



To: All Councillors

Our Ref DS/KK
Contact Krystyna Kowalewska kkowalewska@westsomerset.gov.uk
Date 15 November 2016

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Dear Councillor

I hereby give you notice to attend the following meeting:

COUNCIL MEETING

Date: Wednesday 23 November 2016
Time: 4.30 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton

Please note that this meeting may be recorded. At the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy.

Therefore unless you advise otherwise, by entering the Council Chamber and speaking during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact Committee Services on 01643 703704.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Lang".

BRUCE LANG
Proper Officer

WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

Meeting to be held on Wednesday 23 November 2016 at 4.30 pm

Council Chamber, Williton

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes

Minutes of the Meetings of Special Council and Council held on 21 September 2016 to be approved and signed as correct records – **SEE ATTACHED.**

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive and record any declarations of interest in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

4. Public Participation

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

For those members of the public wishing to speak at this meeting there are a few points you might like to note.

A three-minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue. There will be no further opportunity for comment at a later stage. Your comments should be addressed to the Chairman and any ruling made by the Chair is not open to discussion. If a response is needed it will be given either orally at the meeting or a written reply made within five working days of the meeting.

5. Chairman's Announcements

6. Allocation of Hinkley Point C Section 106 Tourist Information Centre Funds

To consider Report No. WSC 129/16, to be presented by Councillor K Mills, Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Growth – **SEE ATTACHED.**

The purpose of the report is to consult with Council on a suggested approach for allocating Hinkley Point C Section 106 funds for Tourist Information Centres during 2016-18; and to consult with Council on a suggested approach for commissioning tourist information services in Watchet.

7. Review of Council Tax Rebate Scheme for 2017/18

To consider Report No. WSC 128/16, to be presented by Councillor M Chilcott, Lead Member for Resources and Central Support – **SEE ATTACHED.**

The purpose of this report is to provide Full Council with information on our existing Council Tax Rebate scheme and the context for reviewing our scheme for Working Age applicants from 2017/18. The report advises Full Council of the outcome of the public consultation as well as the Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet's recommendations on the preferred revisions to our Council Tax Rebate scheme in 2017/18. The report seeks agreement from Full Council on our Council Tax Rebate scheme for 2017/18.

PLEASE NOTE: Members are required to read all documentation when/before making a decision. Therefore, it is important that you read the separate Appendix 1 – West Somerset Council - Council Tax Reduction Scheme and consider the implications detailed in the Equality Impact Statement (Appendix 4). Appendix 1 is available online at <http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Council---Democracy/Council-Meetings/Full-Council/Full-Council---23-November-2016> A hard copy of Appendix 1 can also be obtained from Democratic Services.

8. Adoption of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032

To consider Report No. WSC 131/16, to be presented by Councillor K Turner, Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing – **SEE ATTACHED.**

The Council is now in receipt of the Inspector's Report which confirms that the Plan can be legally adopted by West Somerset Council subject to the main modifications outlined in his Report (which were consulted upon). At this stage the Council cannot make substantive changes to the WSLP to 2032, it can either adopt the Plan with the main modifications or choose not to adopt. 1.6 Upon adoption, the WSLP to 2032 will comprise a key component in the adopted development plan for the area. There do however, remain areas in which the Council needs to undertake further work in developing policy (as recognised in the Inspector's Report). As such, work will need to commence shortly on a review of the WSLP to 2032.

9. Minutes and Notes for Information

Notes and minutes relating to this item can be found on the Council's website using the following links:

- Notes of the Watchet, Williton and Quantock Vale Area Panel held on 13 September 2016
<http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Council---Democracy/Council-Meetings/Watchet,-Williton-and-Quantock-Area-Panel/Watchet,-Williton---Quantocks-Area-Panel---13-Sept>
- Notes of the Minehead Area Panel held on 14 September 2016
<http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Council---Democracy/Council-Meetings/Minehead-Area-Panel/Minehead-Area-Panel---14-September-2016>
- Notes of the Dunster Area Panel held on 4 October 2016
<http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Council---Democracy/Council-Meetings/Dunster-Area-Panel/Dunster-Area-Panel---4-October-2016>
- Notes of the Exmoor Area Panel meetings held on 8 November 2016
<http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Council---Democracy/Council-Meetings/Exmoor-Area-Panel/Exmoor-Area-Panel---8-November-2016>

COUNCILLORS ARE REMINDED TO CHECK THEIR POST TRAYS

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL**Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 21 September 2016 at 3.00 pm****in the Council Chamber, Williton****Present:**

Councillor B Heywood Chairman
Councillor R Woods Vice-Chairman

Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor S Y Goss
Councillor K M Mills
Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor R Thomas
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew
Councillor D J Westcott

Councillor M Dewdney
Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor C Morgan
Councillor S J Pugsley
Councillor N Thwaites
Councillor K H Turner

Officers in Attendance:

Director of Operations (S Adam)
Assistant Chief Executive (B Lang)
Assistant Director – Energy Infrastructure (A Goodchild)
Meeting Administrator (M Prouse)

Also Present:

Mr Viv Brewer, Hon Alderman
Mrs Eileen Woods M.B.E., Hon Alderman

C42 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aldridge, Archer, Behan, Clifford, Davies, Dowding, Hall, Jones, Leaker, Lillis, Maitland-Walker, Parbrook and Venner.

C43 Declarations of Interest

No Councillor present declared an interest on any item on the agenda.

C44 Public Participation

Mr Adrian Dyer, formerly Chief Executive Officer of this Council, spoke warmly of the three honoured guests and of their character and integrity. Mr Dyer had fond memories of working with all three of them in times past, all had played a major part in his career at the Council.

C45 **Appointment of Honorary Aldermen**

The meeting was asked to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on Messrs E May, T Knight, and T Taylor for the rendering of eminent services to the Council.

Councillor B Heywood proposed the nomination to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on Mr Eddie May, which was duly seconded by Councillor A Trollope-Bellew. Councillor Heywood went on to provide details of Mr May's significant contribution to the Council between 1991 and 2015 as a Councillor for Williton, serving as Chairman between 2008 - 2011. Cllr Heywood stated that Mr May was very much the people's person, loved by all in the community.

Councillor B Heywood proposed the nomination to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on Mr Tony Knight. Mr Knight had served as a councillor for the Watchet ward between 2003 and 2015, chairing the Planning Committee for seven of those years. Mr Knight was also Chairman of the Council between 2011 and 2012. Cllr Heywood stated that Mr Knight was the doyen of Planning, and that his skills in that committee were marked by his local knowledge, fairness and integrity as well as the desire to go above and beyond the call of duty. The proposal was duly seconded by Councillor A Trollope-Bellew.

Councillor B Heywood proposed the nomination to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on Mr Tim Taylor, which was duly seconded by Councillor A Trollope-Bellew. Councillor Heywood went on to provide details of Mr Taylor's significant contribution to the Council between 2007 and 2015 as a Councillor for firstly Crowcombe and Stogumber and then Carhampton and Withycombe. During that period he was firstly Chair of the Performance/Scrutiny Committee and then Leader of the Council from 2010-2015. Councillor Heywood stated that Mr Taylor had thrown himself into serving this Council and the community, and had made a huge contribution to the Council and West Somerset.

Cllrs Mills, Goss, Westcott, Turner, Morgan, Trollope-Bellew, Chilcott, Pugsley and Murphy made brief remarks commending the three nominated gentlemen, and relating personal remembrances. Officer Bruce Lang also made a speech on behalf of the serving officer corps, having worked with all three gentlemen over the years, thanked all three and agreed that these were men deserving of the honour.

Following speeches and words of thanks from the nominated Aldermen, the Chairman called for a vote on all three proposals and the vote was carried, unanimously.

RESOLVED (1) that the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred upon Mr Eddie May.

RESOLVED (2) that the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred upon Mr Tony Knight.

RESOLVED (3) that the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred upon Mr Tim Taylor.

The meeting closed at 4.05 pm

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL**Minutes of Council held on 21 September 2016 at 4.30 pm****in the Council Chamber, Williton****Present:**

Councillor B Heywood Chairman
Councillor R Woods Vice-Chairman

Councillor A Behan	Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor M O Dewdney	Councillor S Goss
Councillor A Hadley	Councillor T Hall
Councillor R P Lillis	Councillor K M Mills
Councillor C Morgan	Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor S J Pugsley	Councillor R Thomas
Councillor N Thwaites	Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew
Councillor K H Turner	Councillor T Venner
Councillor D J Westcott	

Officers in Attendance:

Director of Operations (S Adam)
Assistant Chief Executive (B Lang)
Assistant Director – Energy Infrastructure (A Goodchild)
CIM Fund Manager (L Redston)
Meeting Administrator (M Prouse)

C46 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aldridge, Archer, Clifford, Davies, Dowding, Jones, Leaker, Maitland-Walker and Parbrook.

C47 Minutes

(Minutes of the meetings of Full Council held on 20 July 2016, and Special Full Council held on 31 August 2016, circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 20 July 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of special Full Council held on 31 August 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

C48 Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

Name	Minute No.	Member of	Action Taken
Cllr S Goss	All	Stogursey	Spoke and voted
Cllr R Thomas	All	Minehead	Spoke and voted
Cllr C Morgan	All	Stogursey	Spoke and voted
Cllr P Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted
Cllr N Thwaites	All	Dulverton	Spoke and voted
Cllr A H Trollope-Bellew	All	Crowcombe	Spoke and voted
Cllr K H Turner	All	Brompton Ralph	Spoke and voted
Cllr T Venner	All	Minehead & SCC	Spoke and voted
Cllr D J Westcott	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted

C49 Public Participation

Mr Peter Stephenson, Chairman of the West Somerset Inter-Cultural Friendship Group, drew Members attention to the statements made by Avon and Somerset Chief Constable Andy Marsh in July who was concerned about the apparent 150 percent increase in reported race hate crimes since the EU Referendum vote. Mr Stephenson's organisation was concerned about this and in response held a public event in Minehead to celebrate the many positive aspects of immigration. Mr Stephenson then distributed his petition and factsheets that he had brought along to the meeting. The petition Mr Stephenson presented calls upon the Council to publically condemn racism and to promote community cohesion.

The Leader thanked Mr Stephenson for bringing this petition to the Council, and said there should be zero tolerance for this behaviour.

The Lead Member for Community and Customer stated that hate crime was taken very seriously in West Somerset. He attends the Safer Somerset Partnership which meets around four times a year, and discusses hate crime on its agenda. He informed Members that in the last year there had been up to six reported cases of hate crime in West Somerset.

Race crime should not be tolerated and reports to parish councils of local crime covered Somerset as a whole which was too broad, when the information was needed at a micro-level. This was felt to be a shortfall by the Police.

It was also felt that whilst this was something that West Somerset did not have a lot of, it was still expected that people of different nationalities should live harmoniously.

A further point was made that there was racism in our communities, but that it was not always obvious. Councillor P Murphy proposed a motion based on the text in the petition that "We call upon you and all West Somerset Councillors to publicly condemn racism and promote cohesion within our communities", to show support for that sentiment, which was duly seconded.

RESOLVED that West Somerset Council wished to publically condemn racism and promote cohesion within our communities.

C50 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman stated that he and his wife enjoyed a sumptuous tea at the Sedgemoor District Council Chairman's Civic Service at Wedmore on Sunday 24th July.

On Wednesday 24th August the Chairman and his wife attended the launch of the Dulverton Weir and Leat Conservation Trust in a marquee by the River Barle, opened by the Lord Dulverton.

On Monday 12th September, the Chairman and his wife attended a Garden Party hosted by the High Sheriff in Bath at the American Museum.

The Vice Chair noted that she represented the Council at Shepton Mallet Jail after an invite from Mendip District Council. She also went to the Wells Dancing on the Green with the Mayor of Minehead.

C51 **HPC Planning Obligations Board – Allocation of CIM Funding**

(Report No. WSC 105/16, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present recommendations of the Hinkley Point C Planning Obligations Board and West Somerset Council Cabinet, for the allocation of monies from the Community Impact Mitigation (CIM) Fund secured through the Section 106 legal agreement for the Site Preparation Works at Hinkley Point.

Applications to the CIM fund were considered by the Planning Obligations Board against nine criteria outlined in the Section 106 legal agreement for the Site Preparation Works at Hinkley Point. A recommendation was subsequently made to West Somerset Council's Cabinet. Any proposals above £25,000 also required approval by West Somerset's Full Council.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report and provided background information. The Lead Member reassured members that every single project was carefully monitored. She emphasised that the Board wanted to state quite clearly that the Bridgwater Town Support Scheme would be regarded as a 'package of mitigation' for the proposed roadworks in Bridgwater Town Centre. The second project would enhance the environmental aspects of walking and cycling through Bridgwater and formed part of a larger Somerset County Council scheme.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations of the report which were seconded by Councillor Morgan, who considered that anything that could alleviate the discomfort of residents with all the roadworks and building work going on around Bridgwater was beneficial to see.

During the discussion, the following comments were made:

- The Health and Wellbeing comments included within the report were welcomed as this was an important initiative which encouraged people to walk and cycle for their health.
- An update was requested regarding the Wembdon Village Hall Project, which came to a halt before Christmas. Could it be confirmed that the project was still being delivered, if the money had been released and who was responsible if it had been for its completion?
- Clarification was provided that the project had been halted as the contractors had gone into administration. The Village Hall Committee went out and re-tendered for a new contractor, but that left them with a shortfall which Sedgemoor District Council had met, with work re-started.
- Pleasure was expressed to see the involvement of Bridgwater Town Council in both of these projects in the report, and that town councils were getting involved and tapping into these mitigation funds.
- Members were reminded that a little while ago Scrutiny set up a Task and Finish Group to look at the application process of the CIM fund. The Task and Finish Group felt the Council could be more pro-active. It was discovered that there was piece of work in the pipeline, which was an 'overarching funding review'. It was understood this was this Council's way of trying to identify projects and communities and groups to bring applications forward, but that it was being held up by the decision on Hinkley which had yet to have been taken, but now that it had the Chairman of Scrutiny posed a question to the Officers to give a bit more of a flavour of how the mitigation fund was to be relaunched to encourage communities to bid for this money remaining and what support this council could offer to communities?
- It was explained that that the relaunch of the CIM fund would include the small application form and the change in criteria of releasing those funds, and the streamlined approach to distributing those funds, taking on board Scrutiny's Task and Finish comments.
- It was clarified that the push in communication and support from Engage and the officer team here would hopefully see some more applications from the West Somerset area come forward. In the officer's opinion Grassroots activity had always been done well in the district.
- It was reported that the commitment Cabinet made after receiving the Task and Finish Report was to involve all members in those conversations. The relaunch of the CIM Fund was not going to be just a media campaign, it would be grassroots, with workshops being held in the community. £1million had been given to West Somerset already.
- The need for more active projects was emphasised and it was acknowledged that the Exmoor National Park provided some difficulties. The burden did fall onto Watchet, Williton and Minehead, and their representatives to come forward and take up the money on offer, otherwise others would take it and this area would miss out.
- Members were reminded of concerns around impacts that had not yet materialised, and that funding was being spent before it was clear what impacts could yet happen, counselling patience.

- Full support was expressed for these projects, and the need to maximise the amount of matched funding was an important aspect.
- In response to a question whether the funds were released dependent on the positive acquisition of matched funding, or would the money be released in any case, the Lead Member replied that it was not a written definitive criteria that each project had to have matched funding, but that each project was looked at in its entirety by the Board.

RESOLVED (1) that the recommendation of the Hinkley C Planning Obligations Board and West Somerset Cabinet to release £116,070 from the CIM fund ring-fenced fund for Sedgemoor (and in particular Bridgwater) be endorsed, with the following conditions:

- CIM Fund Manager and Sedgemoor District Council to review the budget and the allocation of funds towards each element of the project with the applicant after all tender processes have been completed to ensure the project remains affordable.
- Applicant to provide regular monitoring reports that provide details of spending against each element of the project.

RESOLVED (2) that the recommendation of the Hinkley C Planning Obligations Board and West Somerset Cabinet to release £344,850 of CIM funding for the Southern Bridgwater and North Petherton Community Mitigation Scheme. £242,776 from the Sedgemoor (in particular Bridgwater) ring-fence and £102,074 from the 1st Annual Payment be endorsed, with the following conditions:

- That funds are not released until full tender processes are completed and delivery plans have been agreed with SCC and a decision has been made on match funding bids.

The meeting closed at 5.29 pm.

Report Number: WSC 129/16

West Somerset Council

Council – 23 November 2016

ALLOCATION OF HPC S106 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE FUNDS

This matter is the responsibility of Cabinet Member Cllr Karen Mills Lead Member for Economic Regeneration & Tourism

Report Author: Corinne Matthews Economic Regeneration & Tourism Manager

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consult with Council on a suggested approach for allocating Hinkley Point C Section 106 funds for Tourist Information Centres during 2016-18.
- 1.2 To consult with Council on a suggested approach for commissioning tourist information services in Watchet.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To recommend to Council the allocation of £71,000 from HPC S106 allocations for tourist information centres. This includes the remaining funds of £60,649.33 from the Site Preparation Works agreement, and part of the funds of £10,350.67 from the first Development Consent Order Works agreement. Staggered payments would be made in line with service level agreements with centres, which total:-
 - (a) £48,000 to West Somerset Council for the purposes of supporting Minehead, Porlock and Watchet tourist information services for two financial years in 2016/17 and 2017/18.
 - (b) £23,000 to Sedgemoor District Council for the purposes of supporting Burnham-on-Sea, Cheddar and Bridgwater tourist information services in 2016/17.
- 2.2 To advertise to the community of Watchet for a service provider for tourism information services and to delegate the commissioning of the service to the Lead Member for Economic Regeneration & Tourism and the Economic Regeneration Manager in line with a provider satisfying the requirements of the service level agreement as detailed in paragraph 4.2.
- 2.3 To advise Somerset County Council that their proposed allocation of £10,000 set aside from the 2015/16 approval process will revert to the Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership fund, unless claimed by 31 March 2017.

3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Without support there will be a decline in tourism information services, which will lead to a lack of quality information for tourism businesses and customers at a time when the construction period of the HPC project could have a negative impact on the perceptions of the area.	5	4	20
<i>Putting in place Service Level Agreements with TIC's to provide good levels of service and information to visitors and businesses will significantly lessen the likelihood and impact of negative perceptions of the area.</i>	3	3	9

Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Impact							

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

4 Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 Role and Responsibilities of Tourism Information Services

4.1.1 Tourism information centres (TIC) are the 'eyes and ears' of tourism intelligence across the area. They are a front-line service, and via their tried and trusted relationships with tourism providers and visitors are aware of visitor trends, opportunities and threats well in advance of any statistical analysis.

4.1.2 The role of tourism information services has changed considerably over the past decade. The growth of the internet, and other modernised tourism marketing models, has minimised the role that the TIC has in supporting the consumer to research their holiday destination in advance of prior bookings. However, it still has significant strength in supporting visitors once they have arrived within a destination, and helping to support accommodation providers and other key attractions in being an integral part of place based marketing and promotion. Information Centres, also traditionally provide a range of services for the local community as well.

4.1.3 In respect of the HPC Project, information services have a pivotal role in:

- Acquiring first-hand information in relation to any 'issues' that are impacting on tourism visits and spend, and rapidly relaying that information to local authorities.
- Providing an important and vital conduit to businesses in terms of the dissemination of information / messages / alerts.
- Establishing an important resource to HPC Construction Workers and their families, in helping to promote the area and provide information for recreational opportunities.
- Delivering key aspects of the Hinkley Tourism Action Plan, such as providing travel information, supporting PR activity, and assisting projects like coach friendly towns and local ambassador schemes.

4.2 Specific West Somerset Service Delivery

4.2.1 Support for the three tourist information centres in Minehead, Watchet and Porlock, is delivered via service level agreements that set out the key tasks and outputs expected of each in return for funding. The scope of these agreements relates to the size and scale of the TIC capacity for delivery against the amount of funding awarded. Previously this has meant that more has been expected of Minehead than Watchet or Porlock.

Minehead Information Centre is located in the area's key seaside town, employs professional TIC staff, delivers all year round opening hours and has a responsibility for promoting the wider district.

Porlock Visitor Centre employs professional and volunteer staff in providing an all year round opening service. Porlock also has a responsibility for promoting the National Park, and receives additional annual funding from the Park Authority.

Watchet Tourist Office provides a summer only service completely staffed by volunteers, and up until 2016, was supported by Watchet Town Council.

4.2.2 Now that the HPC project has started in earnest, and significant investment has been made in the Boat Museum and new Visitor Centre, it is time to review service delivery in Watchet. The new centre is proposing all year round opening hours and professional staff with social media skills. This provides a crucial opportunity to strengthen visitor information services in both the district, and in a town that has already been impacted by the development of HPC. Watchet could help to spread the load with Minehead, speeding up information flows and utilising more communication channels to support the work of the Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership, as well as engaging more directly with businesses and in creating positive perceptions of the area with visitors. Therefore, it is recommended that an approach is made to the community of Watchet to commission a more robust information service in the town.

4.2.3 Minehead will continue to be the district's main TIC, not least because of the strong working relationship that has been established with them during the past four years and key activity they have been requested to deliver, which includes the monthly co-ordination of the district's tourism newsletter, a key communications tool. Going forward, all TIC's, to a lesser or greater extent depending on their scale of funding, would be expected to support HPC specific activity, as set out in 4.1.3, as well in:

- Supporting the promotion of Minehead / Watchet / Porlock and the district.
- Exploring income generating activity (that is in keeping with the TIC function) to ensure continued sustainability of the service.

