SS3 identifies a minimum requirement for 4.5 hectares of employment land in the District's Rural Settlements

- 9.42 It is essential to make efficient and effective use of land, which means prioritising previously developed land and reusing existing buildings where possible.

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.

Delivery

- 9.43 The Council is committed to supporting employment opportunities locally. Economic development and area development officers will seek to support local businesses to find suitable premises, but if there are no alternative options and the business complies with the criteria in Policy EP4, planning policy and development management officers will advise and support businesses to secure appropriately scaled expansions.
- 9.44 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP4:
- South Somerset District Council; and
 - Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Amount of employment land approved in Rural Settlements and countryside locations	100% approval for employment proposals in rural settlements and countryside locations where it is demonstrated that the proposed expansion is needed and policy criteria are met.

Farm Diversification

- 9.45 Farming employs a small proportion of the South Somerset workforce and employee numbers have steadily declined over the years, from approximately 3,189 jobs in 2007 to 3,035 jobs in 2010 (a reduction of 5%)¹⁷⁵. The nature of the industry locally has also changed in recent years, and reflects the trends that are occurring at a national level - whilst there is a growth in the number of farm holdings, the size of holdings is declining and the amount of land farmed is declining (between 2007-2010, there has been an 8% reduction in the amount of land farmed in South Somerset¹⁷⁶) illustrating a shift in the rural way of life and the rise in 'hobby farming'¹⁷⁷.
- 9.46 Despite these changes, farming and its associated businesses remain integral to the present and future of South Somerset. Food security, local produce and reducing 'food-miles' remain nationally important, and an increasing onus on a low carbon economy, will provide opportunities for key sectors such as land based industries and renewable energy. It is therefore important to establish policy, which supports a productive countryside and the transition from traditional to new rural enterprises.
- 9.47 National Guidance recognises that farm diversification, the diversification from the dependence on production of agricultural commodities into non-agricultural activities, is vital to the continuing viability of many existing farm enterprises¹⁷⁸. The District Council is keen to support development that delivers diverse and sustainable farming enterprises, for example, farm shops, Bed and Breakfast and leasing of land or buildings to other non-agricultural businesses. It is important that proposals for diversification bring long-term and genuine benefits to individual farming enterprises and the wider rural area.
- 9.48 In encouraging economic diversity and agricultural diversification, it is important that the countryside is not spoilt by the unfettered development of an inappropriate and unwarranted nature. Therefore diversification proposals should be of a scale and nature appropriate for the location and be capable of satisfactory integration into the rural landscape. Such proposals should have regard to the amenity of neighbours, both residents and other businesses that may be adversely affected by new types of on-farm development.
- 9.49 In some instances when a scheme is successful it can grow to such a scale, which would make it unacceptable and whilst the Local Authority would not wish to limit the growth of a successful business, consideration should be given to the potential impact on the character of the rural location. Also, in more isolated locations, difficulties may arise in terms of access and traffic activity and development may require the need to promote and advertise and therefore signage may also become an issue.
- 9.50 Proposals must be accompanied by a comprehensive farm diversification plan, which indicates how new uses will assist in retaining the viability of the farm and the agricultural enterprise, and how it links with any other short or long term business plans for the farm.

¹⁷⁵ Source - Defra Agriculture and Horticulture Survey, June 2010

¹⁷⁶ 82,275 hectares in 2007 to 75,387 hectares in 2010 – Defra

¹⁷⁷ A hobby farm is a smallholding/small farm that is maintained without the expectation of being a primary source of income

¹⁷⁸ NPPF March 2012

- 9.51 National Guidance supports the development of equine enterprises¹⁷⁹ (see Policy EQ8: Equestrian Development).

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.

Delivery

- 9.52 The AMR will monitor the number of farm holdings and amount of land farmed across the district and the data will be used to target the Council's approach to supporting agricultural businesses and their diversification.
- 9.53 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP5:
- South Somerset District Council; and
 - Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Number of farm holdings in the district	Retention of farm holdings through appropriate farm diversification schemes
Amount of land farmed across the district	Maintenance of number of agricultural based businesses in the district. Maintenance and increase in land farmed in the district

¹⁷⁹ NPPF March 2012

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.

Delivery

10.61 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policies HG9 and HG10:

- South Somerset District Council; and
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Review through the development management process	Retention and provision of specialist accommodation where it is identified to meet the needs of the local community

Design/General Development

- 13.25 Paragraphs 56-68 of NPPF²⁶⁸ set a clear national policy framework for promoting good design as a key element to achieving sustainable development and emphasises the indivisible link between good design and good planning.
- 13.26 It is self-evident that all development in all locations should be designed to the highest standard. This is essential if we are to create functional, attractive places that people want to live in, work in and visit. Well-designed buildings and places can contribute to the quality of life, increase economic vitality, achieve high environmental standards, reduce emissions and deliver a high quality public realm.
- 13.27 This principle is carried throughout the local plan, which sets the objective to develop new homes, infrastructure and all other land uses to the highest possible design standards. Future specific design guidance will come forward as supplementary planning documents or other appropriate planning documents.
- 13.28 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.
- 13.29 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.
- 13.30 Development proposals also need to demonstrate a commitment to designing out crime through the creation of safe environments (both private and public) that benefit from natural surveillance, well overlooked streets and open spaces, appropriate lighting and other security measures.
- 13.31 South Somerset has published a range of Development Management advice guides to give guidance on how design should complement local architectural traditions and how sustainable construction techniques can be incorporated within the context of the existing built heritage. These and others produced during the plan period should be taken into account when considering development proposals. The Council also apply specific guidance from Government and Government sponsored organisations. The Landscape Character Assessment, and Town and Village Design Statements provide a more detailed local context for the evaluation and consideration of development proposals and should be taken into account where they have been produced. The Development Management advice will be reviewed and revised during the lifetime of the Development Plan and the most up to date material should be referred to.
- 13.32 To comply with climate change objectives the design of new development will change significantly over the coming years. Sustainable construction principles will affect layout, orientation of buildings, materials, design for minimum waste and conservation of water resources as well as fundamental appearance. It will be a challenge for the development industry and the local planning authority to both respect local context and distinctiveness and embrace new design principles. The

²⁶⁸ NPPF March 2012 Paragraphs 56-68

Council will look to radical design solutions, where appropriate, to compliment and evolve local distinctiveness and recognise that respect for local context does not preclude contrasting modern design that can work with local context to provide a desirable and high quality living environment which can present the evolving historical and architectural story.

- 13.33 All development should ensure the most efficient use of land through the size and arrangement of plots, further determining the position, orientation, proportion, scale, height, massing and density of buildings as well as the treatment of the spaces around and between the buildings themselves. Consideration of the relationship to adjoining buildings and landscape features will be encouraged. Density should be justified as part of the overall design concept of development proposals and will also include appropriate consideration of private amenity spaces. Particular regard should be had for levels of housing demand and need and availability of sites, infrastructure and service availability, efficient use of land, accessibility, local area characteristics and other detailed design considerations (as indicated above) in the determination of the appropriate density on a particular site. Where appropriate proposals should include design codes and/or master plans.
- 13.34 The NPPF²⁶⁹ requires strategic policy to deliver conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including the landscape. The District Council values the character and diversity of the South Somerset Landscape, and places particular emphasis upon the conservation of protected and designated landscapes. The Council thus intends to produce a Landscape Strategy, which will set out the key characteristics of the South Somerset Landscape, and provide guidance to developers and landowners on how the overall character of the district can be conserved and enhanced; and how the pattern and form of development can be sympathetically located and shaped; ensuring there is no significant adverse impact upon local landscape character, scenic quality and distinctive landscape features as set out in the Landscape Strategy. This will complement similar work in prospect, relating to the historic environment.

²⁶⁹ NPPF March 2012

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.