The table below sets out the tasks and outputs for each TIC which will be commensurate with funding levels got each TIC.

Task	By when	Targets / Outputs
Maintain and upkeep tourism industry database (Minehead TIC only)	Ongoing	Fully up-to-date database which includes District wide information
Collect intelligence / information and evidence in respect of the impacts of the HPC project, and establish a communications strategy for the rapid dissemination of information. <i>This is a vital part of the service – to ensure that the MIC receives up-to-date information in respect of traffic congestion or other issues, and is able to communicate this to tourism providers, and support them with tactics for ensuring that customers visiting the area are not significantly disadvantaged.</i>	Ongoing	Compile 12 e-newsletters per year (Minehead TIC only) Disseminate Hinkley related travel information when required potentially provided by Somerset CC (Minehead / Watchet) Using social media platforms as frequently as required to disseminate all travel information when arises to contacts and via twitter (Minehead & Watchet)

Delivery of specific HTAP projects including Ambassador Scheme (Minehead TIC running pilot scheme, if successful likely to be rolled out to Watchet and Porlock)	By July 2017	TIC to assist with assessment of volunteers Facilitate ambassador scheme from centre -Take bookings, keep records and volunteer contact information, store kit and administer any voluntary donations received
Attend Social Media development training and any other training initiatives that might arise to benefit the TIC function	Ongoing when available	One day of training in social media to enable development of Minehead / Watchet social media channels Contribute or develop content strategy plan for all platforms.
Improving increased Visitor Services (Minehead / Watchet)	Ongoing	Aim to maximise opening hours throughout the summer season. Aim to provide a consistent service throughout the winter months.
Growing the capacity of Minehead / Watchet Information Centres	By the end of August 2017	5% increase in income 5% increase in unique website visits
TIC Manager to attend quarterly update meetings of WS TIC Managers (convened by WSC)	Ongoing	Up to 4 meetings per year Monthly update/ liaison with nominated WSC Officer

4.3 **Section 106 Allocations**

- 4.3.1 The HPC Site Preparation Works (SPW) S106 made a total of £200,000 available for tourist information centre support across the three local authorities in the agreement (West Somerset / Sedgemoor District Councils and Somerset County Council). The payments have been phased with West Somerset Council having access to the first tranche of £50K, the second tranche became available in May 2014 and was distributed across the three authorities. The third and final tranche became available in May 2015 and totalled £100,000. Indexation took the total figure to £210,699.33.
- 4.3.2 Last year, due to the uncertainty related to EDF Energy making their final investment decision, it was agreed amongst local authorities to utilise approximately half of the allocation available, to ensure that resource remained in place for continued support. Therefore, as described in paragraph 2.1 a sum of £60,649.33 remains unallocated from the SPW S106.
- 4.3.3 To date a total of £150,050 of has been approved and allocated by West Somerset Council. The following table provides details as to how this has been done:

Financial Year	Centre	Amount
2012/13	Minehead IC	£28,000.00
	Porlock IC	£4,000.00
	Watchet IC	£750.00
Total 2012/13		£32,750.00
2013/14	Minehead IC	£12,950.00
	Porlock IC	£3,600.00
	Watchet IC	£750.00
Total 2013/14		£17,300.00
2014 /15	Minehead IC	£15,000.00
	Porlock IC	£4,000.00
	Watchet IC	£1,000.00
	Burnham IC	£15,000.00
	Somerset Visitor Centre	£15,000.00
Total 2014/15		£50,000.00
2015/16	Minehead	£15,000.00
	Porlock	£4,000.00
	Watchet	£1,000.00
	Sedgemoor DC	£20,000.00
	Somerset CC	£10,000.00
Total 2015/16		£50,000.00
Total S106 drawn down to date		£150,050.00

4.3.4 Now that the HPC Project has triggered the Development Consent Order (DCO) S106 agreement, a further £160k becomes available for sole use by West Somerset Council in supporting tourist information Centres. The first of four annual £40k payments was made to West Somerset Council in May 2016.

4.4 **Proposed allocations for 2016/17 and 2017/18**

4.4.1 The tourism officers of West Somerset and Sedgemoor Councils have undertaken a review of the existing service level agreements in place with the tourist information centres and have gained an understanding of performance and individual financial circumstances. Significant investment has been given to Minehead Information Centre in recent times, and it is recommended that this time £12.5k per annum should be allocated. Porlock Visitor Centre should continue with £4k per annum matching Exmoor National Park Authority input, while a new potential service in Watchet requires initial investment of £10k per annum. For Minehead and Porlock the recommendation is for two years of payments from April 2016 to March 2018. Watchet requires support from October 2016 to March 2018. The total contribution requested is for £48,000.

4.4.2 Sedgemoor District Council has examined the wider impact of the site preparation works on the towns of Bridgwater and Cheddar and have proposed that the support for visitor services in Sedgemoor extends to these areas as well as Burnham-on-Sea. They have requested a sum of £23,000 to support these three Centres in 2016/17.

- 4.4.3 Together the two allocations total £71,000. It is proposed to utilise the £60,649.33 remaining in the Site Preparation Section 106 agreement for tourist information centres, as described in 2.1 and 4.3.2, along with a small allocation of £10,350.67 from the first £40k DCO payment made in May 2016, and described in 4.3.3.
- 4.4.4 In addition, members may be aware that Somerset County Council closed the Somerset Visitor Centre, located at Sedgemoor Services on the M5 in 2015. Last year SCC told us that they intended to install digital information points at key strategic locations throughout the County, and were working up a costed business plan. Members approved the recommendation to reserve up to a maximum of £10,000 of the 2015/16 allocation and delegate the approval process of releasing the funds to the Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership. SCC have yet to provide a proposal, and it is suggested that a deadline is imposed for the receipt of the proposal of March 31 2017, and if none is received the £10,000 is diverted to the HTAP main fund and allocated to County wide activity.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 5.1 The Council's second key theme around Business & Enterprise aims to 'Support and promote West Somerset's vital tourism and agricultural sectors', as well as 'Maximise the local economic benefits from Hinkley Point C'.
- 5.2 The third key theme around Our Place & Infrastructure also aims to 'Mitigate negative impacts on the community from the construction phase of Hinkley Point C'.
- 5.3 Support for tourist information centres across West Somerset will help in achieving both key aims. Via service level agreements centres will be tasked with supporting PR activity and communicating messages with the industry and visitors via newsletters. This could include promoting the area or providing up to date travel information about congestion on the roads. Centres will also be tasked with supporting the Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership in making improvements to the visitor experience, including supporting the new local ambassador guided walks scheme and improving skills, such as social media and welcoming international visitors via training.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 This proposal, if approved, will have no impact on West Somerset Council General Fund as it is funded entirely from the s106 funding from Hinkley Point C. The project complies with Schedule 15 of the SPW agreement (Tourism) and Schedule 4 of the DCO agreement (Economic Development & Tourism) heading. The agreements specifically dictate that the allocations are to be spent on supporting Tourist Information Centres, to help them mitigate the impact that Hinkley Point C will have on Tourism. All of the spending on this proposal is revenue spending therefore it will have no impact on the Council's capital programme.
- 6.2 If approved, it will allocate all the remaining funding (£60,649.33) from the SPW agreement for the Tourist Information Centre. The remainder will come from the DCO funding. So far, the Council has received the first of four instalments, which was payable

on the transition date (31st May 2016). The first instalment was £42,611.18. If the £10,350.67 is approved, the amount remaining from the first instalment will be £32,260.51.

- 6.3 The other three instalments, under the DCO agreement, are payable on the third, fourth and fifth anniversary of the start of SPW phase 2 (6th May 2017, 2018 and 2019). It is currently estimated that after indexation these three payments will total around £135k.
- 6.4 Decisions regarding allocation from this fund must go through West Somerset Council's decision making process. The process for this approval will go via Full Council as the total amount is above £25,000.

7 Legal Implications (if any)

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8 Environmental Impact Implications (if any)

- 8.1 Local delivery of information services through local tourist information centres enables a reduction in carbon emissions as no transport requirements are needed.

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

- 9.1 Not applicable.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)

- 10.1 All service level agreements emphasise the need for tourist information centres to operate good equality, diversity and bullying at work policies.

11 Social Value Implications (if any)

- 11.1 Not applicable.

12 Partnership Implications (if any)

- 12.1 Each service level agreement is set up with the organisation responsible for the tourist information service in the town or village. The work involves close partnership to deliver and achieve tasks and outputs. The service level agreements set out how each partner will work with the other in order to achieve shared goals, as well as how to deal with issues and risks. This includes the paying back of funds allocated if tasks and outputs are not achieved to the satisfaction of West Somerset Council officers.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)

13.1 Tourist information centres play an important role in the community in providing advice and help to local people in respect of information on events, things to do, travel and local amenities. Centres promote walks and active tourism opportunities, as well as provide volunteer opportunities.

14 Asset Management Implications (if any)

14.1 There are no asset related issues, other than to remind members that the building the Watchet Tourist Office operates from is owned by West Somerset Council.

15 Consultation Implications (if any)

15.1 Up to date service level agreement reports and conversations with individual tourist information centres have helped to refine the content of this report.

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

16.1 None yet.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate)
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate)
- **Full Council – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate)

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

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Report Number: WSC 128/16

West Somerset Council

Full Council 23 November 2016

Review of Council Tax Rebate scheme for 2017/18

This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Mandy Chilcott

Report Author: Heather Tiso, Revenues & Benefits Service Manager

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Full Council with information on our existing Council Tax Rebate scheme and the context for reviewing our scheme for Working Age applicants from 2017/18.
- 1.2 The Council is legally required to give annual consideration on whether to revise its local Council Tax Rebate (CTR) scheme and to consult with interested parties if it wishes to change the scheme.
- 1.3 Consultation on options for our CTR scheme for 2017/18 has been undertaken. Both the Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet support amending the current CTR scheme for 2017/18 to reduce the maximum CTR offered to working age recipients from 85% to 80% and to align the scheme with changes to other welfare benefits, with the exception that applicants aged 18-21 would continue to be eligible.
- 1.4 This report seeks agreement from Full Council on our CTR scheme for the financial year 2017/18.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Full Council, having regard to the consultation response and the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA - see [Appendix 4](#)), agree the recommendation from Cabinet to amend the current CTR scheme to that shown in [Appendix 1](#) (illustrated in [Model 11](#)). This will revise our CTR scheme for 2017/18 to:
 - (a) Reduce the maximum CTR available to people of working age to 80%; **and**
 - (b) Align the CTR scheme for 2017/18 with changes made by the Government to other welfare benefits with the exception that applicants aged 18-21 would continue to be eligible for CTR.
- 2.2 The 2017/18 Council Tax Rebate scheme is recommended for 2017/18 only.

3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
The increased complexity of financial planning that could result from growing pressure from the Council Tax Rebate scheme if funding reductions are not fully addressed	3	4	12
<i>Cautious assumptions on recovery rate and therefore yield from the scheme.</i>	2	4	8
Council incurs an unacceptably high-level of debt because of people's inability to make the payments particularly if the scheme is less generous. Lower Council Tax collection rate and bad debts. The impact of the scheme is that low incomes working age households are now paying more Council Tax. There will be a point if people are asked to pay more Council Tax where the liability is too high for them and they will not pay anything.	4	4	16
<i>Robust arrears management procedures to maximise collection rate and prudent assumptions on collection rates council increases bad debt provision with budget</i>	3	4	12
Higher administrative costs	3	3	9
<i>Maximisation of council tax collected</i>	2	3	6
Potential growth in the number of claimants.	4	4	16
<i>Realistic assumption on caseload growth based on trends in recent years</i>	3	4	12
If West Somerset's population increases, including an increase in the population segment that currently receives CTR, demand for CTR could increase against funding from the Government. This would increase the funding gap. Such population migration may occur if West Somerset's CTR scheme is more generous than those of neighbouring boroughs. Caseload increases (e.g. Major employer loss) and/or total value of awards exceeds estimates	3	4	12
<i>Demand and cost of scheme monitored regularly and material changes reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan</i>	2	4	8
Wider welfare reforms (HB reductions, Universal Credit) cause additional hardship and/or migration of people claiming to West Somerset from more expensive areas and impact on Council Tax Collection	3	3	9
<i>Ensure adherence to robust recovery timetable. Maximise take-up of all available discounts/exemptions/ hardship relief. Strict adherence to monthly monitoring of performance against targets.</i>	3	2	6
Council fails to meet obligations under relevant equality legislation in adopting a scheme	3	4	12
<i>Carry out consultation on proposed scheme. Consider the results and findings as part of the approval of any scheme. Make reasonable adjustments through application of any agreed scheme.</i>	2	4	8

Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Impact							

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

3.1 In addition to the principle risks outlined on the previous page, a number of other factors have been considered:

Fairness: There is also a risk that scheme may be perceived as being unfair. This risk will be studied in line with the Government’s commitment to incentivise work, the recommended scheme requires a contribution. To mitigate this, all residents will have access to a discretionary fund.

Culture of non-payment: As we are mainly asking CTR recipients to make only a small contribution to their Council Tax bill, collection and recovery strategies may not be cost-effective, and small debts may be written off. This may over time develop into a culture of non-payment, where it becomes increasingly difficult and costly to recover small amounts of Council Tax from those who can least afford to pay it. We have mitigated this risk by minimising the level of contribution which is supported by robust arrears management procedures.

4 Background

4.1 Responsibility for Council Tax Rebate (CTR) passed to Local Authorities on 1 April 2013. Government also passed funding for CTR to Local Government through the annual Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA), but reduced the amount of funding available by 10% compared to the costs of the previous Council Tax Benefit (CTB) system. Previously, responsibility for CTB was held by central Government and funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

4.2 Local Authorities therefore had to decide whether to absorb the funding reduction across other areas of their budget or pass it on to recipients of CTR by requiring them to make a contribution to their overall Council Tax bill.

- 4.3 Billing Authorities were tasked with designing a CTR scheme for people of working age, while rules for people of pension age are set in regulations prescribed by the Government. This means people of pension age continue to receive assistance at no less amount than had been available under the CTB scheme.
- 4.4 While we have some discretion on designing our CTR scheme for people of working age, the Government say we must protect vulnerable groups. There is no definition of which groups are counted as “vulnerable” as each authority has to make its own assessment. However, the Government have highlighted Local Authority statutory duties regarding:
- Children and duties under the 2010 Child Poverty Act to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty
 - Disabled people and duties under the Equality Act 2010
 - Homelessness Prevention and duties under the 1996 Housing Act to prevent homelessness with special regard to vulnerable groups.
- 4.5 Currently, our scheme considers disabled people’s needs and those responsible for children. It fully ignores income from a War Disablement or War Widows Pension. Also following the Government’s direction, our scheme strengthens work incentives and does not discourage people to move off benefits and into work or to stay in work.
- 4.6 Approaches to the design of local CTR schemes by individual Councils have varied greatly. In designing their local schemes, a few authorities have absorbed the funding reduction passed on by Government, without passing on the cut to residents eligible for CTR by requiring them to contribute to their Council Tax bill. Other Councils have asked households to make a contribution to their annual Council Tax bill for the first time, in some cases as much as 45% of their total bill. In 2015/16, 260 Local Authorities (80%) required everyone to pay at least some Council Tax regardless of income, 30 more than in 2013/14. From April 2016, just 41 Councils (13%) continue to provide support at the level paid under the former CTB scheme.
- 4.7 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) provides funding through the annual Settlement Funding Assessment (comprising Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates Baseline) to help meet the cost of localised CTR schemes. Each of the major precepting authorities in Somerset received the initial funding based on their share of Council Tax receipts. In West Somerset, the initial grant awarded to precepting authorities was £2,831,449, with West Somerset Council’s share of this grant being £265,741 (based on a 9.39% share). From 1 April 2014, funding for localised CTR was incorporated in the LGFS and is not separately identified.
- 4.8 It is now impossible to ascertain funding provided for CTR in the LGFS. Government grants to councils are being phased out and local government will move to 100% business rates retention by 2020. It has not been confirmed, but this may well be how councils will be expected to fund CTR schemes in future.
- 4.9 Whilst it is not possible to identify the level of grant being received the approach taken by many authorities has been to assume the grant is being reduced at the same rate as the Settlement Funding Assessment. The Settlement Funding Assessment reduced by 25% in cash terms in the two years up to 2015/16 and by 14.5% from 2016/17. In applying this methodology, the funding available for Localised CTR has reduced by £1,015,782 to £1,815,667²⁴

- 4.10 In 2015/16, we paid CTR of £1,601,174 for people of pensionable age. Based on the assumptions stated above, this would leave just £214k to spend on CTR for people of working age. As our expenditure for working age recipients in 2015/16 was £1,024,271, this leaves a funding shortfall of £809,778. Based on our precepting share of Council Tax for 2016/17 of 9.48%, the share of this shortfall in funding for West Somerset Council equates to £76,767.
- 4.11 If there are no changes to Single Person Discounts or protection provided to pensioners, CTR is going to become an additional cost pressure to local government. The Council has effectively maximised discounts and exemptions to close the funding gap (see paragraphs 6.2 - 6.5) and the only significant variable is to adjust the taper (minimum payment), however this needs to be managed carefully so as not to have an adverse impact on collection rates. For example, the review of CTR schemes carried out by Eric Ollerenshaw OBE in December 2015, noted that every Council that set their minimum payment to above 20% saw collection rates drop.
- 4.12 Therefore, we need to consider the affordability of our current CTR scheme, and consider the cost of the financial support provided against other service priorities and alternative options to address the overall budget gap.

5 West Somerset Council's Council Tax Rebate Scheme

- 5.1 People of pension age are able to claim support at up to 100% of their Council Tax liability. If a person claims Pension Credit (guarantee element) there is no limit on the savings they can have and they will normally not pay Council Tax at all. Pensioners with higher incomes can also qualify, even if they do not get Pension Credit. Depending on their circumstances they can qualify for some help with their Council Tax with an income of £400 a week or more.
- 5.2 In designing our CTR scheme, we considered customers' ability to pay and the collectability of the resultant Council Tax liability. For people of working age, our scheme has the following key elements:

- Maximum support is 85% of Council Tax - everyone of working age has to pay something;
- Increased non-dependant deductions;
- No Second adult rebate;
- Earned income disregards are at increased levels than those offered under CTB;
- Hardship fund of £22.5k for short-term help (this is a Collection Fund commitment and not fully funded by WSC).

and from 1 April 2016:

- Disregard maintenance received for children;
 - CTR at a level no more than for a Band C property;
 - No CTR for applicants with capital over £6,000;
 - Minimum Income Floor for self-employed applicants.
- 5.3 In annual billing for 2016/17, West Somerset Council sent Council Tax bills that after the award of CTR, totalled more than £21.6 million. Approximately 18% of residents receive financial support through CTR, with under 8% of those liable to pay some Council Tax, being CTR recipients of working age.

- 5.4 There were 3,531 people who moved from the Council Tax Benefit scheme to the localised CTR scheme. At 31 March 2016, this had reduced to 3,143. Key information on CTR caseload, spending and budgets is shown below:

Claimant type	% of total claims	Caseload at 31 March 2016	% of total spend	CTR Expenditure
Working Age	43%	1,357	39%	£1,024,271
Pension Age	57%	1,786	61%	£1,601,174
Total	100%	3,143	100%	£2,625,445

Table 5.4.1

Authority	*Notional CTR Budget
West Somerset Council (9.46%)	£256,845
Parishes (4.37%)	£118,610
Somerset County Council (69.13%)	£1,877,185
Avon and Somerset Police (11.76%)	£319,375
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority (5.28%)	£143,297
Total *Notional Budget	£2,715,313

Table 5.4.2

Comparative data	
Council Tax Benefit awarded 2012/13	£3,105,112
Council Tax Rebate awarded 2015/16	£2,625,445
Reduction in Council Tax Rebate expenditure in comparison to Council Tax Benefit (15%)	£479,667
Council Tax Benefit claims @ 31 March 2013	3,531
Council Tax Rebate claims @ 31 March 2016	3,143
Reduction in Council Tax Rebate caseload in comparison to CTB (11%)	388
Council Tax Rebate Budget 2015/16	£2,715,313
Council Tax Rebate awarded 2015/16	£2,625,445
Saving in CTR for 2015/16 in comparison to *notional budget	£89,868

Table 5.4.3

**Notional budget calculated in accordance with CTR funding distribution in 2013/14*

- 5.5 Members will see from the tables above that the cost of our CTR scheme has reduced considerably, both through the implementation of our local policy and the trend in demand / eligibility for financial assistance. The changes to our CTR scheme to reduce support offered to working age applicants in 2016/17 were estimated to reduce expenditure. At 30 June 2016 we estimated that the CTR we award this year will be £183k less than our budget. However, there are a number of factors potentially affecting the ongoing reduction in costs and CTR recipients, namely:

- A downturn in the economy generally (as experienced in 2008 until 2013); or
- A downturn in the local economy such as a local business going into liquidation or a reducing labour force; or
- An increase in Council Tax above the increase in allowances available under the scheme.

- 5.6 The administration of the current scheme is both cost effective and efficient as for the majority of claims we can use information supplied by claimants for a Housing Benefit claim or direct from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

6 Collection Activity and Debt Profile for 2015/16

- 6.1 From 1 April 2013 the Council decided to take advantage of new flexibilities related to second home discounts and short and long term empty properties to generate additional income through Council Tax in 2013/14.
- 6.2 For unoccupied and unfurnished properties the changes meant Council Tax would be payable at 100% of the liability after 1 month. For those remaining unoccupied and unfurnished after 2 years, the Council decided to charge Council Tax at 150% to encourage owners to put those properties back into use. Previously, there was no Council Tax payable for unoccupied and unfurnished properties for the first 6 months and after this, Council Tax was due at 90% of the liability.
- 6.3 For unoccupied furnished properties (“second homes”) Council Tax from 1 April 2013 was payable at 100% instead of 90% that previously applied.
- 6.4 The households liable for Council Tax increased from 17,595 in 2012/13 to 17,912 by 31 March 2016. While bringing additional income from Council Tax, this growth has increased the demand for services.
- 6.5 The net collectable amount for Council Tax in 2015/16 increased by over £1.6m in comparison to 2012/13. The collection of Council Tax in year, while at a rate slightly less than achieved in 2012/13, has resulted in additional income for West Somerset of £147k based on its preceptor share of 9.46%. Since 2012/13, approximately 30% of the increased income from Council Tax has been derived from growth, with 70% being the consequence of other factors, such as the new flexibilities on second home discounts and short and long term empty properties (technical reform).

	2012/13	2015/16	Difference since 2012/13	% change since 2012/13
Council Tax due	£18,716,143	£20,321,395	£1,602,252	8.6% ↑
Council Tax Collected (in year)	£18,252,909 (97.52%)	£19,802,043 (97.44%)	£1,549,134	8.5% ↑

Table 6.5.1

- 6.6 Despite our best endeavours, it has not been possible to maintain in-year Council Tax collection at the rate it was before the introduction of CTR. For many customers, having to pay Council Tax has caused them budgeting issues, not least because many have also been affected by other welfare reform, such as the removal of the spare room subsidy.
- 6.7 Overall, the Council Tax outstanding for 2015/16 was £519,352. Council Tax outstanding for working age CTR recipients was £100,004. Therefore, while working age CTR recipients represent just 8% of households, the value of their debt equates to 19% of Council Tax outstanding at 31 March 2016.
- 6.8 In some instances, significant effort is required to collect relatively small sums of money and that effort may not be economical when balanced against the value of the debt owed. Furthermore the impact of passing enforcement costs on to residents will only increase the level of the debt further.

7 Council Tax Rebate Scheme 2017/18

- 7.1 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 states that before making a scheme we must consult with any major precepting authorities, publish a draft scheme and then consult with other such persons who are likely to have an interest in the operation of such a scheme. We must set a realistic timeframe for consultation to ensure we can seek feedback from all appropriate individuals and groups in the community.
- 7.2 Consultation with precepting authorities (Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Police, and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority took place on 24 June 2016. Public consultation started on 4 July 2016 and ended on 11 September 2016. At the closing date, we had received 108 responses. Full details of the consultation are shown in [Appendix 2](#). Information below shows a summary of the 4 options on which we consulted, as well as the response received.

7.2.1 Option 1 - No Change

Consultation Response: 40% in favour

Under this option we would work out CTR in the same way as we do now. Any shortfall in the funding we get and the CTR we pay in 2017/18 would need to be met from other Council budgets.

7.2.2 Option 2 - Reduce maximum CTR offered to working age recipients from 85%

Consultation Response: 47% in favour

This means working age CTR recipients would need to pay more and the Council could reduce the funding required to support the scheme in 2017/18 to assist in off-setting cuts in the Local Government Finance Settlement. Under our current CTR scheme the minimum contribution is 15%. If we were to reduce the maximum CTR offered to working age recipients to 80%, it would result in a potential saving as shown below:

Financial effect in reducing maximum CTR to 80% in isolation	
Current CTR spend based on 85% maximum support	£2,560,474
Revised spend on CTR based on 80% maximum support	<u>£2,493,603</u>
Potential saving	£66,871
<i>WSC's share (9.48 %) of the saving</i>	<i>£6,339</i>

Increasing the contribution rate to 20% adds an additional Council Tax burden of £164.07 a year for a working age couple on CTR living in a band D property. It is important to consider the impact of increasing the Council Tax burden for those residents who are also likely to be impacted by wider Welfare Reform. Alternative reductions in the maximum CTR offered could be considered, for example, the maximum support provided through CTR could be any value less than 85% of the liability. Nationally, the highest contribution required in 2016/17 is 45%.

Any reduction in the support offered to working age CTR recipients is likely to negatively impact on in-year collection of Council Tax and lead to a potential increase in administration costs to recover the Council Tax owed.

7.2.3 Option 3 - Increase maximum CTR offered to working age recipients from 85%

Consultation Response: 22% in favour

Option 3 would mean all working age CTR recipients could pay less Council Tax, but there would be an additional cost to the Council and precepting authorities. Increasing the level of support carries a high level of risk to the Council in protecting front line services as resources would be diverted to support the CTR policy. This risk is increased in future years as the Council continues to see the funding available for services reducing. If we were to increase the maximum CTR offered to recipients of working age to 90%, it would result in potential increased costs as shown below:

Financial effect in increasing maximum CTR to 90% in isolation	
Current CTR spend based on 85% maximum support	£2,560,474
Revised spend on CTR based on 90% maximum support	<u>£2,619,809</u>
Potential increased cost	£59,335
<i>WSC's share (9.48 %) of the cost</i>	<i>£5,625</i>

7.2.4 Option 4 - Technical changes

Consultation Response: 18% in favour

Option 4 would mean the Council could chose to align the CTR scheme for 2017/18 with some or all of the changes the Government make to other welfare benefits. The changes known or expected to be implemented by the Government would have the following effect:

- The maximum period for which we will backdate CTR for working age recipients would reduce from 6 months to 1 month. This reduction in backdating has applied to working age Housing Benefit recipients since April 2016.
- From 1 April 2017, we would not include a Family Premium within in the applicable amount for new working age CTR applicants, or existing recipients who would otherwise have had a new entitlement to the premium. The Family Premium has not been included for the same category of Housing Benefit recipients since May 2016.
- When working out CTR, we would not include the Work Related Activity component in the applicable amount for new claimants of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). New claimants for ESA in the Work-Related Activity Group (WRAG) will receive the same rate of CTR as those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. The Work Related Activity component will not be included in Universal Credit from April 2017.
- Under our current scheme, we include £66.90 in the applicable amount for every child up to the age of 20. From 1 April 2017, we would remove this amount for third and any subsequent children born after that date to align with revised rules for Housing Benefit, Tax Credits and Universal Credit that are expected to apply in 2017/18. We would continue to include the amount for first and second children. There will be protection for multiple births or women who have a third child as the result of rape or other exceptional circumstances.

- From April 2017, 18-21 year olds who are not in work may no longer be eligible for help through our CTR scheme. We would implement this change to align with new rules expected to apply to Universal Credit applicants. Under Universal Credit, 18-21 year olds will be required to participate in an “intensive regime of support from day one of their benefit claim”, and after six months they will be expected to apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship, gain work-based skills, or go on a mandatory work placement. There will be a range of exemptions for vulnerable young people, including those in danger of suffering abuse and those receiving disability benefits. People who have been in work for 6 months before making a claim, will continue to be eligible for CTR for up to 6 months while they look for work. Applicants who have previously been in care will not be affected.
- From 1 April 2017 we would align our CTR scheme with changes made to the temporary absence rules in Housing Benefit and Pension Credit on 28 July 2016. This would reduce the allowable period of temporary absence outside Great Britain from 13 weeks to 4 weeks. Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are not part of Great Britain for Housing Benefit purposes. There are exceptions to the general temporary absence rule that we would similarly apply to CTR recipients, for example absences related to the death of a close relative

All the changes outlined above would mean that some working age CTR recipients would need to pay more and the Council could reduce the funding required to support the scheme in 2017/18 to assist in off-setting cuts in the Local Government Finance Settlement. Making such changes would mean the scheme for Housing Benefit recipients would be less complicated as rules would be aligned as well as easing administration. The potential saving by implementing all the changes outlined above is shown below.

Financial effect in amending the CTR scheme to align with welfare benefit changes	
Current CTR spend based on 85% maximum support	£2,560,474
Revised spend on CTR based on alignment with other welfare benefit changes	<u>£2,546,287</u>
Potential saving	£14,186
<i>WSC’s share (9.48 %) of the saving</i>	<i>£1,345</i>

8 Key considerations applicable to all options

- 8.1 Any of the options to reduce or increase the level of support we offer through CTR will have an adverse or positive impact on certain applicants or groups of applicants. If we need to cut the support offered through our CTR scheme, we need to consider a careful selection of options for our particular demographic unless additional funding can be raised through other Council initiatives or by cuts in services generally. The reality is that any revised scheme that has less funding, needs to establish which applicants are more able to pay an increased level of Council Tax with the reduction in their CTR.
- 8.2 There is no single option or change to the CTR scheme that can deliver sufficient savings to meet the predicted budget gap from the reduced LGFS in 2017/18. The decision will be to choose what options are acceptable to the Council bearing in mind the overall level of finance available.
- 8.3 Although the Council is not legally required to include transitional protection for claimants moving from one CTR scheme to a replacement scheme, the legislation does state that Members must consider if transitional arrangements may be needed and if protection should apply to all groups or just certain groups. Such protection could limit our ability to realise savings.

- 8.4 Should there be any shift in proportions between working age and pension age or an economic downturn resulting in more people relying on some form of state financial support, there would be greater pressure on remaining Council Taxpayers to meet potentially higher outlay.
- 8.5 A decision to reduce CTR for people of working age will mean that Council Tax Collection will be a much harder task. This will result in more pressure on Revenues staff and may require additional capacity to maintain tax collection rates.
- 8.6 Detailed modelling on the options, is shown in [Appendix 3](#). Financial modelling for Option 4 is based on data derived from customers affected by Housing Benefit changes from 1 April 2016 to 15 September 2016. Modelling illustrates the effect on applicants and potential savings.

9 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 9.1 Council Tax Rebate is closely linked with the financial performance of the Council, underpinning the delivery of corporate priorities and therefore all Corporate Aims.

10 Finance / Resource Implications

- 10.1 As reported earlier in this report, funding for CTR was reduced by 10% in 2013/14. Subsequently the Settlement Funding Assessment reduced by 39% in cash terms by 2016/17. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the Council, as reported to the Scrutiny Committee on 16 June 2016 reported that we have a projected annual budget gap rising from £119,619 in 2017/18 to £1,226,705 by 2021/22 based on current projections for costs and funding. The plans for transformation will reduce but not fully close the gap and as recognised in the business case, further options will need to be explored to address the residual gap.
- 10.2 The Council has been required to make significant financial savings in recent years, and faces further cuts in funding and increasing financial risks over the coming years. It is becoming increasingly difficult to preserve core services to local residents. Reducing Council Tax income will increase the Council's budget gap (and increase budget pressures for major preceptors) increasing the challenge for Members in identifying savings required to balance the budget overall.
- 10.3 The financing risk of the scheme is shared with other precepting Authorities through the tax base calculation. The financial impact of the CTR scheme is on the Collection Fund that is used to manage all Council Tax income, before that funding is shared between the various local precepting bodies. Given WSC's share of the Collection Fund is only 9.48%, the major element of the risk falls on the other precepting local authorities.
- 10.4 The maximum saving that may be achieved is through implementing Options 2 & 4 combined ([Model 10](#)). By reducing the maximum CTR available to working age recipients to 80% and aligning our scheme for 2017/18 with all changes to other welfare benefits, there is an estimated saving of £80,839.12 in comparison with expenditure of £2,560,474 in 2016/17. West Somerset Council's share of that saving would be £7,664.
- 10.5 The saving to be achieved by amending the current scheme for 2017/18 to reduce the maximum CTR offered to working age recipients from 85% to 80% and to align the scheme with changes to other welfare benefits, with the exception that applicants aged 18-21 would remain eligible for CTR ([Model 11](#)), would be £6,623. Revisions to CTR for 2017/18 are shown in the draft scheme attached at [Appendix 1](#).

11 Legal Implications

- 11.1 Section 33 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit and any replacement scheme is excluded from the scope of the Universal Credit system set up by Section 1 of that Act. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 (“the 2012 Act”) amends the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (“the 1992 Act”) to make provision for the localisation of Council Tax Rebate.
- 11.2 The 2012 Act amends the 1992 Act by adding a new section 13A to state that Council Tax will be reduced to the extent set out in an authority’s Council Tax reduction scheme and to such further extent as the authority sees fit (new s13A(1)(c) replicating the existing provision for authorities to adopt specified additional classes).
- 11.3 Local authorities must make a Council Tax Reduction Scheme setting out the reductions which are to apply in its area by persons or persons in classes consisting of persons whom the authority considers to be in financial need.
- 11.4 Paragraph 5 of Schedule 1A to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as inserted by Schedule 4 to the Local Government Finance Act 2012, requires the authority to consider whether, for each financial year, the CTR scheme is to be revised or replaced. Where the scheme is to be revised or replaced the procedural requirements in paragraph 3 of that schedule apply. Any revision/replacement must be determined by 31st of January in the preceding year to the year which the changes are to apply.
- 11.5 The council must therefore consider whether the scheme requires revision or replacement and if so, consult with precepting authorities (Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Police, and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority), publish a draft scheme and then consult with such persons as are likely to have an interest in the operation of that scheme prior to determining the scheme before 31st January. If any proposed revision is to reduce or remove a reduction to which a class of person is entitled, the revision must include such transitional provision as the Council sees fit.
- 11.6 Case law has confirmed that consultation must
- be undertaken when proposals are at a formative stage;
 - include sufficient reasons for particular proposals to allow those consulted to give intelligent consideration and an intelligent response;
 - give consultees sufficient time to make a response; and
 - be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken.

12 Environmental Impact Implications

- 12.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

13 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 Safeguarding and community safety implications have been considered, and there are not expected to be any specific implications relating to this report.

14 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 14.1 Members need to demonstrate they have consciously thought about the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty as part of the decision making process. The three aims the authority must have due regard for:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- 14.2 The public sector equality duty, as set out in section 149 of the 2010 Equality Act, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic.
- 14.3 The “protected characteristics” are: age, disability, race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment. Marriage and civil partnership are also a protected characteristic for the purposes of the duty to eliminate discrimination.
- 14.4 The Council must pay due regard to any obvious risk of such discrimination arising from the decision before them. There is no prescribed manner in how the equality duty must be exercised, though producing an EIA is the most usual method. For this reason these matters are examined in the EIA at [Appendix 4](#). In addition, debt levels are broken down by claim profile in [Appendix 5](#).
- 14.5 Councillors must consider the effect that implementing any changes to the CTR scheme will have on equality before making a decision. The EIA will assist with this. Where it is apparent the CTR policy would have an adverse effect on equality, then adjustments should be made to seek to reduce that effect and this is known as “mitigation”.
- 14.6 Implementing Option 4 to remove CTR entitlement from people aged 18 to 21 will have a disproportionate effect on younger applicants. Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, we have a responsibility to foster good relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. There is a risk of harming the relationship between young people and those aged 22 or over, as applicants aged 18 to 21 will receive no support, while older applicants will see no reduction in their CTR through this amendment. In considering to implement this measure, based on current recipients, 15 individuals aged 18-21 would no longer receive any CTR.
- 14.7 The Council has a duty to prevent child poverty under provisions within the Child Poverty Act 2010, but inevitably in aligning our CTR scheme to some of the changes made by the Government to other welfare benefits, there could be a disproportionate effect on applicants with responsibility for children. There are 861 working age CTR recipients with children, accounting for 50% of all working age CTR recipients.

- 14.7.1 In not including a Family Premium this would result in a “notional” weekly loss of CTR of £3.49. As this measure only applies to new claims to CTR, or those who have a first child while claiming CTR, this alignment measure will not result in a reduction in actual support paid. However, this provision has applied to Housing Benefit since 1 May 2016 and so we have undertaken modelling to ascertain the likely effect should we apply this measure from 1 April 2017. This modelling shows there would be only one CTR recipient who would see the support we provide reduce by an average of £3.50 a week.
- 14.7.2 In limiting dependants’ additions to a maximum of two, households who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1 April 2017 will see a “notional” weekly loss of CTR of £13.38 (20% of £66.90). Modelling on the likely effects of implementing this measure shows there would be 5 CTR recipients who would no longer receive CTR, while 2 further applicants would continue to receive CTR, but the support provided would reduce by an average of £11.85 a week.
- 14.8 In mitigating the effects of any reduction to CTR for working age applicants, officers could apply a discretionary reduction in Council Tax liability through exceptional hardship as appropriate and in accordance with our policy
- 14.9 Budgetary pressures and economic and practical factors will also be relevant. The amount of weight to be placed on the same countervailing factors in the decision making process will be for Members to decide.

15 Social Value Implications

- 15.1 There are no social value implications associated with this report.

16 Partnership Implications

- 16.1 CTR costs will increase if any of the precepting Authorities increase their Council Tax.

17 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 17.1 There are no Health and Wellbeing implications associated with this report.

18 Asset Management Implications

- 18.1 There are no asset management implications associated with this report.

19 Consultation Implications

- 19.1 Before implementing any change to the CTR scheme for 2017/18 we must consult with the public. It is important not just to consider the options to reduce funding for CTR, but also to give the public options on how we can keep our CTR scheme at the same level by making funding available from other sources or by reducing other services. Responses to consultation are shown in [Appendix 2](#). A copy of our consultation document is available on request

20 Scrutiny Recommendation

- 20.1 The Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 13 October 2016 considered the outcome of consultation and the Equalities Impact Assessment. Their recommendation on the preferred CTR scheme for 2017/18 is to amend the current scheme to reduce the maximum CTR offered to working age recipients from 85% to 80% and to align the scheme with changes to other welfare benefits, with the exception that applicants aged 18-21 would continue to be eligible. This recommendation is reflected in the draft scheme at [Appendix 1](#) (and illustrated in [Model 11](#)).

21 Cabinet Recommendation

21.1 The Cabinet met on 2 November 2016 to consider the recommendation from the Scrutiny Committee as well as the outcome of consultation and the Equalities Impact Assessment. The Cabinet's recommendation on the preferred CTR scheme for 2017/18, is to amend the current scheme to reduce the maximum CTR offered to working age recipients from 85% to 80% and to align the scheme with changes to other welfare benefits, with the exception that applicants aged 18-21 would continue to be eligible. This recommendation is reflected in the draft scheme at [Appendix 1](#) (and illustrated in [Model 11](#)).

Democratic Path:

- Scrutiny Committee - Yes
- Cabinet - Yes
- Full Council - Yes

Reporting Frequency: Annually

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix 1	West Somerset Council's Draft Council Tax Rebate Scheme
Appendix 2	Public Consultation
Appendix 3	Modelling of impact of options for CTR applicants and financial effect
Appendix 4	Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 5	Council Tax debt profile @ 31 March 2016

Contact Officers

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West Somerset Council

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

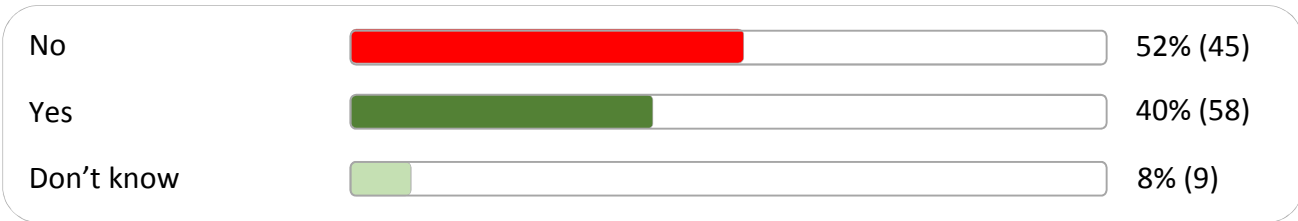
S13A and Schedule 1a of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

PLEASE READ SEPARATE DOCUMENT

Council Tax Rebate – Consultation for changes in 2017/18

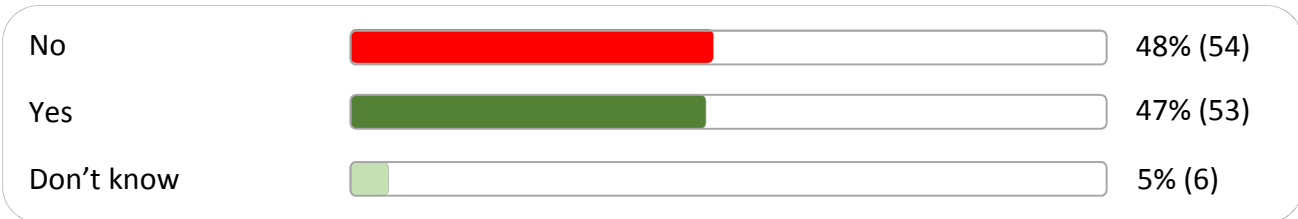
Option 1

Do you agree with the principal that the current CTR scheme is unchanged for 2017/18?



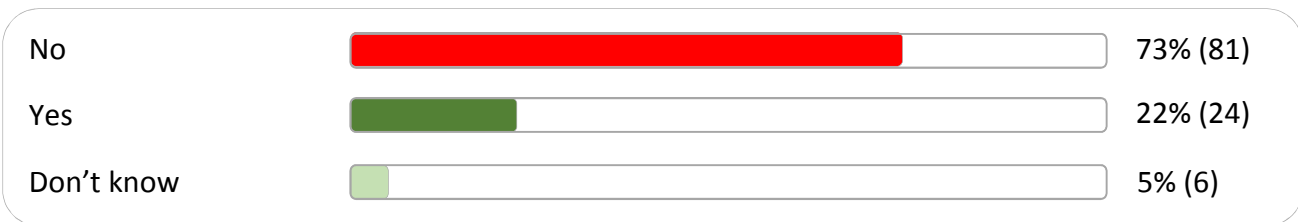
Option 2

Do you agree with the principle that the Council reduces the maximum support a working age person can receive for 2017/18?