Delivery

- 13.35 It is anticipated that the Council will produce and update design guidance to ensure the highest possible standard of development throughout the district, which will maintain environmental quality, protect and enhance the character and landscape assets of the area. This will be delivered through the Development Management process. The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ2:
- South Somerset District Council; and
 - Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Avoidance of development that will have an adverse impact on landscape areas	100% refusal of all development that would result in a net loss of designated landscape assets

Historic Environment

- 13.36 The National Planning Policy Framework²⁷⁰ sets out the Government's objective for the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by conserving the historic environment and its assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.
- 13.37 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.
- 13.38 The richness of South Somerset's historic environment is indicated by its high number of designated assets including 4,600 Listed Building list entries, over 80 Conservation Areas, 14 Historic Parks, a battlefield site of national importance and a high number of scheduled monuments and other archaeological sites.
- 13.39 The District Council is committed to protecting and where appropriate enhancing this irreplaceable heritage. All designated assets including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and archaeological sites together with other heritage assets that contribute positively to the significance of the historic environment will be protected from demolition or inappropriate development that affects the asset or its setting. The Council will seek to work with owners and developers to ensure historic assets are properly managed and cared for and remain in a viable use.
- 13.40 The Council will develop a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment that will be identified in the Council's Local Development Scheme and will include:
- Guidance and advice for owners and developers in relation to the conservation of the historic environment, nationally and locally designated assets including archaeological sites.
 - The Council's approach to identifying and managing heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, and to their conservation and return to sustainable use where appropriate.
 - A programme for the review of existing Conservation Area boundaries, the preparation of Conservation Area Assessments and Management Plans and making new designations.
 - Encouragement for the development of local skills, crafts and the production of local materials relevant to the historic environment.
 - Measures to identify locally significant assets including buildings, parks and gardens and archaeological features and the preparation of a district-wide list of such assets.
 - Detailed advice for developers preparing proposals that may have an impact upon any aspect of the historic environment about conservation, good design and positive enhancement of the assets and their settings.
 - Opportunities to improve historic townscapes, landscapes and the public realm.
 - Support for communities to identify locally significant historic buildings and in their preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

²⁷⁰ NPPF March 2012

- 13.41 It is expected that once a Strategy is produced that all new development will be compliant with it.

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.

Delivery

- 13.42 It is anticipated that the Council will produce and update the Heritage Strategy, providing comprehensive advice to ensure the highest possible standard of development throughout the district, which will maintain, protect and enhance the character, or the heritage assets of the area. This will be delivered through the Development Management process.
- 13.43 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ3:
- South Somerset District Council; and
 - Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Avoidance of development that will impact heritage areas on the national list.	There should be no net loss of heritage assets
The production of a Heritage Strategy.	To be delivered within the first 5 years following the local plans' adoption.

Biodiversity and New Development

- 13.44 National policy²⁷¹ promotes sustainable development whilst conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Plan policies should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology by sustaining and where possible improving the quality and extent of natural habitat and the populations of naturally occurring species which they support. This should be based on up to date information²⁷² of resources in the area and should promote opportunities within the design of the proposal for the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity and geological interests.
- 13.45 The District Council recognises the value of our natural assets and has been working with Somerset County Council, the District/Borough Councils, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Natural England, RSPB and other conservation agencies as part of the Somerset Biodiversity Partnership to identify species²⁷³ and habitats that are important in Somerset and to draw up plans to assist in their conservation.
- 13.46 'Wild Somerset' is the Strategy that covers the whole area of Somerset and describes how the partnership will work together and involve local communities and other agencies in activities to protect and enhance wildlife. In addition to the habitats and species covered in the Countywide Wild Somerset Strategy, the South Somerset Local Biodiversity Action Plan describes the actions that the district and other partners will take locally to protect and enhance wildlife in the district.²⁷⁴ All proposals should consider protection and enhancement of biodiversity from the outset and have regard to Local and Regional Biodiversity Strategies, taking into consideration the findings as identified in 'The Distribution of European Protected Species in South Somerset' and 'European Protected Species in South Somerset'.²⁷⁵ Priority Species are defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act and in Somerset Priority Species List, and are to be protected from the adverse implications of new development. The Brackets Coppice Special Conservation Area near Crewkerne merits particular consideration of its resident bat population and their foraging area in consideration of local biodiversity in that area. The implications for bats of lighting associated with development will need to be borne in mind when determining planning applications.
- 13.47 There are significant consequences for the long-term protection and adaptability of biodiversity and the ability of wildlife and habitats to respond to climate change. There is a need to expand and re-connect the existing areas and restore habitats where they have been destroyed. Development proposals should be accompanied by sufficient information to assess the effects of development on protected sites, species, biodiversity or geology, together with any proposed prevention, mitigation or compensation measures. They will need to demonstrate that they will not adversely impact nationally and internationally designated sites.