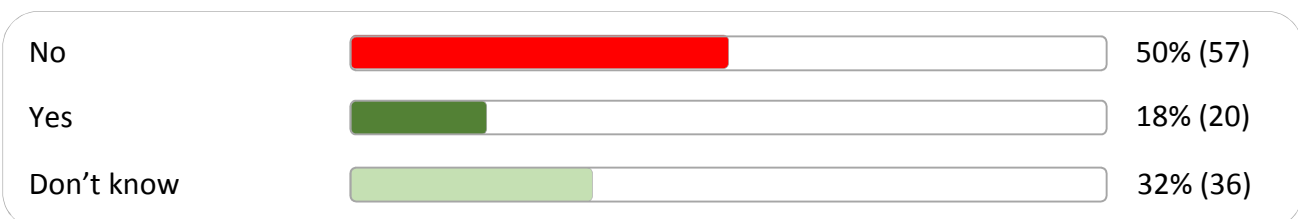
Option 3

Do you agree with the principle that the Council increases the maximum support a working age person can receive for 2017/18?

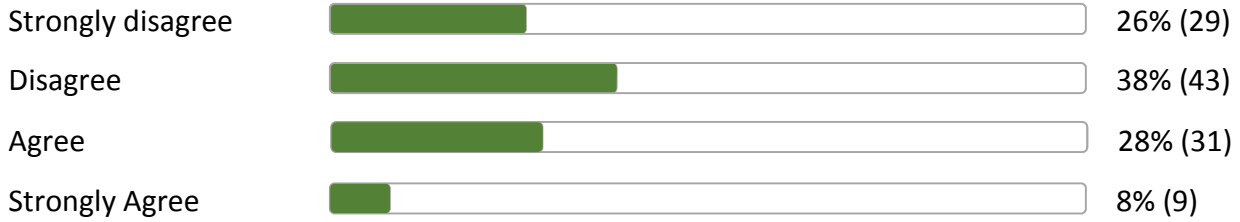


Option 4

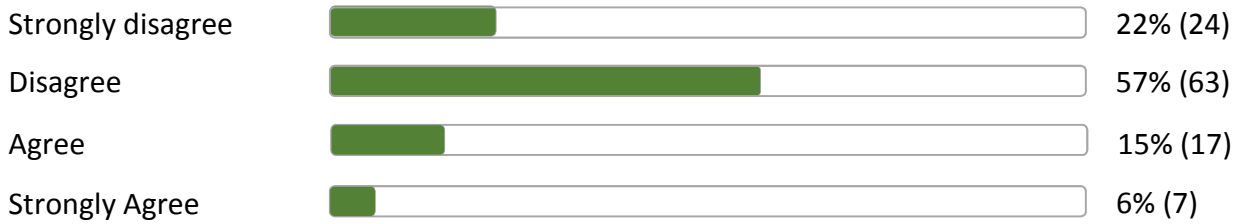
Do you agree with the principle that the Council may change the Council Tax Rebate scheme to reflect changes made by the Government to welfare benefits?



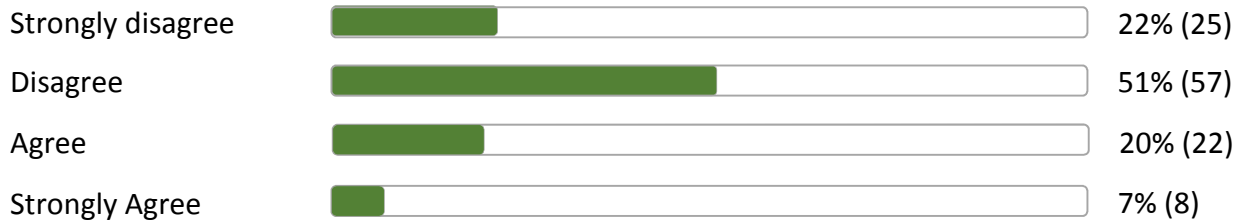
Should the Council increase Council Tax to help pay for the scheme?



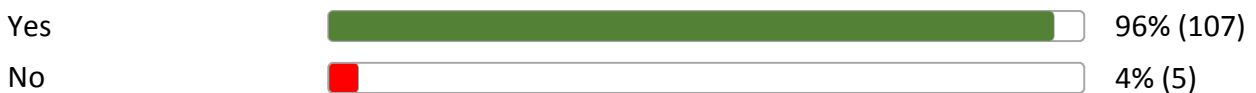
Should the Council reduce funding to other services to help pay for the scheme?



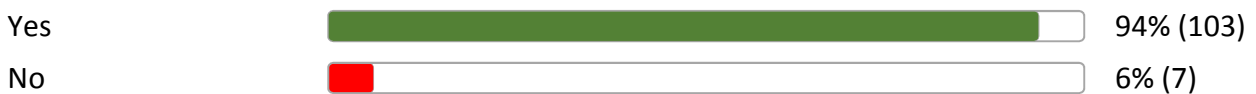
Should the Council use its reserves to help pay for the scheme?



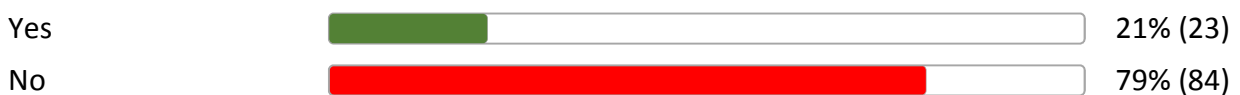
Are you a resident of West Somerset?



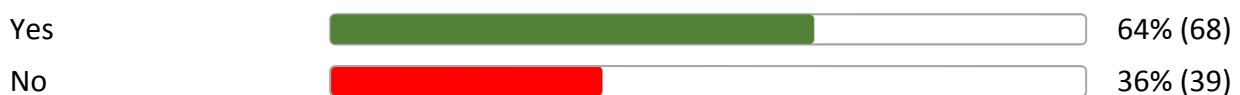
Do you pay Council Tax?



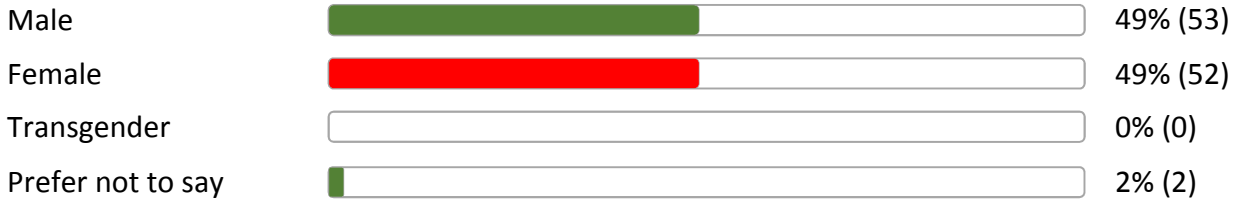
Do you currently receive Council Tax Rebate?



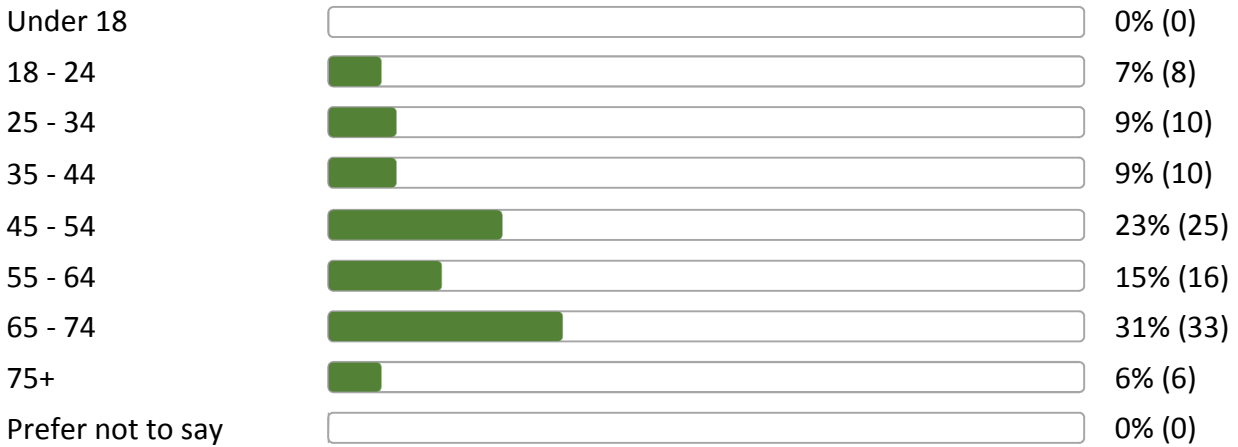
Do you work, either full or part time?



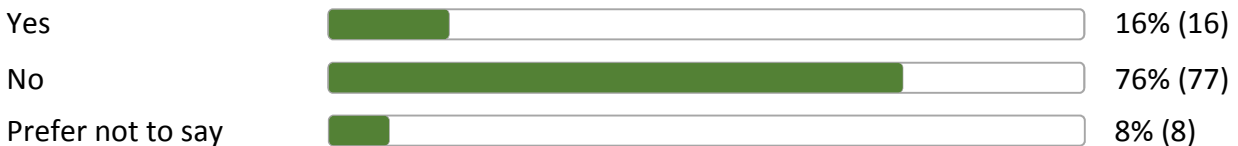
What is your gender?



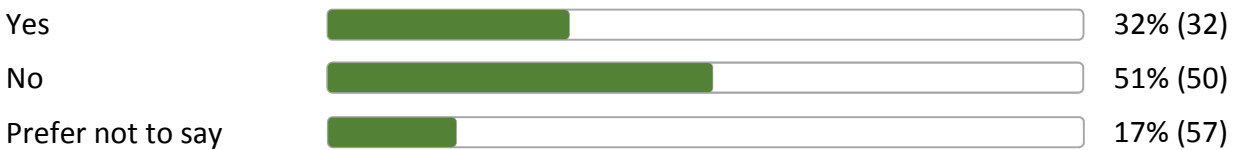
What is your age group?



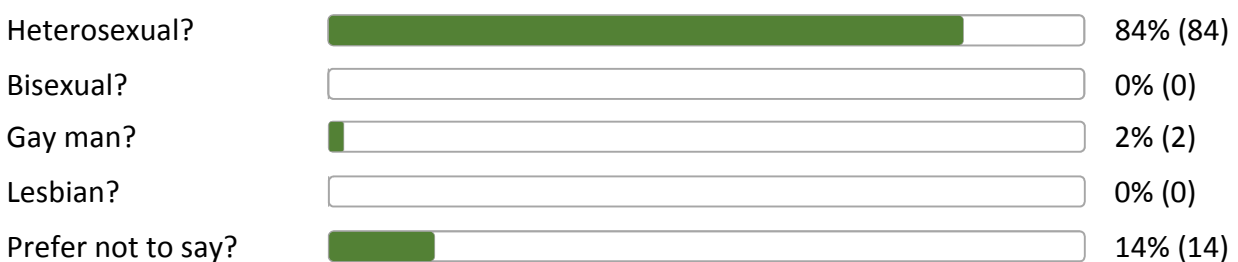
Do you consider yourself as having a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition?



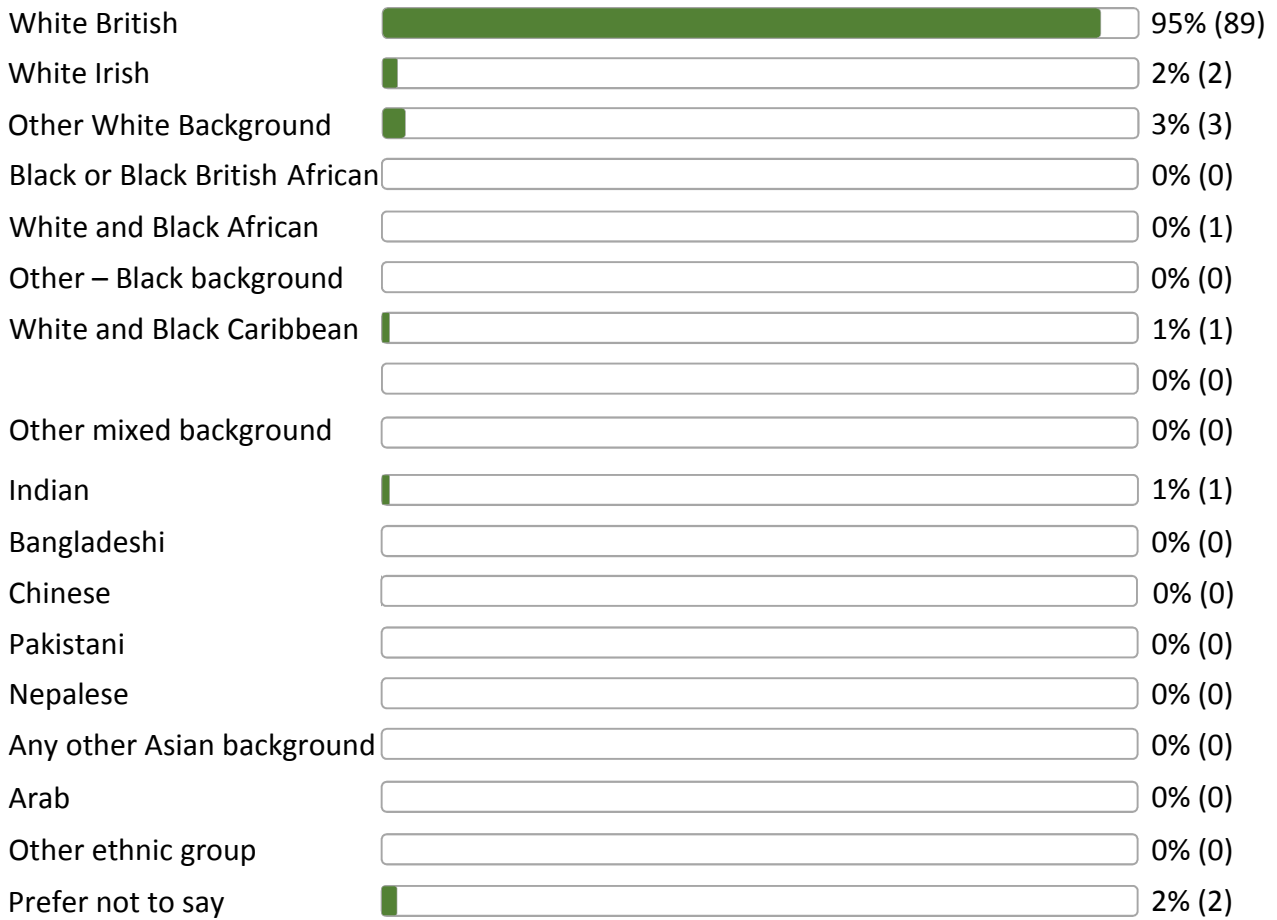
Do you consider yourself to have a religion or belief?



Do you consider your sexual orientation to be



Which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong to?



Part A

Please use the space below to make any other comments you have about the Council's preferred options:

Merging with 2 other councils, say Taunton and Sedgemoor would find savings.

The more expensive it is to live here, it drives young people away. It will become a retirement town!

Money is wasted and the council doesn't listen to the public or their needs and what they think is important.

Landlord could be made responsible for the rates and the amount of rent payable was assessed by the rateable value of the property but an agreed amount was decided so the landlord couldn't pass on the extra charge to the tenant then this would solve a lot of financial problems. If you have extra properties to rent surely you can pay the rates.

This is necessary and useful.

If you can get more from second home owners - please do so. In many cases this is a pernicious practice which has reduced housing for local people.

Get a job and pay it yourself!

Should only increase if central government fully funds it.

Get the unemployed and those on probation picking up litter and sweeping up sand on the seafront

STOP IT NOW!

WSC seems to be the poor relative with regards to only retaining a small %. why do we receive so little...?

Part C

If you have any further comments or suggestions to make on the Council Tax Rebate Scheme please use the space below:

Leaving the scheme as it is, will cost West Somerset more because of changes in other benefits. The no change option is NOT a no cost option.

Reduction in benefits will increase poverty for those least able to cope.

I do not agree with using council reserves. These should be kept for emergency contingencies

Money wasted where it doesn't need to be. Councillors need to be more friendly and get to know local people

One advantage of keeping the status quo - changes are not needed for IT systems and re printing 'paper work' which cost us money.

The system needs to be made fairer for all.

More money needs to go to other services, too much benefit paid already

I think working people should pay less - rewarded for working too much goes to the police - for nothing in return

I would like to pay less as a working age council tax payer

I agree that the CTR scheme should be changed to reflect changes in the welfare benefit - although it would be very unpopular I feel that in the long term it is better to link them together.

Reducing CTR maximum is my 2nd choice

Holiday home owners should have to pay full amount

Rebate should be limited to 2 children

Model 1

No change to current Council Tax Rebate Scheme

	Pension Age	Working age	Total
Number of claims	1,769	1,366	3,135
Total weekly awards	£30,982.11	£18,122.86	£49,104.98
Average weekly award	£17.51	£13.27	£15.66
Estimated 2017/18 awards	£1,615,495.98	£944,977.77	£2,560,473.75
Estimated expenditure 2016/17			£2,560,473.75
Saving			£0.00
* Notional Budget 2016/17			£2,752,974.00
Estimated underspend in 2017/18 compared to budget for 2016/17			£192,500.25

Working age customers	Number	Average Award
Single, no children	604	£10.62
Couple no children	110	£14.20
Couple with children	245	£6.07
Lone parent with children	407	£8.16
	1,366	£13.27
Employed & self employed	378	£10.51
Applicants with a disability	109	£13.83
Applicants with caring responsibilities	33	£14.22

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Model 2

Reduce maximum support through CTR to 80% for all working age recipients

	Pension Age	Working age	Total
Number of claims	1,769	1,356	3,125
Total weekly awards	£30,982.11	£16,840.40	£47,822.52
Average weekly award	£17.51	£12.42	£15.30
Estimated 2017/18 awards	£1,615,495.98	£878,106.65	£2,493,602.63
Estimated expenditure 2016/17			£2,560,473.75
Saving			£66,871.12
* Notional Budget 2016/17			£2,752,974.00
Estimated underspend in 2017/18 compared to budget for 2016/17			£259,371.37

Working age customers	Number reduced	Average weekly reduction	Applicants that would no longer qualify
Single, no children	604	£0.89	0
Couple no children	108	£1.12	2
Couple with children	238	£1.64	7
Lone parent with children	406	£1.07	1
	1,356	£0.95	10
Employed & self employed	369	£1.36	9
Applicants with a disability	109	£1.42	1
Applicants with caring responsibilities	33	£1.97	1

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Model 3**Increase maximum support through CTR to 90% for all working age recipients**

	Pension Age	Working age	Total
Number of claims	1,769	1,372	3,141
Total weekly awards	£30,982.11	£19,260.80	£50,242.91
Average weekly award	£17.51	£14.04	£16.00
Estimated 2017/18 awards	£1,615,495.98	£1,004,312.94	£2,619,808.92
Estimated expenditure 2016/17			£2,560,473.75
Additional Expenditure			£59,335.17
* Notional Budget 2016/17			£2,752,974.00
Estimated underspend in 2017/18 compared to budget for 2016/17			£133,165.08

Working age customers	Number increased	Average weekly increase	<u>Additional</u> applicants that would qualify
Single, no children	604	£0.85	3
Couple no children	110	£1.13	0
Couple with children	245	£1.16	2
Lone parent with children	407	£0.98	1
	1,366	£0.83	6
Employed & self employed	378	£1.07	4
Applicants with a disability	109	£1.00	0
Applicants with caring responsibilities	33	£0.97	0

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Model 4

Current scheme modelled to show CTR payable if backing for working age applicants is reduced to one month

	Pension Age	Working age	Total
Number of claims	1,769	1,366	3,135
Total weekly awards	£30,982.11	£18,122.52	£49,104.64
Average weekly award	£17.51	£13.27	£15.66
Estimated 2017/18 awards	£1,615,495.98	£944,960.12	£2,560,456.10
Estimated expenditure 2016/17			£2,560,473.75
Saving			£17.65
* Notional Budget 2016/17			£2,752,974.00
Estimated underspend in 2017/18 compared to budget for 2016/17			£192,517.90

Working age customers	Number	Average weekly decrease
Single, no children	3	£0.11
Couple no children	0	£0.00
Couple with children	0	£0.00
Lone parent with children	0	£0.00
	3	£0.11
Employed & self employed	0	£0.00
Applicants with a disability	3	£0.11
Applicants with caring responsibilities	0	£0.00

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Model 5

Current scheme modelled to show CTR payable if Family Premium is withdrawn for new working age CTR applicants, or existing recipients who would otherwise have had a new entitlement to the premium

	Pension Age	Working age	Total
Number of claims	1,769	1,366	3,135
Total weekly awards	£30,982.11	£18,119.36	£49,101.47
Average weekly award	£17.51	£13.26	£15.66
Estimated 2017/18 awards	£1,615,495.98	£944,795.17	£2,560,291.15
Estimated expenditure 2016/17			£2,560,473.75
Saving			£182.60
* Notional Budget 2016/17			£2,752,974.00
Estimated underspend in 2017/18 compared to budget for 2016/17			£192,682.85