²⁷¹ NPPF March 2012

²⁷² The latest Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites (LGS) are shown on the Policies Maps; with the exception of the LGSs at 'Yeovil Old Town Walls', 'Ilminster Old Town Walls' and 'Corton Ridge and Beacon' where there is a lack of specific information on their extent – further detail on these sites is available from the Somerset Environment Records Centre.

²⁷³ Somerset Priority Species List

²⁷⁴ South West Nature Map (evidence for RSS) is also useful

²⁷⁵ Produced by Somerset County Council, 2009

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.

Delivery

13.48 It is anticipated that the forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy is relevant and will contribute to the protection and enhancement of areas of biodiversity importance and therefore support delivery of the policy objectives.

13.49 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ4:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners; and
- Natural England.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Changes in areas of biodiversity importance	There should be no net losses of biodiversity habitat areas due to development

Green Infrastructure

- 13.50 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. In addition to enriching visual amenity they offer opportunities for informal recreation and provide wildlife habitats and the connectivity between them. They can also contribute to natural drainage and reduce surface water run off, helping mitigate for the consequences of climate change. Green Infrastructure assets include open spaces such as parks and gardens, allotments, woodlands and natural open space, fields, hedges, lakes, ponds, playing fields, as well as footpaths, cycleways and rivers.
- 13.51 The provision of properly integrated Green Infrastructure can enhance the amenity of an area and promote a sense of place and community identity. Greater access to open space, parks, playing fields and provision for children and young people are clearly beneficial to health and the sense of well-being of the local community. Networks of green spaces and corridors provide opportunities for recreation, walking and cycling and also benefit wildlife by conserving and enhancing habitats, and providing buffers from development to important wildlife sites and watercourses. Green infrastructure can also serve to deflect visitor pressures on nationally and internationally important wildlife sites.
- 13.52 Trees are essential to the value of Green Infrastructure. The retention of trees and woodland; their appropriate management; and provision of new tree planting, can help to combat climate change and flooding. Trees help to alleviate pollution and modify microclimate.
- 13.53 Attenuation ponds and other sustainable drainage systems, together with larger water bodies, can also provide valuable aspects of Green Infrastructure, with a potential for enhancing ecological and landscape value.
- 13.54 Clear priorities will be established through an overarching Green Infrastructure Strategy. This will incorporate local open space standards and requirements for developments to contribute towards the delivery of a comprehensive network of Green Infrastructure. In particular, the strategy will recognise the need to integrate Green Infrastructure within the Yeovil Sustainable Extensions and to ensure that all communities have access to quality green areas.
- 13.55 Where loss of green infrastructure as a result of development is unavoidable the Council will seek mitigation in accord with Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGST).

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 & 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.

Delivery

- 13.56 It is anticipated that the forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy will identify specific actions for the short, medium and long term. The Council will work with other partners and bid for available funding opportunities to bring Green Infrastructure projects to fruition.
- 13.57 There will be opportunities for the provision of new Green Infrastructure, or improvement of existing facilities, in association with new development. It is essential that this should be an integral part of the design process to ensure the multifunctional aspects are incorporated. This is of particular significance in consideration of major development sites.
- 13.58 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ5:
- South Somerset District Council;
 - Developers and Landowners;
 - Somerset County Council;
 - Infrastructure Providers; and
 - Town and Parish Councils.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Access to Natural Greenspace	All new development should comply with Natural England's 'Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt)' wherever possible
Green Infrastructure Strategy	Production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document by October 2016

Woodlands and Forest

- 13.59 South Somerset has only 5% coverage of woodland, which is significantly below the County average of 9%. This is a reflection of the rolling lowland character of the district, where good soils have led to the land being cleared for agriculture over past centuries. There are a few exceptions to this such as the Eastern scarp boundary, which is well wooded, the hills East of Bruton, South of Crewkerne and the edge of the Blackdown Hills around Chard. Over the remainder hedgerow trees, small copses and locally significant old orchards, often on the edge of villages, dominate the landscape. Significant linear woodlands such as those along the Fivehead and Somerton ridges also define the Western edge of the district. These both have a high proportion of Ancient Woodland²⁷⁶.
- 13.60 Traditional old orchards and veteran trees are important features of the region providing good habitats for wildlife. The Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework (RWFF)²⁷⁷ is the regional expression of Government policy on woodland and forest setting out what is needed to help secure the future of these assets.
- 13.61 Areas of woodland should be expanded where appropriate and as indicated in the RWFF, to support other habitats, act as carbon sinks, enhance landscape character and as a key part of providing green infrastructure in and around new development. Any unavoidable loss of woodland should be replaced via agreements with developers and other mechanisms. The removal and management of trees and woodland may be necessary where this is needed to meet conservation objectives for open habitats, such as heathland and grassland.
- 13.62 Sustainable tourism development opportunities presented by woodlands and forests should be promoted, particularly in rural areas. The wider economic use of woodlands and forests should also be promoted, for example with regards to wood fuel. The procurement of locally grown timber products to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)²⁷⁸ should be supported, particularly in relation to development, in order to achieve improved sustainability of construction and in support of local supply chains.

²⁷⁶ Ancient woodland is defined as land continually wooded since at least AD1600, Natural England and Woodland Trust

²⁷⁷ South West regional Woodland and Forestry Framework: South West England Forestry Commission, 2005

²⁷⁸ The UK Woodland Assurance Standard was developed by a group of forestry and environmental organisations to provide a standard for certification relevant to UK woodlands and which satisfies the standards required by both the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Pan European Forest Certification (PEFC)

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Access to Natural Greenspace	All new development should comply with Natural England's 'Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt)' wherever possible
Green Infrastructure Strategy	Production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document by October 2016

Woodlands and Forest

- 13.59 South Somerset has only 5% coverage of woodland, which is significantly below the County average of 9%. This is a reflection of the rolling lowland character of the district, where good soils have led to the land being cleared for agriculture over past centuries. There are a few exceptions to this such as the Eastern scarp boundary, which is well wooded, the hills East of Bruton, South of Crewkerne and the edge of the Blackdown Hills around Chard. Over the remainder hedgerow trees, small copses and locally significant old orchards, often on the edge of villages, dominate the landscape. Significant linear woodlands such as those along the Fivehead and Somerton ridges also define the Western edge of the district. These both have a high proportion of Ancient Woodland²⁷⁶.
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- 13.61 Areas of woodland should be expanded where appropriate and as indicated in the RWFF, to support other habitats, act as carbon sinks, enhance landscape character and as a key part of providing green infrastructure in and around new development. Any unavoidable loss of woodland should be replaced via agreements with developers and other mechanisms. The removal and management of trees and woodland may be necessary where this is needed to meet conservation objectives for open habitats, such as heathland and grassland.
- 13.62 Sustainable tourism development opportunities presented by woodlands and forests should be promoted, particularly in rural areas. The wider economic use of woodlands and forests should also be promoted, for example with regards to wood fuel. The procurement of locally grown timber products to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)²⁷⁸ should be supported, particularly in relation to development, in order to achieve improved sustainability of construction and in support of local supply chains.

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²⁷⁷ South West regional Woodland and Forestry Framework: South West England Forestry Commission, 2005

²⁷⁸ The UK Woodland Assurance Standard was developed by a group of forestry and environmental organisations to provide a standard for certification relevant to UK woodlands and which satisfies the standards required by both the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Pan European Forest Certification (PEFC)

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.