Working age customers	Number reduced	Average weekly reduction	Applicants that would no longer qualify
Single, no children	0	£0.00	0
Couple no children	0	£0.00	0
Couple with children	1	£3.50	0
Lone parent with children	0	£0.00	0
	1	£3.50	0
Employed & self employed	0	£3.50	0
Applicants with a disability	0	£0.00	0
Applicants with caring responsibilities	0	£0.00	0

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Model 6

Current scheme modelled to show CTR payable if Work Related Activity Component is withdrawn

	Pension Age	Working age	Total
Number of claims	1,769	1,366	3,135
Total weekly awards	£30,982.11	£18,122.86	£49,104.98
Average weekly award	£17.51	£13.27	£15.66
Estimated 2017/18 awards	£1,615,495.98	£944,977.77	£2,560,473.75
Estimated expenditure 2016/17			£2,560,473.75
Saving			£0.00
* Notional Budget 2016/17			£2,752,974.00
Estimated underspend in 2017/18 compared to budget for 2016/17			£192,500.25

Working age customers	Number reduced	Average weekly reduction	Applicants that would no longer qualify
Single, no children	0	£0.00	0
Couple no children	0	£0.00	0
Couple with children	0	£0.00	0
Lone parent with children	0	£0.00	0
	0	£0.00	0
Employed & self employed	0	£0.00	0
Applicants with a disability	0	£0.00	0
Applicants with caring responsibilities	0	£0.00	0

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Model 7

Current scheme modelled to show CTR payable additional allowance for children included in the applicable amount is capped to 2 children

	Pension Age	Working age	Total
Number of claims	1,769	1,361	3,130
Total weekly awards	£30,982.11	£18,065.07	£49,047.18
Average weekly award	£17.51	£13.27	£15.67
Estimated 2017/18 awards	£1,615,495.98	£941,964.12	£2,557,460.10
Estimated expenditure 2016/17			£2,560,473.75
Saving			£3,013.65
* Notional Budget 2016/17			£2,752,974.00
Estimated underspend in 2017/18 compared to budget for 2016/17			£195,513.90

Working age customers	Number reduced	Average weekly reduction	Applicants that would no longer qualify
Single, no children	0	£0.00	0
Couple no children	0	£0.00	0
Couple with children	2	£11.85	5
Lone parent with children	0	£0.00	0
	2	£11.85	5
Employed & self employed	2	£11.85	5
Applicants with a disability	0	£0.00	0
Applicants with caring responsibilities	0	£0.00	0

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Model 8

Current scheme modelled to show CTR payable if there is no assistance is available to unemployed 18-21 year olds

	Pension Age	Working age	Total
Number of claims	1,769	1,341	3,120
Total weekly awards	£30,982.11	£17,912.43	£48,894.55
Average weekly award	£17.51	£13.26	£15.67
Estimated 2017/18 awards	£1,615,495.98	£934,005.35	£2,549,501.33
Estimated expenditure 2016/17			£2,560,473.75
Saving			£10,972.42
* Notional Budget 2016/17			£2,752,974.00
Estimated underspend in 2017/18 compared to budget for 2016/17			£203,472.67

Working age customers	Number reduced	Average weekly reduction	Applicants that would no longer qualify
Single, no children	0	£14.03	15
Couple no children	0	£0.00	0
Couple with children	0	£0.00	0
Lone parent with children	0	£0.00	0
	0	£14.03	15
Employed & self employed	0	£0.00	0
Applicants with a disability	0	£0.00	0
Applicants with caring responsibilities	0	£0.00	0

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Model 9

Current scheme modelled to show CTR payable if all Government changes to other Welfare Benefits are implemented for working age CTR recipients

	Pension Age	Working age	Total
Number of claims	1,769	1,346	3,115
Total weekly awards	£30,982.11	£17,850.79	£48,832.90
Average weekly award	£17.51	£13.26	£15.68
Estimated 2017/18 awards	£1,615,495.98	£930,791.45	£2,546,287.43
Estimated expenditure 2016/17			£2,560,473.75
Saving			£14,186.32
* Notional Budget 2016/17			£2,752,974.00
Estimated underspend in 2017/18 compared to budget for 2016/17			£206,686.57

Working age customers	Number reduced	Average weekly reduction	Applicants that would no longer qualify
Single, no children	3	£0.11	15
Couple no children	0	£0.00	0
Couple with children	3	£9.07	5
Lone parent with children	0	£0.00	0
	6	£4.59	20
Employed & self employed	3	£9.07	5
Applicants with a disability	3	£0.11	0
Applicants with caring responsibilities	0	£0.00	0

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Model 10

Current scheme modelled to show CTR payable if maximum support through CTR is reduced to 80% and all Government changes to other Welfare Benefits are implemented for working age CTR recipients

	Pension Age	Working age	Total
Number of claims	1,769	1,336	3,105
Total weekly awards	£30,982.11	£16,577.23	£47,559.34
Average weekly award	£17.51	£12.41	£15.32
Estimated 2017/18 awards	£1,615,495.98	£864,384.27	£2,479,880.25
Estimated expenditure 2016/17			£2,560,473.75
Saving			£80,839.12
* Notional Budget 2016/17			£2,752,974.00
Estimated underspend in 2017/18 compared to budget for 2016/17			£273,339.37

Working age customers	Number reduced	Average weekly reduction	Applicants that would no longer qualify
Single, no children	589	£0.91	15
Couple no children	108	£1.12	2
Couple with children	233	£1.79	12
Lone parent with children	406	£1.07	1
	1,336	£1.13	30
Employed & self employed	373	£1.45	14
Applicants with a disability	109	£1.42	1
Applicants with caring responsibilities	33	£1.97	1

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Model 11

Current scheme modelled to show CTR payable if maximum support through CTR is reduced to 80% and all Government changes to other Welfare Benefits are implemented for working age CTR recipients, with the exception of removing entitlement for applications aged 18-21

	Pension Age	Working age	Total
Number of claims	1,769	1,336	3,120
Total weekly awards	£30,982.11	£16,577.23	£47,765.06
Average weekly award	£17.51	£12.41	£15.31
Estimated 2017/18 awards	£1,615,495.98	£864,384.27	£2,490,607.05
Estimated expenditure 2016/17			£2,560,473.75
Saving			£69,866.70
* Notional Budget 2016/17			£2,752,974.00
Estimated underspend in 2017/18 compared to budget for 2016/17			£262,366.95

Working age customers	Number reduced	Average weekly reduction	Applicants that would no longer qualify
Single, no children	604	£0.89	0
Couple no children	108	£1.12	2
Couple with children	233	£1.79	12
Lone parent with children	406	£1.07	1
	1,351	£1.12	15
Employed & self employed	373	£1.45	14
Applicants with a disability	109	£1.42	1
Applicants with caring responsibilities	33	£1.97	1

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Summary of the impact of models for working age customers

Number of claims with reduced or no entitlement

	Model										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Single, no children	0	604	0	3	0	0	0	15	18	604	604
Couple, no children	0	110	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	110	110
Couple with children	0	245	0	0	1	0	7	0	8	245	245
Lone parent with children	0	407	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	407	407
Total claims reduced	0	1,366	0	3	1	0	7	15	26	1,366	1366
Employed & self employed	0	387	0	0	1	0	7	0	8	387	387
Applicants with a disability	0	110	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	110	110
Applicants with caring responsibilities	0	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	34

Average weekly decrease in entitlement

	Model										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Single, no children	£0.00	£0.89	£0.00	£0.34	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£14.03	£0.11	£0.91	£0.89
Couple, no children	£0.00	£1.12	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1.12	£1.12
Couple with children	£0.00	£1.64	£0.00	£0.00	£3.50	£0.00	£11.85	£0.00	£9.07	£1.79	£1.79
Lone parent with children	£0.00	£1.07	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1.07	£1.07
Total claims reduced	£0.00	£0.95	£0.00	£0.34	£3.50	£0.00	£11.85	£14.03	£4.59	£1.13	£1.12
Employed & self employed	£0.00	£1.36	£0.00	£0.00	£3.50	£0.00	£11.85	£0.00	£9.07	£1.45	£1.45
Applicants with a disability	£0.00	£1.42	£0.00	£0.34	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.11	£1.42	£1.42
Applicants with caring responsibilities	£0.00	£1.97	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1.97	£1.97

Summary of potential savings for CTR expenditure

	Estimated 2017/18 awards	54 Saving against estimated spend 2016/17	Estimated saving against notional* budget 2016/17	Net shortfall for WSC (see para. 4.10)	Estimated saving for WSC
Model 1. No change to current CTR Scheme	£2,560,473.75	£0.00	£192,500.25	£76,766.95	£0.00
Model 2. Reduce maximum support through CTR to 80% for all working age recipients	£2,493,602.63	£66,871.12	£259,371.37	£70,427.57	£6,339.38
Model 3. Increase maximum support through CTR to 90% for all working age recipients	£2,619,808.92	-£59,335.17	£133,165.08	£82,391.93	-£5,624.98
Model 4. Limit backdating for working age CTR recipients to no more than one month	£2,560,456.10	£17.65	£192,517.90	£76,765.28	£1.67
Model 5. Withdraw Family Premium for new working age CTR applicants, or existing recipients who would otherwise have had a new entitlement to the premium	£2,560,291.15	£182.60	£192,682.85	£76,749.64	£17.31
Model 6. CTR Scheme amended for working age recipients to withdraw Work Related Activity Component from the applicable amount	£2,560,473.75	£0.00	£192,500.25	£76,766.95	£0.00
Model 7. CTR Scheme amended to limit additional allowance for children to 2 children for working age recipients	£2,557,460.10	£3,013.65	£195,513.90	£76,481.26	£285.69
Model 8. No CTR payable to unemployed people aged 18-21	£2,549,501.33	£10,972.42	£203,472.67	£75,726.77	£1,040.18
Model 9. CTR Scheme aligned with all changes made by Government to other Welfare Benefits for working age recipients	£2,546,287.43	£14,186.32	£206,686.57	£75,422.09	£1,344.86
Model 10. Reduce maximum support through CTR to 80% for all working age recipients and align CTR Scheme with all changes made by Government to other Welfare Benefits for working age recipients	£2,479,634.63	£80,839.12	£273,339.37	£69,103.41	£7,663.54
Model 11. As Model 10 with the exception of removing entitlement for applications aged 18-21	£2,490,607.05	£69,866.70	£262,366.95	£70,143.59	£6,623.36

* Notional budget calculated in accordance with initial distribution of funding for CTR in 2013/14

Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Plan

Officer completing EIA Form	Job Title	Team/Service	
Heather Tiso	Revenues & Benefits Service Manager	Revenues & Benefits Service	
Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? Please ✓ as appropriate			
Proposed new policy or service	Change to policy or service	New or change to budget	Service review
	✓		
1 Description of policy, service or decision being impact assessed:			
<p>Background</p> <p>From 2013/14 district councils have operated localised Council Tax Rebate (CTR) schemes to provide assistance to people on low income. CTR replaced the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme that was administered by the council on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Councils are responsible for the design and implementation of these schemes and need to consider if they are to be revised or replaced on an annual basis. The subsidy reimbursement for CTR reduced nationally by 10% in 2013/14 with councils having the option of funding the shortfall or designing a CTR scheme that is cost neutral. The Government state any CTR scheme must protect pensioners at the existing level of support. That decision means the burden falls disproportionately upon those of Working Age.</p> <p>From 1 April 2014, funding for localised CTR is incorporated in Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) and not separately identified. The SFA has reduced by 25% in cash terms in the two years up to 2015/16 and by 14.4% from 2016/17. In applying this methodology, the funding available for Localised CTR has reduced by £1,015,782 to £1,815,667. In 2015/16 we paid CTR of £2,625,445, meaning that if there is no change to the existing CTR scheme, we estimate we will have a funding shortfall of £807,778, with WSC's share of that shortfall being £76,767. The financing risk of the scheme is shared with other precepting Authorities through the tax base calculation. West Somerset's share of the collection fund in 2016/17 is 9.48%.</p> <p>West Somerset's Council Tax Rebate Scheme</p> <p>On 11 December 2012, the Council adopted the Local Council Tax Rebate scheme for 2013/14. While those of pension age receive support of up to 100% of their Council Tax liability, from 1 April 2013, the maximum support for those of working age was set at 85%.</p> <p>On 23rd January 2013 Full Council approved a scheme with the following key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum Liability - Maximum award for working age claimants is 85% of the council tax liability. • Child Maintenance - Maintenance received for a child or children, paid by a former partner is treated as income in the means test assessment. • Non-dependant deductions - Increased non-dependant deductions • Second Adult Rebate - Abolish Second Adult Rebate for working age claimants. • Increased Earnings Disregard - Part of earned income is not included in the means test to calculate CTR, so incentivising work. • Exceptional Financial Hardship fund of £22.5k, through Discretionary Reduction in Council Tax Liability for short-term help (this is a Collection Fund commitment and not fully funded by WSC). • Sub-Tenant/Boarder Income - Disregards abolished for sub-tenant and boarder income. <p>West Somerset Council's Local Council Tax Rebate scheme is designed to retain the majority of features of the CTB scheme. The CTB scheme recognised the additional financial burden of disability through a system of additional allowances/premiums within the means test. The authority's scheme continues to include the allowances/premiums that featured in the CTB scheme and, as such, the scheme positively recognises disability.</p> <p>The CTB scheme recognised the additional financial burden those with children have, through a system of additional allowances that recognise each child, child care costs and enhanced premiums for Lone parents in the means test. WSC's CTR scheme continues to include the allowances/premiums that featured in the CTB scheme and, as such, the scheme positively recognises those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>On 20 November 2013 Full Council agreed to maintain the same scheme for 2014/15 with the same principles as detailed above. On 19 November 2014, Full Council agreed to maintain the same scheme for 2015/16 with the same principles as detailed above.</p>			

In developing options for our CTR scheme for 2016/17, we worked in collaboration with the County Council (as the major preceptor) and the other Somerset District billing authorities of Taunton Deane, Sedgemoor, Mendip and South Somerset. On 20 January 2016 Full Council, having regard to the consultation response and the Equality Impact Assessment, agreed to revise support for working age applicants in 2016/17 by:

- disregarding maintenance received for children
- removing entitlement to applicants with capital over £6,000;
- applying a Minimum Income for Self-Employed applicants; and
- paying CTR at a level that would be no more than for a Band C property

As a result of the continuing reductions to the Settlement Funding Assessment, continuing to allow the same level of CTR in 2017/18 for working age recipients could impact negatively upon WSC's budget and the budget of those that levy a precept to it (County Council, Fire, Police Authorities and Parish Councils). An adverse effect on service provision might result in us, and the other major preceptors, having to stop, reduce or seek additional charges for services with a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable. Therefore, on 25 May 2016, the Corporate Policy Advisory Group agreed on options to take to public consultation for our CTR scheme for 2017/18.

Public consultation on proposals to change the CTR scheme in 2017/18 started on 4 July 2016 and ended on 11 September 2016. Every Council Taxpayer had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. The options on which we consulted were as follows:

Option 1 - No change we would work out CTR in the same way as we do now. Any shortfall in the funding we get and the CTR we pay in 2017/18 would need to be met from other Council budgets.

Option 2 - Reduce maximum support offered under our CTR scheme from 85% for working age applicants.

Option 3 - Increase maximum support offered under our CTR scheme from 85% for working age applicants.

Option 4 - Align our CTR scheme for 2017/18 with some/all of changes made by the Government to other welfare benefits. The changes known or expected to be implemented by the Government would have the following effect:

- The maximum period for which we will backdate CTR for working age recipients would reduce from 6 months to 1 month. This reduction in backdating has applied to working age Housing Benefit recipients since April 2016.
- From 1 April 2017, we would not include a Family Premium within in the applicable amount for new working age CTR applicants, or existing recipients who would otherwise have had a new entitlement to the premium. The Family Premium has not been included for the same category of Housing Benefit recipients since May 2016.
- When working out CTR, we would not include the Work Related Activity component in the applicable amount for new claimants of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). New claimants for ESA in the Work-Related Activity Group (WRAG) will receive the same rate of CTR as those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. The Work Related Activity component will not be included in Universal Credit from April 2017.
- Under our current scheme, we include £66.90 in the applicable amount for every child up to the age of 20. From 1 April 2017, we would remove this amount for third and any subsequent children born after that date to align with revised rules for Housing Benefit, Tax Credits and Universal Credit that are expected to apply in 2017/18. We would continue to include the amount for first and second children. There will be protection for multiple births or women who have a third child as the result of rape or other exceptional circumstances.
- From April 2017, 18-21 year olds who are not in work may no longer be eligible for help through our CTR scheme. We would implement this change to align with new rules expected to apply to Universal Credit applicants. Under Universal Credit, 18-21 year olds will be required to participate in an "*intensive regime of support from day one of their benefit claim*", and after six months they will be expected to apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship, gain work-based skills, or go on a mandatory work placement. There will be a range of exemptions for vulnerable young people, including those in danger of suffering abuse and those receiving disability benefits. People who have been in work for 6 months before making a claim, will continue to be eligible for CTR for up to 6 months while they look for work. Applicants who have previously been in care will not be affected.
- From 1 April 2017 we would align our CTR scheme with changes made to the temporary absence rules in Housing Benefit and Pension Credit on 28 July 2016. This would reduce the allowable period of temporary absence outside Great Britain from 13 weeks to 4 weeks. Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are not part of Great Britain for Housing Benefit purposes. There are exceptions to the general temporary absence rule that we would similarly apply to CTR recipients, for example absences related to the death of a close relative.

2 People who could be affected, with particular regard to the legally defined protected characteristics¹:

Our localised CTR scheme affects all claimants who are of working age (and those of working age currently not in receipt of CTR but who may apply in the future). Limited equality data is held within WSC's CTR computer system (as the collection of such information has not been necessary for administering CTR) given the caseload can come from all sections of the community it is likely there will be claimants (and their household members) that contain the full range of protected characteristics¹ as defined within the Equalities Act 2010 and include:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation

The Government expects local authorities to establish schemes that minimise the impact on vulnerable groups. The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2012 include provisions for those of working age but none of those prescribed requirements set out the level of support to be given.

3 People and Service Area who are delivering the policy/service/decision:

Council Staff in the Revenues & Benefits Service

4 Evidence used to assess impact: Please attached documents where appropriate.

We have obtained data relating to people affected from our Council Tax Rebate processing system. The data available has allowed us to analyse impact on people according to their age, disability, family circumstances and level of income. We have modelled options on scenarios with "live" data based on actual entitlements and CTR recipients at that point in time. We asked general diversity questions as part of the consultation exercise.

In addition, we have undertaken debt profiling against the Council Tax Rebate (CTR) customer base ([Appendix 5](#)) and also against those customer groups impacted most by the key elements of our localised scheme.

We have also considered the following assessments undertaken by the DWP:

- [Equality Analysis](#) to remove the Family Premium and limit backdating for Housing Benefit to one month;
- [Impact Assessment](#) to remove the ESA Work-Related Activity Component
- [Equality Analysis](#) for Housing Benefit (Temporary Absence)(Amendment) Regulations 2015

To raise awareness of our proposals and to encourage participation in the consultation process we requested that every WSC Members obtain views on the options from constituents within their Wards. We distributed a minimum of 10 consultation questionnaires to each of our 28 Members. Consequently, if every Member obtained the views of one of their constituent each week of the consultation period (4 July 2016 to 11 September 2016 - 10 weeks) we would obtain views of 280 residents across the entirety of the WSC area. This would provide a confidence level of 95% with a 5% margin of error. Obtaining 108 responses increases the margin of error to 9.4%.

In supplementing Member involvement, we also created a dedicated web page with an online survey, as well as promoting consultation and encouraging participation from customers, staff and external partners.

Should Members decide to align our Council Tax Rebate Scheme with changes made to the temporary absence rules in Housing Benefit and Pension Credit on 28 July 2016, this would apply to all customers equally from April 2017 and so will not affect customers differently because of any protected characteristic.

The impact of implementing other changes to our local Council Tax Rebate Scheme for each of the protected groups, is considered on the following pages.

¹ For protected characteristics, please visit:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/guidance-all/protected-characteristics>

Equality Impact Assessment (by protected characteristic)

Age

The proposed scheme for 2017/18 is subject to some national prescription relating to protecting pensioners' entitlements. Therefore we have no discretion about whether or not to follow this principle. The Government is committed to protecting pensioners on low incomes and therefore have prescribed a scheme for pensioners through legislation. This means that pensioners will not see any reduction in their CTR in comparison with their former levels of Council Tax Benefit.

Pensioners are still entitled to claim up to 100% of their Council Tax liability through CTR. West Somerset has a high pensioner population therefore, there will be a disproportionate effect on working age people with this policy. The Council's general equality duty is lessened to an extent with regard to older people as Government has prescribed that pensioners are not to be affected by CTR. However, we have a responsibility to foster good relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. There is a risk of harming the relationship between pensioners and working age claimants of CTR as pension age claimants are not affected and working age claimants have a greater reduction to their CTR to cover the shortfall in funding.

Our CTR scheme's premiums and personal allowance are linked to the rates set by the DWP. The main rates of working age benefits and tax credits are frozen in cash terms for 4 years from April 2016. Pensioner benefits are excluded from the benefit freeze and will be protected by the 'triple lock'. This means that for pensioners, premiums and personal allowance will rise by the higher of price inflation, earnings growth or 2.5%.

Table 1	Number of claims	Cases with debt	% of cases with debt	Average debt for those in arrears	Total Debt
Pension Age	1,928	28	1%	£211.68	£5,927
Working Age Employed	477	155	32%	£389.93	£60,439
Working Age Other	1,255	228	18%	£173.53	£39,565
Total for CTR recipients	3,660	411	11%	£257.74	£105,931
Working age	1,732	383	22%	£261.11	£100,004

The CTR scheme retains the majority of the former Council Tax Benefit assessment rules, including the use of applicable amount and personal allowances. The personal allowances and applicable amounts used to calculate CTR are the amounts deemed necessary to provide for basic needs based on household composition and disability. These allowances and applicable amounts take the claimant's circumstances into account and mean they are awarded more support if they have children or dependents under the age of 18.

The CTR scheme for 2017/18 will continue to disregard Child Benefit in income calculations meaning that the added income this provides will not reduce the CTR that an applicant receives.

In conducting consultation for our CTR scheme for 2017/18, Option 4 proposes to align our scheme with some or all of the changes the Government make to other welfare benefits. Under Option 4, from April 2017, 18-21 year olds who are not in work would no longer be eligible for help through our CTR scheme. There will be a range of exemptions for vulnerable young people, including those in danger of suffering abuse and those receiving disability benefits. People who have been in work for 6 months before making a claim, will continue to be eligible for CTR for up to 6 months while they look for work. Applicants who have previously been in care will not be affected. Analysis of our current caseload identified 15 CTR recipients for the period April - August 2016 that were not working and aged 18-21. In considering to implement this measure, based on current recipients, 15 individuals aged 18-21 would no longer receive any CTR.

In mitigating any of the effects under Option 4, officers could apply a discretionary reduction in Council Tax liability through exceptional hardship as appropriate and in accordance with our policy.

Disability

Disabled people have a limited ability to work and are likely to have higher level disability related living expenses. This group in particular find it difficult to access and sustain employment and therefore improve on their current financial situation. This group of people is less resilient to the impact of recession and unemployment and are often living in poverty. These further impacts on the individual's mental health.

The personal allowances and applicable amounts currently used to calculate CTR, are the amounts deemed necessary to provide for basic needs based on household composition and disability. These allowances and applicable amounts already take the claimant's circumstances into account and mean that they are awarded more support if they or anyone in their household has a disability than if the household had the same income but contained no-one with a disability.

Disability benefits, the disability-related elements of tax credits and statutory payments including Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance (Support Group only), Maternity Allowance, Statutory Maternity/Paternity Pay and Statutory Sick Pay, are uprated in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). The CPI fell in the year to September 2015 so it meant the benefits mentioned above were not increased from April 2016.

In common with other working age recipients, people with disabilities will receive less CTR under the localised scheme than they did under CTB. However, the limited changes between CTB and our local CTR scheme are not such as to introduce disproportionately adverse effects on people based on disabled people as a specific group. Outside of CTR, the Council Tax scheme itself recognises disability by exempting those with a severe mental impairment, the CTR scheme will not impact upon that exemption and it will continue to apply where appropriate. Additionally, the Council Tax scheme also recognises disability where a dwelling occupied by a disabled person has a room that is adapted or additional to meet the needs of that resident. In those cases the band attributable to that dwelling for the purposes of Council Tax is reduced in advance of any further reduction under CTR.

In consultation for our CTR scheme for 2017/18, Option 4 proposes that new claimants for Employment and Support Allowance in the Work Related Activity Group will receive the same rate of CTR as those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. Analysis of our current CTR caseload has not identified any applicants where we include the Work Related Activity Component within the Applicable Amount and so implementing this measure is unlikely to have a disproportionate negative impact for working age customers with disabilities.

The average level of debt for working age CTR recipients in 2015/16 receiving the disability premium was £164.80 - lower than the scheme average of £261.11 for working age claims, with only 10% of CTR recipients with a disability premium were in arrears with their Council Tax – significantly less than the scheme average of 22%.

Table 2

CTR recipients with disabilities	Number of claims	Cases with debt	% of cases with debt	Average debt for those in arrears	Total Debt
Working Age Employed	57	6	11%	£228.33	£1,370
Working Age Other	98	9	9%	£122.44	£1,102
Total	155	15	10%	£164.80	£2,472

Gender

There are a greater number of female recipients of CTR within our caseload (either single, lone parents or part of a couple) than male recipients. Consequently more females will be impacted by changes made to our CTR scheme than males. This is not deliberate but is simply a product of the makeup of our caseload. However, gender will not be a direct factor in any part of the assessment of CTR as it is not considered to be a characteristic that requires a higher applicable amount when assessing support.

The majority of lone parents in receipt of CTR are female. Under Option 4, aligning the backdating period from six months to one month means the potential entitlement period changes, but there is no actual reduction in CTR to the applicant. This measure would apply to all CTR applicants regardless of any protected characteristic. There is no evidence that reducing the period for which CTR can be backdated for working age applicants would change the gender profile of the caseload.

In reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive CTR to 4 weeks, the DWP consider there will be small cases of claimants impacted (mainly women) who leave their homes through fear of violence in that dwelling. Currently those fleeing domestic violence are allowed CTR during a period of temporary absence for up to 52 weeks. Under the changes if they decide to flee to a place of safety outside Great Britain, for example to Northern Ireland, then their CTR will be stopped after 4 weeks. Due to the relatively low numbers likely to be affected officers could apply a discretionary reduction in Council Tax liability through exceptional hardship as appropriate and in accordance with our policy.

The average level of debt for working age lone parents in 2015/16 was £277.05 - greater than the scheme average of £261.11 for working age claims. See table 3 detailing debt levels for this group.

Table 3

Lone Parents	Number of claims	Cases with debt	% of cases with debt	Average debt for those in arrears	Total Debt
Working Age Employed	209	46	22%	£293.22	£13,488
Working Age Other	253	54	21%	£249.95	£14,217
Total	462	100	22%	£277.05	£27,705

Gender Reassignment

We hold no data on our Council Tax system to identifying the names or numbers of current CTR applicants who share this protected characteristic. Gender reassignment is not a factor in any part of the assessment of CTR and it is not considered to be a characteristic which requires a higher applicable amount when assessing support. In common with other working age CTR applicants, transgendered people may receive less CTR under the proposals for change in 2017/18. However, these are not such as to introduce disproportionately adverse effects on transgendered people as a specific group.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Marital or civil partnership status is not currently a factor in determining CTR as it is not considered to be a characteristic that requires a higher applicable amount. Our CTR scheme will continue to recognise and retain the treatment rules for those in Polygamous marriages. Options for changing our CTR scheme for 2017/18 do not introduce disproportionately adverse effects on people based on their marriage or civil partnership status.

Religion and Belief

We do not gather data on religion or belief as part of the CTR application process; we do not hold full data specific to religion or belief within our caseload. Religion and belief is not a factor in any part of the assessment of Council Tax Rebate as it is not considered to be a characteristic which requires a higher applicable amount.

Some working age CTR applicants, people of all or no religion or belief, may receive less CTR under the proposals for change in 2017/18. However, these are not such as to introduce disproportionately adverse effects on people based on their religion or belief status.

Race

West Somerset historically has a low BME (Black & Minority Ethnic) population compared to the rest of Somerset. Race is not a factor in the assessment of CTR and it is not considered to be a characteristic that requires a higher applicable amount. Some people of all races, may receive less CTR under the proposals for change in 2017/18. However, these are not such as to introduce disproportionately adverse effects on people based on their race status.

Pregnancy and Maternity

For the purposes of CTR, pregnancy and maternity must be considered as two separate characteristics as while the applicant is pregnant, her applicable amounts and personal allowances are lower (as for a person without children). Once a child is born, it becomes part of the household composition and increased allowances are applied. Pregnancy alone is not a factor in the current assessment of CTR as it is not considered to be a characteristic that requires a higher applicable amount. Providing that the child (or children) forms part of the mother's household composition once it is born, the application for CTR will then include the child (or children) as part of the household and the applicable amount will increase which, once other income changes have been taken into account may provide for a more generous assessment of CTR and reduced Council Tax payments. The CTR scheme will retain the current disregard of Child Benefit in income calculations, meaning the income that Child Benefit provides will not reduce the amount of CTR that a recipient receives as a result of having a baby.

In considering our CTR scheme for 2017/18, Option 4 proposes that we will not include a Family Premium within in the applicable amount for new working age CTR applicants, or existing recipients who would otherwise have had a new entitlement to the premium. This would result in a "notional" weekly loss of CTR of £3.49 (20% of the current Family Premium of £17.45). As this measure only applies to new claims to CTR, or those who have a first child while claiming CTR, this alignment measure does not result in a reduction in actual support paid.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is not be a factor in any part of the assessment of CTR as it is not considered to be a characteristic which requires a higher applicable amount when assessing support. Some working age CTR applicants will receive less CTR under the proposals for change in 2017/18. However, these are not such as to introduce disproportionately adverse effects on people based on their sexual orientation.

Children and duties under the 2010 Child Poverty Act

The minimum age for receiving CTR is 18 and so people under the age of 18 will not be impacted directly by the CTR scheme. Indirect impact has been considered as people under the age of 18 are included as part of a claimant's household and the Council has a duty to prevent child poverty as outlined in the Child Poverty Act 2010. There are 861 working age CTR recipients with children, accounting for 50% of all working age CTR recipients. Of those with children, 25% (217) have debt totalling £61,712 with these arrears making up 62% of all Council Tax debt for those of working age getting CTR.

In conducting consultation for our CTR scheme for 2017/18, Option 4 proposes to align our scheme with some or all of the changes the Government make to other welfare benefits. In not including a Family Premium within in the applicable amount for new working age CTR applicants, or existing recipients who would otherwise have had a new entitlement to the premium, this would result in a "notional" weekly loss of CTR of £3.49 (20% of the current Family Premium of £17.45). As this measure only applies to new claims to CTR, or those who have a first child while claiming CTR, this alignment measure does not result in a reduction in actual support paid.

Within the current scheme, applicants who have children are awarded a dependants addition of £66.90 for each child within the calculation of their needs (Applicable Amounts). There is no limit to the number of dependants' additions that can be awarded. From April 2017 the Government will limit dependants' additions in Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits to a maximum of two. This will only affect households who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1 April 2017. This measure only applies to new claims for CTR, or those who have a third child on or after 1 April 2017 and so does not result in a reduction in actual support paid. However, it would result in a "notional" weekly loss of CTR of at least £13.38 (20% of £66.90). We would continue to include the amount for first and second children. There will be protection for multiple births or women who have a third child as the result of rape or other exceptional circumstances.

In mitigating any of the effects under Option 4, officers could apply a discretionary reduction in Council Tax liability through exceptional hardship as appropriate and in accordance with our policy. Analysis of debt levels for existing working age applicants with children is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Working age claims with children	Number of claims	Cases with debt	% of cases with debt	Average debt for those in arrears	Total Debt
Working Age Employed	502	115	23%	£353.48	£40,650
Working Age Other	359	102	28%	£206.49	£21,062
Total	861	217	25%	£284.39	£61,712

Other Groups (non-statutory)**Employment**

West Somerset has the second lowest wage levels amongst neighbouring authorities and is significantly below county, regional and national averages. This may be a factor in the levels of debt for working claims. The number of working age CTR recipients in employment is 477, accounting for 28% of all working age recipients. Those CTR recipients without employment are 14% more likely to have Council Tax arrears, although the average value of their debt (£173.53) is less than for those with employment (£389.93) - see Table 5.

Table 5

	Number of claims	Cases with debt	% of cases with debt	Average debt for those in arrears	Total Debt
Working Age Employed	477	155	32%	£389.93	£60,439
Working Age Other	1,255	228	18%	£173.53	£39,565
Total for working age	1,732	383	22%	£261.11	£100,004

Couples in employment without responsibility for children, have the greatest average debt at £492.64, while non-working applicants with disabilities, have the lowest average debt of £122.44 - see Table 6.

Table 6

Average debt for those in arrears	Couples with children	Couples, no children	Single, no children	Lone parent	Disabled
Working Age Employed	£393.65	£492.64	£279.17	£293.22	£228.33
Working Age Other	£142.60	£425.79	£301.06	£263.28	£122.44
Total for working age	£290.66	£464.20	£294.49	£277.05	£164.80

The National Living Wage is currently £7.20 an hour for those 25 or over from April 2016 and will increase to £9.00 an hour by 2020. For people of working age that are not in employment, the benefit cap restricts the amount in certain benefits that a household can receive. Any household receiving more than the cap will have their Housing Benefit reduced to bring them back within the limit. The Benefit Cap will be cut from £26,000 to £20,000 for households living in the West Somerset area and will be phased-in gradually from November 2016. We estimate up to 50 households will be affected. This reduction in income may mean Council Tax is more difficult to collect from those households.

Rural Isolation

Because of the rural location of West Somerset access to suitable employment, training and public services is an issue for many. The rural nature of West Somerset sees many residents trapped in low paid work with little opportunity to improve on their situation. Increasing transport costs and limited public transport makes it difficult for residents to commute to better paid jobs in other parts of the County.

Carers

Larger families or people with disabilities may be in larger properties to cater for disability needs and so carers are able to stay overnight.

Armed Forces

Veteran Benefits continue to be fully disregarded in the means test for CTR. Our scheme does not appear to have a differential impact but we are aware some ex veterans experience mental health issues and have physical disabilities.

Other

Many of our customers have low numeracy and literacy skills and will have been unable to engage with the consultation on this policy. Skills and qualification levels are particularly poor in the district and therefore limit people's opportunities.

5 Conclusions on impact of proposed decision or new policy/service change:

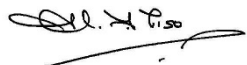
In considering options to change our CTR scheme we have tried hard to balance the reality of a significant cut in Central Government funding to protecting the most vulnerable members of our community as far as practicable.

In mitigating any disproportionate effect through implementing any of the proposed options to change our CTR scheme, officers could apply a reduction in Council Tax liability through exceptional hardship as appropriate and in accordance with our discretionary policy.

6 Recommendation based on findings. These need to be outlined in the attached action plan.

Adjust the policy.

Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan					
Group Affected	Action required	Expected outcome of action	Person to undertake action	Service Plan - for monitoring	Expected Completion date
Age	Young people aged 18 to 21 that are not working will receive no help with either their housing costs (rent) or with paying Council Tax. It will be important to work closely with DWP colleagues in ensuring such people receive the “intensive regime of support” stipulated by the Government to increase their skills and confidence in gaining for employment.	Flagging affected individuals as “vulnerable” with Revenue IT systems to ensure collection of debt is appropriately managed	DHP/Welfare Reform Officer	Revenues & Benefits	On-going
Disability	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Pregnancy and Maternity	In not including a Family Premium within in the applicable amount for new working age CTR applicants, or existing recipients who would otherwise have had a new entitlement to the premium, there will be less CTR available to those affected. In addition, limiting dependant additions to a maximum of two children is similarly likely to reduce support.	Provide short-term help for instances of hardship.	DHP/Welfare Reform Officer	Revenues & Benefits	On-going
Race	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Gender Re-assignment	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable		
Religion and Belief	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable		
Sex	There are a greater number of female CTR recipients within our caseload (either single, lone parents or part of a couple) than male recipients. Consequently more females will be impacted by changes made to our scheme However, gender is not a direct factor in any part of the assessment of CTR as it is not considered to be a characteristic that requires a higher applicable amount when assessing support.	Provide short-term help for instances of hardship.	DHP/Welfare Reform Officer	Revenues & Benefits	On-going		
Sexual Orientation	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable		
Rurality	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable		
Author's Signature:		Report Title	Review of CTR scheme for 2017/18	Date	13/10/2016	EIA Version	1.1
Contact Details:	Tel:	01823 356541	Email:	h.tiso@tauntondeane.gov.uk			

CTR Tax Rebate - Debt Profile @ 31 March 2016

Table 1 – Profile of claims with arrears

	Number of cases	Cases with debt	Percentage of cases with debt	Average arrears cases	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	1,928	28	1.45%	£211.68	£3.07	£5,927.00
Working Age Employed	477	155	32.49%	£389.93	£126.71	£60,439.00
Working Age Other	1,255	228	18.17%	£173.53	£31.53	£39,565.00
Total	3,660	411	11.23%	£257.74	£28.94	£105,931.00
Total for working age	1,732	383	22.11%	£261.11	£57.74	£100,004.00

Table 2 – Profile of claims – Claim numbers

	Total claims	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone parent	Disabled
Pension Age	1,928	1,167	24	15	454	2	98
Working Age Employed	477	0	502	336	122	209	57
Working Age Other	1,255	957	359	286	294	253	98
Total	3,660	2,124	885	637	870	464	253
Total for working age	1,732	957	861	622	416	462	155

Table 3 – Total arrears

	Total arrears	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone parent	Disabled
Pension Age	£5,927.00	£2,011.00	£0.00	£37.00	£759.00	£0.00	£79.00
Working Age Employed	£60,439.00	£0.00	£40,650.00	£37,933.00	£8,375.00	£13,488.00	£1,370.00
Working Age Other	£39,565.00	£36,719.00	£21,062.00	£24,270.00	£21,074.00	£14,217.00	£1,102.00
Total	£105,931.00	£38,730.00	£61,712.00	£62,240.00	£30,208.00	£27,705.00	£2,551.00
Total for working age	£100,004.00	£36,719.00	£61,712.00	£62,203.00	£29,449.00	£27,705.00	£2,472.00

Table 4 – Number of claims with arrears

	Total claims with arrears	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone parent	Disabled
Pension Age	28	8	0	1	11	0	1
Working Age Employed	155	0	115	77	30	46	6
Working Age Other	228	205	102	57	70	54	9
Total	411	213	217	135	111	100	15
Total for working age	383	205	217	134	100	100	15

Table 5 –Percentage of claims with arrears

	Total claims	Total with arrears	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone parent	Disabled
Pension Age	53%	1%	1%	0%	7%	2%	0%	1%
Working Age Employed	13%	32%	0%	23%	23%	25%	22%	11%
Working Age Other	34%	18%	21%	28%	20%	24%	21%	9%
Total	100%	11%	10%	25%	21%	13%	22%	6%
Total for working age	47%	22%	21%	25%	22%	24%	22%	10%

Table 6 – Average arrears per case

	Total	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone parent	Disabled
Pension Age	£211.68	£251.38	£0.00	£37.00	£69.00	#DIV/0!	£79.00
Working Age Employed	£389.93	£0.00	£353.48	£492.64	£279.17	£293.22	£228.33
Working Age Other	£173.53	£179.12	£206.49	£425.79	£301.06	£263.28	£122.44
Total	£257.74	£181.83	£284.39	£461.04	£272.14	£277.05	£170.07
Total for working age	£261.11	£179.12	£284.39	£464.20	£294.49	£277.05	£164.80

Table 7– Average arrears across scheme

	Total	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone parent	Disabled
Pension Age	£3.07	£1.72	£0.00	£2.47	£1.67	£0.00	£0.81
Working Age Employed	£126.71	£0.00	£80.98	£112.90	£68.65	£64.54	£24.04
Working Age Other	£31.53	£38.37	£58.67	£84.86	£71.68	£56.19	£11.24
Total	£28.94	£18.23	£69.73	£97.71	£34.72	£59.71	£10.08
Total for working age	£57.74	£38.37	£71.67	£100.00	£70.79	£59.97	£15.95

Table 8 – Total Arrears by Council Tax Band

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Pension Age	£1,906.00	£1,965.00	£329.00	£1,307.00	£0.00	£0.00	£420.00
Working Age Employed	£8,646.00	£27,250.00	£13,052.00	£4,640.00	£2,033.00	£4,818.00	£0.00
Working Age Other	£21,584.00	£12,185.00	£4,687.00	£818.00	£493.00	£0.00	£359.00
Total	£32,136.00	£41,400.00	£18,068.00	£6,765.00	£2,526.00	£4,818.00	£779.00
Total for working age	£30,230.00	£39,435.00	£17,739.00	£5,458.00	£2,526.00	£4,818.00	£359.00

Table 9 Number of cases with arrears by Council Tax Band

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Pension Age	8	10	2	4	0	0	1
Working Age Employed	15	47	19	8	2	2	0
Working Age Other	83	58	19	6	0	1	1
Total	106	115	40	18	2	3	2
Total for working age	98	105	38	14	2	3	1

Table 10 – Average Arrears by Council Tax Band

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Pension Age	£238.25	£196.50	£164.50	£326.75	£0.00	£0.00	£420.00
Working Age Employed	£576.40	£579.79	£686.95	£580.00	£1,016.50	£2,409.00	£0.00
Working Age Other	£260.05	£210.09	£246.68	£136.33	£0.00	£0.00	£359.00
Average	£303.17	£360.00	£451.70	£375.83	£1,263.00	£1,606.00	£389.50
Average for working age	£308.47	£375.57	£466.82	£389.86	£1,263.00	£1,606.00	£359.00

Table 11 – Claims with Children – Arrears Analysis

	Number of cases	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	24	0	#DIV/0!	£0.00	£0.00
Working Age Employed	502	115	£353.48	£80.98	£40,650.00
Working Age Other	359	102	£206.49	£58.67	£21,062.00
Total	885	217	£284.39	£69.73	£61,712.00
Total for working age	861	217	£284.39	£71.67	£61,712.00