Delivery

- 13.63 It is anticipated that the forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy will identify specific actions for the short, medium and long term, including the provision of additional woodland areas.
- 13.64 In conjunction with the aims and objectives of the Green Infrastructure Policy and consideration of individual planning applications, care should be taken to ensure existing woodland is not lost through development.
- 13.65 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ6:
- South Somerset District Council; and
 - Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Levels of woodland and forest within the district	There should be no net losses of woodland or forests due to development
Number of planning application requiring the planting of additional woodland	Net increase in woodland in the district

Pollution Control

- 13.66 Paragraphs 120 - 125 of the NPPF²⁷⁹ set out the need for Local Authorities to consider the impact of new development on noise, air and light pollution. This aims to ensure that new developments do not harm existing residents, future residents or the natural environment. This includes minimising air, noise, light, water quality or odour pollution, that would be harmful to other land uses, human health, tranquillity or the natural and built environment. The NPPF states that plan policy aims to avoid and mitigate the impacts of potential pollution associated with development.
- 13.67 Potentially noisy developments will be expected to be accompanied by an appropriate noise assessment. Developers will be required to demonstrate the potential impact of proposals on the environment and on residential amenity and the ability to mitigate to an acceptable level.²⁸⁰
- 13.68 Noise Exposure Category maps exist for three airfields in the district, RNAS Yeovilton in Ilchester, RNAS Merryfield in Ilton and Westlands airfield in Yeovil (see Appendix 4). These have been produced by predicting the likely noise exposure from the expected number of aircraft at each airfield. The contours produced are designed to act a guide to where new development is likely to be adversely affected by aircraft noise, and where development is likely to be unsuitable or would need more robust noise insulation – see Noise Exposure Category Guidelines (Appendix 4). However as with any scientific assessment, there is a margin of error associated with the prediction, this is due to uncertainties surrounding the number and path of aircraft movements, the type of aircraft involved and local metrological conditions. The Government recognises that noise contours are only one form of definition and measurement of noise, and other measures, could also be used to inform Development Management decisions where concerns are raised²⁸¹.
- 13.69 Light pollution refers to the effect of excessive or intrusive lighting arising from poor or insensitive design. The Council will seek to reduce light pollution by encouraging the installation of appropriate lighting and only permitting lighting proposals which would not adversely affect amenity or public safety. Lights should be appropriately shielded, directed to the ground and sited to minimise any impact on adjoining areas, and of a height and illumination level of the minimum required to serve their purpose.
- 13.70 Air quality is generally good in South Somerset, with low levels of sulphur, oxides of nitrogen and particulates in comparison to the rest of England, although one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared in Yeovil, where national air quality objectives are not likely to be achieved. It is shown on the Proposals Map (Yeovil Inset). This AQMA is within the urban area where air pollution results mainly from traffic. Air quality should be considered when assessing development proposals, particularly in or near the AQMA and where significant doubt arises as to the air quality impact then a cautious approach should be applied.

²⁷⁹ NPPF March 2012

²⁸⁰ Noise Policy Statement for England 2010 (NPSE)

²⁸¹ Aviation Policy Framework (March 2013)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/153776/aviation-policy-framework.pdf

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.

Delivery

13.71 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ7:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Environment Agency;
- Wessex Water; and
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Number of days of air pollution exceeding 40ug/m ³	Meet or exceed relevant Air Quality objectives as set out in Air Quality regulations

Equine Development

13.72 By its nature equestrian development requires a countryside location but the cumulative impact of development can have an adverse impact on the rural character of the area. New buildings can adversely affect landscape character and natural beauty where they detract from existing characteristics e.g. due to scale or materials or design. Therefore it is important to consider the current character of the countryside and how equine development can ultimately impact upon it.

13.73 Consideration for such proposals should have regard to such aspects as:

- Whether the site is located within or adjacent to an existing settlement;
- It should avoid exposed skyline locations;
- It should avoid the loss of existing vegetation;
- The existing landform and vegetation should be utilised to integrate development with the surrounding landscape;
- Vernacular design and building hierarchy must be respected;
- Materials that blend with the surrounding landscape should be considered;
- Bright finishes and unsuitable materials should be avoided;
- New native planting can help to integrate buildings with their surroundings;
- The proposals should be close to the bridleway network; and
- Conflict could arise between road users due to horse transportation, deliveries and horses using narrow lanes.