Table 12 – Lone Parent Claims – Arrears Analysis

	Number of cases	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	2	0	#DIV/0!	£0.00	£0.00
Working Age Employed	209	46	£293.22	£64.54	£13,488.00
Working Age Other	253	54	£263.28	£56.19	£14,217.00
Total	464	100	£277.05	£59.71	£27,705.00
Total for working age	462	100	£277.05	£59.97	£27,705.00

Table 13 – Claims with a Disability Premium – Arrears Analysis

	Number of cases	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	98	1	£79.00	£0.81	£79.00
Working Age Employed	57	6	£228.33	£24.04	£1,370.00
Working Age Other	98	9	£122.44	£11.24	£1,102.00
Total	253	16	£159.44	£10.08	£2,551.00
Total for working age	155	15	£164.80	£15.95	£2,472.00

Table 14 – Passported Claims – Arrears Analysis

	Number of cases	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	1,167	8	£251.38	£1.72	£2,011.00
Working Age	957	205	£179.12	£38.37	£36,719.00
Total	2,124	213	£181.83	£18.23	£38,730.00

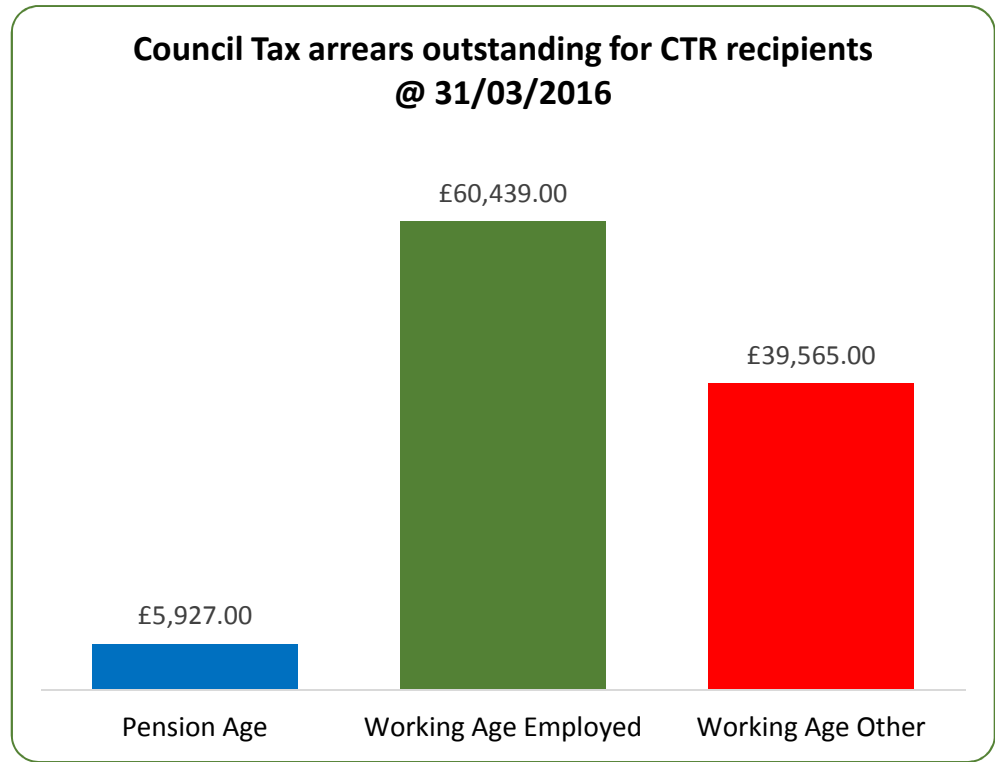
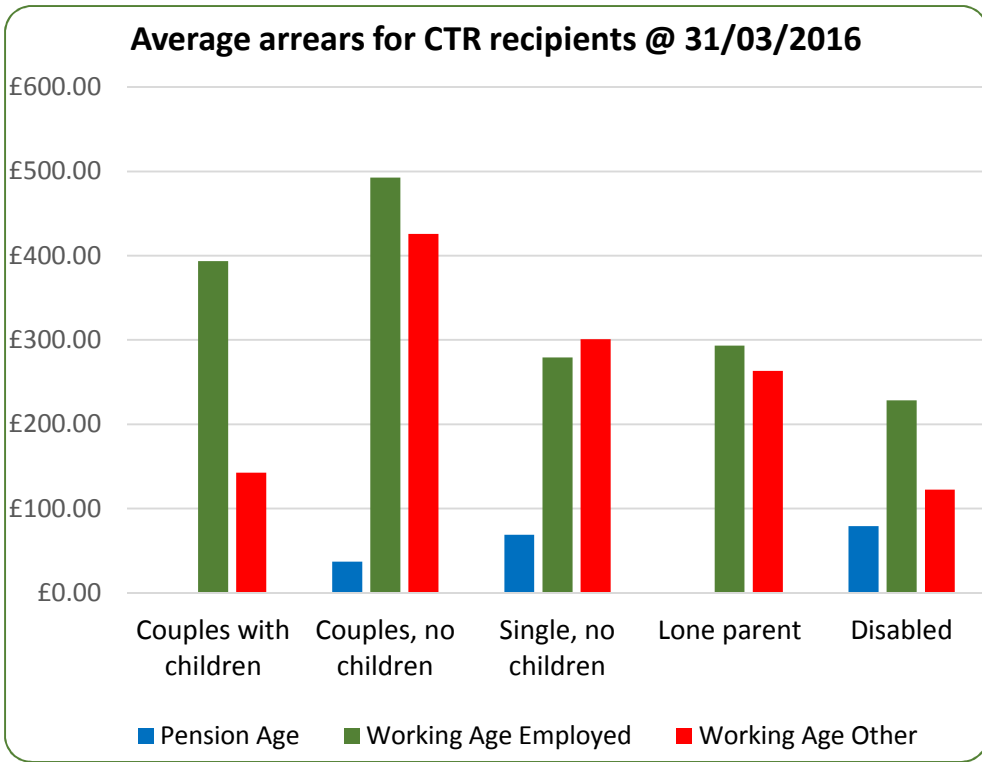
Table 15 – Couples (no children) claiming CTR – Arrears Analysis

	Number of cases	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	15	1	£37.00	£2.47	£37.00
Working Age Employed	336	77	£492.64	£112.90	£37,933.00
Working Age Other	286	57	£425.79	£84.86	£24,270.00
Total	637	135	£461.04	£97.71	£62,240.00
Total for working age	622	134	£464.20	£100.00	£62,203.00

Table 16 – Single People Claiming CTR – Arrears Analysis

	Number of cases	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	454	11	£69.00	£1.67	£759.00
Working Age Employed	122	30	£279.17	£68.65	£8,375.00
Working Age Other	294	70	£301.06	£71.68	£21,074.00
Total	870	111	£272.14	£34.72	£30,208.00
Total for working age	416	100	£294.49	£70.79	£29,449.00

Table 17 – Comparison of Working Age cases – Arrears Analysis					
	Number of cases	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Working age (working)	327	74	£469.47	£106.24	£34,740.55
Working age (not working)	1,120	323	£327.78	£94.53	£105,873.23
Total for working age	1,447	397	£354.19	£97.18	£140,613.78



Report Number: WSC 131/16

West Somerset Council

Full Council – Wednesday 23rd November 2016

Adoption of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 (WSLP to 2032)

This matter is the responsibility of Councillor K Turner, Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing

Report Author: Nick Bryant, Planning Policy Manager

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The 'plan-led' system establishes that planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As such, preparing local plans and keeping them up-to-date is an important function carried out by Local Authorities.
- 1.2 The current West Somerset District Local Plan (WSDLP) is now largely out-of-date. The assumptions and evidence-base upon which it was based, were intended to operate until 2011 and many of its policies, and specifically the wordings of these policies are now inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The weight that can be attached to the adopted Local Plan policies is generally quite limited.
- 1.3 Work on a replacement local plan commenced in 2009. The Plan has involved over this time from being a very strategic document to one which now includes some detailed development policies as well as specific site allocations to meet long-term housing requirements.
- 1.4 An examination of the WSLP to 2032 was held between Monday 14th and Tuesday 22nd March 2016. Through this examination a number of proposed modifications emerged which, as members will recall, were agreed by Full Council on 11 May 2016. These modifications were considered necessary for the Plan to be found sound and capable of adoption it must be 'positively prepared', 'justified', 'effective' and 'consistent with national policy' and have now been confirmed by the Inspector. Modifications were subject to a six week consultation period which ran between the 3 June and 15 July 2016.
- 1.5 The Council is now in receipt of the Inspector's Report which confirms that the Plan can be legally adopted by West Somerset Council subject to the main modifications outlined in his Report (which were consulted upon). At this stage the Council cannot make substantive changes to the WSLP to 2032, it can either adopt the Plan with the main modifications or choose not to adopt.

- 1.6 Upon adoption, the WSLP to 2032 will comprise a key component in the adopted development plan for the area. There do however, remain areas in which the Council needs to undertake further work in developing policy (as recognised in the Inspector's Report). As such, work will need to commence shortly on a review of the WSLP to 2032.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Full Council is recommended to:

- a) **adopt the WSLP to 2032 incorporating;**
 - i. **the modifications as indicated in the Appendix to the Inspector's Report,**
 - ii. **the Additional Modifications, unchanged, which were consulted on between 3rd June and 15th July 2016, and,**
 - iii. **a renumbering of some of the policies within it for reasons of consistency and clarity,**
- b) **endorse the continued use of the extant policies in the West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted, April 2006 that have not been identified for replacement by the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032, and,**
- c) **endorse the continued use of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document as a statement of Council policy for the West Somerset Local Planning Authority area.**

3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

This Report represents a purely procedural stage in plan-making. No known risks have been identified with adopting the Plan. Whilst the WSLP to 2032 is subject to a six-week legal challenge period, the Council has taken steps through its preparation to minimise the likelihood of a successful challenge being possible.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act introduced the requirement for Local Authorities to prepare development plans; a requirement which remains enshrined in law through subsequent legislation up to the present day. The 'plan-led system' as it is referred to, establishes that planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 In the West Somerset Local Planning Authority area the development plan is made up of a series of Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The Minerals and Waste plans are prepared and maintained by Somerset County Council as the authority responsible for such matters. The current development plan is comprised of the following:
- West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted, April 2006
 - Somerset Waste Core Strategy – Adopted, February 2013
 - Somerset Minerals Plan – Adopted, February 2015
- 4.3 The current West Somerset District Local Plan is time expired insofar as the projection

data used to underpin the strategy and policies was only intended to operate until 2011. Further, it was prepared prior to the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and consequently the weight which can be attached to its policies can be quite limited. Work on a replacement West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 (WSLP to 2032) began in 2009 and over the course of its development it has changed quite considerably in terms of its scope.

- 4.4 The WSLP to 2032 was subject to extensive public consultation prior to its submission to the Planning Inspectorate and Secretary of State in July 2015. This included several public exhibitions held across the Planning Area and wider public consultation at 'Issues', 'Options', 'Preferred Strategy' and 'Revised Preferred Strategy' stages. The Draft Plan was formally published for a six week representation period in early 2015.
- 4.5 Inspector Brian Cook was appointed to consider the soundness of the Plan in-line with the provisions of Section 182 of the NPPF, namely whether the document as submitted is 'positively prepared', 'justified', 'effective' and 'consistent with national policy'.
- 4.6 Examination hearing sessions of the WSLP to 2032 were held between Monday 14th and Tuesday 22nd March 2016. Through this examination a number of proposed modifications emerged which, as members will recall, were agreed by Full Council on 11 May 2016. These modifications were considered necessary for the Plan to be found sound. Modifications were subject to a six week consultation period which ran between the 3rd June and 15th July 2016.
- 4.7 The Inspector has taken comments on the main modifications into account before issuing his Inspector's Report which is appended at Appendix A. The Inspector's Report confirms that subject to the main modifications the Plan is sound and capable of adoption.
- 4.8 The changes proposed to the Plan are relatively minor in nature and can be summarised as:
- Modifications to policies SV1, SC1 and OC1 to assist their clarity and consistency with one another and inconsistency with national policy;
 - Providing additional detail and clarification as to how housing land supply requirements have been identified. This includes reflection of the Hinkley C Project's impact upon housing requirements and introducing a stepped rate of housing delivery;
 - Re-writing of the policy relating to the provision of adequate Gypsy and Traveller pitches to ensure consistency with national policy;
 - Deletion of the proposed employment allocation at Williton which is neither deliverable nor consistent with national policy; and
 - A series of amendments to ensure that the Plan's approach to the historic environment and protected landscapes (the Quantock Hills AONB and Exmoor National Park) is consistent with national policy.
- 4.9 In addition to these changes, the Inspector also noted that since the document is not a full Local Plan as intended by the National Planning Policy Framework, the Plan should be the subject of an early review to ensure consistency with national policy. Officers will carefully consider the options for instigating such a review before preparing a revised Local Development Scheme: the project plan document required by statute which sets out stated Council planning policy-making intentions and the timelines associated.

- 4.9 Officers have prepared an updated version (text only) of the WSLP to 2032 which subject to Full Council agreement, will be adopted as part of the development plan for the area (see Appendix B). It incorporates the main modifications as well as some more minor changes to the Plan itself. Importantly, it should be noted that members cannot at this point make substantive changes to the WSLP as the Regulations do not allow for this; the choice is to adopt the Plan or not. The Policies Map, which is currently based on the adopted WSDLP, that accompanies the new local plan, will need to be amended to reflect the changes recommended by the Inspector. Appendix C contains a Council response to all of the additional modifications put forward through the consultation that took place in the summer.
- 4.10 During the evolution of the WSLP to 2032 from the Preferred Strategy stage, there have been a number of changes to the policy content of the document and the sequence in which they have been arranged. In order to add clarity and consistency to the final version of the document some of the policies have been renumbered from those included in the Publication and Submission versions of the plan. These primarily affect the SC and NH policies.
- 4.11 The WSLP to 2032 originally started out as a Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) in the Council's proposed portfolio of documents that would form its Local Development Framework (LDF) as set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated Regulations. Subsequent changes to the primary and secondary legislation and Central Government policy since 2004 have changed the emphasis of the composition of development plans. The WSLP to 2032, as presented with this report, will provide an up to date DPD for the LPA area providing a strategic policy framework for the determination of proposals for development and some detailed policy context on specific aspects such as the built heritage. As such the policies in the WSLP to 2032 will not cover all planning matters currently provided for in the adopted West Somerset District Local Plan.
- 4.12 The currently extant policies in the West Somerset District Local Plan (WSDLP) that are due to be replaced by policies in the WSLP to 2032 are identified in Appendix 3 of the latest version of document (see Appendix B to this Report). Those extant policies in the WSDLP that are not subject to replacement will continue to be used for Development Management purposes in the determination of development proposals but, consistent with national advice in the NPPF will have diminished weight and status. All these remaining WSDLP policies that are not identified for replacement have been assessed against the latest national policy position as expressed through the NPPF.
- 4.13 Appendix D identifies all the policies in the WSDLP and their status in respect of those contained in the WSLP to 2032, the NPPF. Where a retained WSDLP policy is inconsistent with the provisions of the NPPF, the weight that can be attributed to it when determining planning applications is significantly reduced as the NPPF (where relevant) post-dates the local plan policy. Where there is no conflict between the national position, as expressed through the NPPF, and the relevant WSDLP policy, then some weight can continue to be attributed to the latter in the determination of planning applications through the Development Management process. The same can be applied to those retained WSDLP policies where there is no direct national policy position.
- 4.14 One of the consequences of the replacement of policies in the WSDLP by more up to date equivalents in the WSLP to 2032 is that any Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) that are linked to policies that are to be replaced, will no longer have the status

it previously had in relation to the development plan. This will affect the weight that can be attributed to the content of the SPD if it is used as part of the negotiation process in the determination of a planning application. This will particularly affect the WSC Planning Obligations SPD which is currently linked with Policies PO/1 – Planning Obligations and, H/4 – Affordable Housing, in the WSDLP. These policies will be replaced by Policy ID1: Infrastructure Delivery, in the WSLP to 2032.

- 4.15 In order for the Planning Obligations SPD to continue to provide a contribution to the negotiation process of relevant planning applications, it needs to be re-affirmed as a statement of Council policy for the LPA area. Whilst it will no longer have the full weight of an SPD, it will still be able to be used as a 'material consideration' for use by Development Management officers in the determination of those planning applications that would qualify for making such contributions. This may be particularly useful until such time that the Community Infrastructure Levy (or any similar arrangements) are introduced for the area.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 5.1 The WSLP to 2032 will deliver outcomes against three of the four key themes identified in the Council's Corporate Strategy, namely; 'People, 'Business and Enterprise' and 'Our Place'.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 The WSLP to 2032 introduces new policies and allocations which will boost the Council's supply of deliverable housing land. This will generate significant receipts in the form of New Homes Bonus and planning obligations which can be used to help fund essential infrastructure.

7 Legal Implications (if any)

- 7.1 Upon adoption the WSLP to 2032 will be subject to a six week legal challenge period. As part of the statutory development plan the WSLP will be the starting point for planning decisions.

8 Environmental Impact Implications (if any)

- 8.1 Under the Strategic Environmental Appraisal Directive (2004) the Council is obliged to consider the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was prepared to support the Draft Plan, this sets out all likely significant effects on the environment as well as economic and social factors and mitigation measures. The proposed changes outlined in this Report will need to be subject to an addendum to the published SA.

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

- 9.1 A development management policy setting out how safety should be considered in the design of new developments is included within the Draft Plan.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)

- 10.1 The Draft Plan was accompanied by an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA).

11 Social Value Implications (if any)

11.1 None identified.

12 Partnership Implications (if any)

12.1 The WSLP to 2032 itself will be delivered in partnership with a range of key stakeholders, these include, but are not limited to; local communities, developers and landowners and infrastructure providers.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)

13.1 Policies in the WSLP to 2032 have taken account of health and well-being implications. The Plan includes policies that will ensure the provision of land for community facilities and the encouragement of walking and cycling and active lifestyles.

14 Asset Management Implications (if any)

14.1 None identified.

15 Consultation Implications (if any)

15.1 None, the Local Plan has been subject to numerous rounds of consultation since work on the Plan commenced in 2009.

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

16.1 Not applicable.

Democratic Path:

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

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

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix A	WSLP to 2032 Inspector's Report and Appendix
Appendix B	Final WSLP to 2032 (text only) proposed for adoption
Appendix C	Council response to Additional Modifications
Appendix D	Status of WSDLP policies

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The Planning Inspectorate

Report to West Somerset Council

by **Brian Cook BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Date 14 September 2016

PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004 (AS AMENDED)

SECTION 20

REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION INTO WEST SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN TO 2032

Document submitted for examination on 31 July 2015

Examination hearings held between 14 and 22 March 2016

File Ref: PINS/H3320/429/1

Abbreviations Used in this Report

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DtC	Duty to Co-operate
ENPA	Exmoor National Park Authority
HMA	Housing Market Area
LDS	Local Development Scheme
LP	Local Plan
MM	Main Modification
OAN	Objectively assessed need
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SHMA	Northern Peninsula Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Non-Technical Summary

This report concludes that the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the District providing a number of main modifications are made to the plan. West Somerset Council has specifically requested me to recommend any modifications necessary to enable the plan to be adopted.

All of the main modifications to address this were proposed by the Council but where necessary I have amended detailed wording and/or added consequential modifications where necessary and I have recommended their inclusion after considering the representations from other parties on these issues.

The main modifications can be summarised as follows:

- The relationship between policies SV1, SC1 and OC1 is ambiguous making them ineffective and inconsistent with national policy. **MM2, MM3 and MM12** address these soundness issues;
- **MM4** does not alter policy but does provide required information about the assumptions underlying the way that the 5 year housing supply has been calculated to aid understanding of this issue in future development management procedures.
- Land allocated at Williton for employment is not deliverable and submitted policy EC6 is not sufficiently flexible and enabling to be consistent with national policy. **MM14** and **MM15** respectively address these soundness issues.
- The following are required to ensure that the Plan correctly interprets and therefore is consistent with national policy for the historic environment: **MM6** to **MM11, MM20** and **MM21**;
- The remaining main modifications are required to ensure that the submitted Plan policies are effective and/or consistent with national policy.

Introduction

1. This report contains my assessment of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 in terms of Section 20(5) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). It considers first whether the Plan's preparation has complied with the duty to co-operate, in recognition that there is no scope to remedy any failure in this regard. It then considers whether the Plan is sound and whether it is compliant with the legal requirements. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) at paragraph 182 makes clear that to be sound a Local Plan should be positively prepared; justified; effective and consistent with national policy.
2. The starting point for the examination is the assumption that the local authority has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. The basis for my examination is the submitted draft plan (SD4) dated July 2015. This is the same as the document published for consultation in January 2015 (CD1).
3. My report deals with the main modifications that are needed to make the Plan sound and legally compliant and they are identified in bold in the report (MM). In accordance with section 20(7C) of the 2004 Act the Council requested (ED65) that I should make any modifications needed to rectify matters that make the Plan unsound/not legally compliant and thus incapable of being adopted. These main modifications are set out in the Appendix.
4. The main modifications that are necessary for soundness all relate to matters that were discussed at the examination hearings. Following these discussions, the Council prepared a schedule of proposed main modifications and carried out a sustainability appraisal of them. Both have been subject to public consultation for six weeks. I sought the Council's views on a number of matters arising (ED66) and the Council responded as requested (ED67). I have taken account of both the consultation responses and the further views of the Council in coming to my conclusions in this report and in this light I have made some amendments to the detailed wording of the main modifications and added consequential modifications where these are necessary for consistency or clarity. None of these amendments significantly alters the content or, as appropriate, the objective of the modifications as published for consultation or undermines the participatory processes and sustainability appraisal that has been undertaken. Where necessary I have highlighted these amendments in the report.
5. Throughout my report references to documents in the evidence base are included in the body of the text in () while references to other documents such as the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are given as footnotes. References to passages of the National Planning Policy Framework are given as 'Framework paragraph XX'.

Policies Map

6. The Council must maintain an adopted policies map which illustrates geographically the application of the policies in the adopted development plan. When submitting a local plan for examination, the Council is required to provide a submission policies map showing the changes to the adopted policies map that would result from the proposals in the submitted local plan. In this case, the

submission policies map comprises the set of plans identified as Submission Draft Figures and Proposals Map Amendments as set out in SD5.

7. The policies map is not defined in statute as a development plan document and so I do not have the power to recommend main modifications to it. However, a number of the published MMs to the Plan's policies require further corresponding changes to be made to the policies map. In addition, there are some instances where the geographic illustration of policies on the submission policies map is not justified and changes to the policies map are needed to ensure that the relevant policies are effective.
8. These further changes to the policies map were published for consultation alongside the MMs [<https://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Planning---Building/Planning-Policy/Local-Plan-to-2032/WSLP-to-2032-Proposed-Modifications>].
9. When the Plan is adopted, in order to comply with the legislation and give effect to the Plan's policies, the Council will need to update the adopted policies map to include all the changes proposed in Submission Draft Figures and Proposals Map Amendments and the further changes published alongside the MMs incorporating any necessary amendments identified in this report.

Assessment of Duty to Co-operate

10. Section s20(5)(c) of the 2004 Act requires that I consider whether the Council complied with any duty imposed on them by section 33A of the 2004 Act in relation to the Plan's preparation.
11. The Council has set out how it considers it has co-operated with the prescribed and other bodies in the preparation of the Plan in a statement dated December 2014 (SD17) and its Matter 1 hearing statement (ED34/1). In addition to providing more evidence about the specific involvement and contribution of elected members in the process, this also provided further information in regard to the duty in the period up to formal submission of the Plan for examination.
12. Two points have been taken by those making representations.
13. The first is raised by Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) and relates to provision being made within West Somerset for a proportion of the market housing need arising in ENPA. I will come to these matters in due course but, in short, the particular characteristics of ENPA mean that it is very difficult for the planning authority to make provision within the ENPA boundaries for the market housing need arising therein. ENPA explain that other councils within the housing market area (HMA) are willing to accommodate some of that housing need and ENPA have made the same request to West Somerset. The total number of market houses for which provision in West Somerset is sought is 186 (ED25/2).
14. The Council does not consider that it can agree to this request for reasons that I shall come to later. There is however quite considerable evidence, much of it provided by ENPA, that this has been a topic of active discussion and engagement between the partner authorities in the HMA over a considerable period. This continues as the other planning authorities bring forward their local plans and compile their evidence bases which include a joint housing topic paper

and the commissioning of a joint update of the Northern Peninsula Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to assess the implications of the 2012-based household projections published in February 2015 by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

15. Also included as Appendix 4 to the ENPA hearing statement (ED25/2) is a statement of common ground concerning the HMA and the objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing. This has been signed on behalf of North Devon Council, Torrington District Council and ENPA. It has not been signed by the Council for the sole reason that the housing OAN is not agreed; the Council considers it to be considerably higher.
16. To conclude on this point, there is no evidence to suggest that the Council has failed to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of the Plan. Rather, there is evidence that the Council and ENPA have been unable to agree on one particular matter. As the PPG makes clear the duty to co-operate is not a duty to agree. Failure to do so cannot therefore amount to a failure to comply with the duty.
17. The second is raised by the Home Builders' Federation (ED33/1) and some individual development companies. The essence of this point is that co-operation on the steps to secure housing delivery is premature since the calculation of the housing OAN is not clear and it cannot therefore be determined that the housing needs of the HMA will be met in full as required by the Framework and confirmed by case law. In particular this applies to the affordable housing element within the HMA. Furthermore, until there is a housing OAN for the HMA, the required co-operation with the Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure successful delivery of policies for economic growth cannot be evident.
18. Dealing with these in turn, there is considerable evidence that the Council and others within the HMA have co-operated fully to determine the housing OAN; the statement of common ground referred to above is an obvious example. A concern that the determined OAN is not justified and/or is not reflected correctly in the amount of housing for which the Plan makes provision is valid but is an issue of soundness. Contrary to the contention, there is adequate evidence (SD17) that the Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership has been engaged with the Somerset Growth Plan informing the Strategic Economic Plan of the Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership.
19. I consider that the evidence supports a conclusion that the duty imposed on the Council by s33A of the 2004 Act has been complied with.

Assessment of Soundness

Preamble

20. The circumstances in which the Plan has been prepared are unusual if not unique. While not identifying the measure being used, the Council confirmed in its opening statement at the hearing sessions that West Somerset is the smallest council in England (ED55). This leads to a challenging resource position for the Council to which it responded in 2014 by entering into a formal partnership with Taunton Deane Borough Council to provide services. While the hearing sessions were taking place, at their respective full council meetings both authorities

committed to continuing this arrangement. They also undertook to authorise and prioritise the development of a high level transformation business case that would test three sequential options, the second of which is one team supporting a merged council (ED58). Following Full Council meetings on 26 July (Taunton Deane Borough Council) and 7 September (West Somerset Council), the two Councils have agreed, in principle, to commence work on the creation of a new Local Authority arising out of the merger of the two existing authorities. The outcome of this decision and its implications for future plan-making across the combined area will emerge as the process evolves

21. Some two thirds of the Council area lies within the Exmoor National Park which has its own planning authority. The Plan area is thus smaller than the area of the Council. At around 27,000 people the population of the Plan area is, by any measure, very low.
22. West Somerset will, nevertheless, host one of the largest infrastructure projects to ever take place in this country if and when the Hinkley Point C nuclear power plant is constructed. While the Development Consent Order has been granted and considerable ground and other works have been put in place, at the time of the hearing sessions EDF Energy had yet to make the final investment decision or indeed give any firm indication when it would be made. The Council has however had to plan for the consequences of the project which could see some 25,000 temporary jobs created over the construction period peaking at around 5,600 (ED55). This was meant to be in 2016 (ED58, #4.2) which self-evidently has not occurred. The implications of the inevitable uncertainty created by the absence of the final commitment to the project are discussed later. At the time of writing, that uncertainty has not been resolved. While EDF Energy has now made the final investment decision to go ahead with the project, the UK government has not and has deferred a decision to the autumn of 2016.
23. Preparation of the Plan began in 2009. In the period between then and submission there have been two general elections leading to, first, a Coalition Government and, then, a Conservative party administration. In 2012 the Framework was published, there have been a host of Written Ministerial Statements and important court judgements and, at the time when the hearing sessions took place, the Housing and Planning Bill was passing through its parliamentary stages. All of these have affected the planning landscape within which the Plan has emerged. The implications of both the Housing and Planning Bill and an outstanding court of appeal judgement for the Plan policy addressing the provision of affordable housing (a key issue for the Plan) were still unknown when the hearing sessions took place.
24. The Plan started out as a core strategy to be followed by site allocations and development management development plan documents. The Council has confirmed that no other such documents will now be prepared (ED4, #1.4). The Plan is not and, without significant alteration, cannot become a local plan for the area as envisaged by Framework paragraph 153 (emphasis added). The Council tacitly acknowledges that the Plan is not fully compliant with the Framework in this regard (ED4, #1.4).
25. Nevertheless, in July 2015 a Written Ministerial Statement about local plans was published and was accompanied by a letter from the Secretary of State to the then Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate; both are available on the

DCLG web site. The latter included the following: *"In order to maintain plan-making progress and to recognise the cost and time to a council prior to submitting a plan, it is critical that inspectors approach examination from the perspective of working pragmatically with councils towards achieving a sound Local Plan"*. As clear statements of the Government's approach both the letter and the Written Ministerial Statement should be afforded substantial weight.

Main Issues

26. Taking account of all the representations, written evidence and the discussions that took place at the examination hearings I have identified four main issues upon which the soundness of the Plan depends.

Issue 1 – Whether the spatial strategy and spatial distribution of development is justified.

27. I have already noted that a large part of the administrative area of West Somerset is within Exmoor National Park. Part of the remaining (Plan) area is within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In accordance with national planning policy development within or affecting the setting of the AONB should be controlled and this acts as a further constraint on spatial options.

28. Transport communications within the Plan area are limited. There is a heritage railway running between Minehead and Bishops Lydeard but this appears to offer limited opportunities for commuting within and certainly outside of the Plan area. The area is linked to the M5 Motorway at Bridgwater by the A39 and at Taunton by the A358. These two roads meet in Williton before the A39 proceeds to Minehead and beyond. Railway bridges limit headroom on the A358 while there are several places on the A39 where two heavy goods vehicles are only able to pass with difficulty, if at all.

29. Some two thirds of the Plan area's population lives in Minehead/Alcombe, Williton and the historic port of Watchet (ED55). These three settlements are the principal service centres in the Plan area. The population is ageing with over 15% being in the over 75 cohort (ED55).

30. This is the background to the development of the spatial strategy.

31. Strategy development began in 2009 in the context of the then regional spatial strategy (CD24). Six strategy options were put forward for consideration. Three were not taken forward. These were:

- Less development in the larger settlements with a wide degree of dispersion including to settlements with few or no facilities.
- No significant development in Minehead with substantial development instead being focussed elsewhere closer to the M5 corridor.
- Concentration of the bulk of the regional spatial strategy requirement in a single new eco-village/new settlement.

32. The three that were taken forward were:

- Concentrate development at the three main settlements.
 - Concentrate development at four main settlements including an upgrade of Stogursey.
 - Dispersal of development including allocations at the larger villages.
33. The assessment of the three strategy options taken forward followed a standard sustainability appraisal approach. There is in fact very little difference between options 1 and 2 with the latter simply being a development of the former in the context of the Hinkley Point C development which would be near-by. The option would have enabled Stogursey to develop as a higher order settlement to provide for the housing accommodation that would be required. This did not attract local community support however given the substantial improvements in local community and transport infrastructure that would be implied.
34. The first of the three listed above was selected and represents a continuation of the previous strategy followed in the local plan adopted in 2006 and covering the period 1991 to 2011 (SD14). In summary, this option is said to perform *"...very strongly as part of the SA and it is the strategy that best maintains and strengthens the current service role of West Somerset settlements"* (SD14, page 10). It is also clear that this strategy option attracted most public support (EB7, #35).
35. Nevertheless, the preferred strategy on which the Plan is based was determined by 2010 in the context of the then emerging regional spatial strategy. The SA itself is dated and key elements on which it relies, such as the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA) (EB12 & 13), are also dated (the SFRAs were issued in 2009 and 2010 respectively) and possibly out-of-date. For example, neither SFRA can include the climate change allowances issued by the Environment Agency in September 2013 and then withdrawn and replaced in any event in February 2016. There is no evidence that the strategy has been revisited and re-appraised in the light of this or any of the significant changes in planning policy since it was determined as the most appropriate.
36. There is therefore a concern that the chosen strategy is not based on the most up-to-date evidence. However, very little comment was received on the strategy at pre-submission consultation. In particular, no alternative strategy was promoted and supported by robust evidence. In the context and circumstances outlined in the Preamble I do not find that surprising. Of more concern was whether the policies developed would deliver the strategy; that is an issue to which I shall return. Therefore, on the basis of the evidence I consider the spatial strategy and the spatial distribution of development being pursued to be the most appropriate for the future sustainable development of West Somerset.

Issue 2 – Whether the objectively assessed needs for which the Plan makes provision are derived from robust evidence

Housing – The HMA

37. The Northern Peninsula HMA was first identified as a character area in 2004 in work undertaken for the South West Housing Body (EB1, #ES1.1). It was one of 12 sub-regional housing markets into which the region was divided. It covered North Devon, North Cornwall, parts of West Somerset and all of Exmoor National Park. It was described thus: *“rural in character with a settlement pattern based on villages and market towns, which vary in size and function. With no major centres of employment, the area is better described as comprising a series of local markets, all of which are subject to significant influence of in-migration and second home purchase”*. At the hearing sessions it was characterised as the area that remained after the boundaries of the other 11 had been determined.
38. In October 2007 Housing Vision was commissioned to conduct a SHMA. That report is document EB1.
39. Following reorganisation of local government in the area and the establishment of Cornwall as a unitary authority the former district council area of North Cornwall was taken out of the Northern Peninsula HMA and absorbed into the Cornwall HMA. There is no evidence before this examination that this decision was informed by an analysis of the factors that the PPG advises should be taken into account when defining housing market areas¹. However, I understand that the Inspector examining the Cornwall Local Plan has accepted that the HMA including the ‘transferred’ former North Cornwall area is appropriate.
40. The reduced Northern Peninsula HMA is being used by the ENPA for its emerging local plan and by North Devon Council and Torrington District Council in the preparation of their emerging joint local plan (ED25/2, Appendix 4, #1.4). I recognise therefore that my conclusion in respect of the HMA in what is the first of the local plans within it to come forward for examination will have implications for each authority.
41. At several points in the evidence base the HMA is characterised as polycentric (ED25/2, Appendix 4, #1.2 for example). However, it could equally be described as comprising a number of smaller HMAs with three such being recognised within West Somerset alone (ED34/2, #2.1.3 to 2.1.5). However, the Council explained at the hearing session that the key and unifying factor across the HMA as a whole was its demographic profile. The ageing population that results both from the nature of the in-migration to the area (which is typified by both those taking early retirement and those in the 45 to 64 age group coming to work in the area – possibly from home – before retiring) and the ageing of both that and the existing population is an important influence on house prices and changes in those prices and the consequent structure of the housing market.

¹ Paragraph 011 Reference ID: 2a-011-20140306

42. On that basis and in the absence of any cogent evidence to the contrary I agree that the Northern Peninsula HMA is the appropriate one for the purposes of Framework paragraph 47.

Housing – The OAN

43. It is important to note that none of those making representations on the Plan have provided an alternative OAN figure. In addition, only one of the representations made on the pre-submission Plan queried the basis of the calculation contending that in a number of respects, such as adjusting for market signals and economic forecasts, the advice in the PPG had not been followed. However, further work has been commissioned by the Council since those representations were made although this point was pursued briefly at the hearing sessions.
44. Since the original SHMA (EB1) was prepared a further seven documents have been issued (ED25/2, Appendix 4, Table 1). However, only two of these have been in the form of a SHMA for the HMA as a whole (EB3 and EB21). Document EB21 was issued in December 2015 and takes account of the 2012-based household projections released in February 2015. It is therefore this assessment that is of most relevance to this issue since, in accordance with the PPG, these provide the starting point for the assessment of the OAN².
45. Dealing first with market signals, the relevant SHMA makes allowance for what it describes as 'market signals', namely vacant dwellings, second homes and homes occupied by non-residents (EB21, #5.9). However, the PPG says that when considering 'appropriate' market indicators relevant signals may include land prices, house prices, rents, affordability, rate of development and overcrowding³ (emphasis added).
46. The Council accepted at the hearing sessions that not all of the market signals as defined and listed in the PPG had been taken into account. However, the Council considers those factors that have been used to be the most appropriate for the HMA. No evidence from others was given to explain why this conclusion is incorrect or what the effect would be on the OAN if the example market signals listed in the PPG had been used instead or as well.
47. Turning now to economic forecasts, these do not form part of the analysis in Document EB21. They are however taken into account in the overall OAN for the HMA as indicated in the statement of common ground (ED25/2, Appendix 4, Table 2). The requirement for economic growth in North Devon and Torridge derives from work as set out in the footnotes to that Table. That for West Somerset derives from the implications of the Hinkley Point C project (EB7, #45

² Paragraph 015 Reference ID: 2a-015-20140306

³ Paragraph 019 Reference ID: 2a-019-20140306

- to #47). I am satisfied therefore that economic data has been taken into account in assessing the OAN.
48. The OAN for the HMA is calculated at 19,412 dwellings (ED25/2, Appendix 4, Table 2). This represents the full objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing in the HMA; the first stage set out in the Framework paragraph 47, bullet 1 process. As I understand it, this is a figure derived from aggregating the assessments for each of the constituent planning authorities. However, each assessment was undertaken by the same consultant, Housing Vision, applying what was confirmed at the hearing session to be the same methodology. No criticism was made of the approach taken to the demographic data but, as explained above, the extent to which the treatment of other factors is appropriate is difficult to judge on the evidence put forward. However, it would not be appropriate for me to come to a view on the figure for the HMA as a whole. During the examinations of the other plans within the HMA other evidence may be brought forward on these matters that was not available to me. There is however no evidence before me to conclude that the calculated OAN for West Somerset is not of the right order.
 49. The proportion of the calculated OAN of c19,400 homes for which West Somerset needs to plan is 2,105 dwellings. This includes the unadjusted demographic requirement, the uplift for vacant and second/holiday homes, the affordable homes backlog and the economic growth (Hinkley Point C) requirement.
 50. The Council does not accept this as the appropriate figure on which the Plan should be based. The reasons are set out in detail (ED34/2, #2.2.9) but may be summarised as a concern over the reliability of the national-level data used to make projections in a small area that is subject to particular local factors and a reluctance to plan for an implied annualised construction rate well below the long term average of about 118 dwellings per annum since 1976 (EB7, Table 5).
 51. From the evidence it does not appear therefore that the Council is challenging the way the OAN has been calculated. Rather, it is using its judgement about particular local factors to 'over provide' at stage 2 of the Framework paragraph 47, bullet 1 process. No evidence was put forward that this would be inconsistent with the policies set out in the Framework.
 52. On that basis, I see no reason to disagree with the Council's assessment that the Plan should make provision for the development of 2,900 homes over the Plan period. This is reflected in the Plan's vision which would therefore be achieved. Whether the vision and strategic objective to make a step change in the provision of affordable housing will be achieved will depend on the strategy and the policies developed to implement it.
 53. Finally under this sub issue I shall deal with the concern raised by ENPA and referred to in my assessment of the duty to co-operate. Put simply, ENPA wish the Council to make provision for a part of its market housing need; some 186 dwellings that ENPA considers attributable to the West Somerset part of the Park. However, it does not suggest that the 2,900 dwellings for which the Plan makes provision should be increased. I understand this to be because this is already far in excess of what ENPA considers the OAN for West Somerset to be.

ENPA therefore sees no reason why some of this excess cannot be used to accommodate its market housing requirement. It therefore seeks changes to the wording of both the justification text of the Plan and to that in an evidence base document to confirm that; it does not seek a change to the policy itself.

54. As I understand it, the Council does not agree to the request because it considers 2,900 dwellings to be the appropriate provision for the Plan area. To accommodate an additional 186 market homes would require an uplift of the Plan's housing provision by some 286 dwellings to allow for the 65:35 market: affordable housing split required on development sites. This would add a further 14 or so dwellings per annum to what it regards as an already challenging annualised build rate.
55. These do not appear to me to be issues or suggested changes that go to the soundness of the Plan. The evidence suggests that, overall, provision is being made in the three local plans for a greater quantum of housing than simply meeting the OAN would require (ED25/2, Appendix 4, Table 3). As I understand it both the emerging North Devon and Torridge Local Plan and the West Somerset Local Plan over-provide against the OAN; North Devon and Torridge to accommodate 196 dwellings arising from the need in ENPA attributable to that plan area and West Somerset for the reasons set out above. It is for other examinations rather than this one to test whether the assumptions made by ENPA and the other two councils in preparing their respective local plans are robust.
56. Towards the very end of the period for consultation on the proposed main modifications a further set of household projections were published (ED66). The Council does not consider that these have any material effect on the Plan (ED67). This is because, as set out above, the Council has reservations about the reliability of both the 2012-based and 2014-based projections for West Somerset and is, in any event, planning for a figure which far exceeds that implied by either of those projections. In view of the non-material difference between the two sets I see no reason to disagree with the generality of that analysis. There is therefore no effect on the forgoing assessment.

Employment

57. The Plan notes (SD4, #2.7) that the two main sources of employment in West Somerset are agriculture and tourism with Hinkley Point power station also being a significant employer. As a consequence of the age profile of the population, social care is also a growing employment sector. Watchet, Minehead/Alcombe and Williton provide the main employment and service centres although since the Plan was submitted the closure of the paper mill at Watchet has been announced and has taken place with the loss of about 175 local jobs.
58. The Council commissioned a three stage employment land review (EB8 to EB10). The Stage 2 Report (EB9) presents a view of the potential for economic growth and an assessment of the future need for employment space. The latter follows a traditional model of converting baseline employment forecasts into employment floorspace forecasts before estimating future employment land requirements on an essentially 'B' Use Class basis.

59. The report is dated March 2010. It was therefore issued after the deep recession of 2008/9. This is not mentioned in the 'economic outlook' section. Moreover, much of the analysis appears to be based on modelling and growth scenarios developed in the early to mid-2000s to inform regional spatial planning. I therefore consider this part of the evidence base both dated and out-of-date and agree with those at the hearing sessions who felt that looking at employment provision on a 'B' Use Class basis no longer reflected the world of employment either today or in the future.
60. In some respects, this is reflected in the Stage 2 Report which notes that the economy of West Somerset is characterised by micro-businesses employing 10 people or fewer and representing 88% of the workplaces which equates to 34% of the employment base (EB9, #4.16). The economic vision for the Plan (SD4, #5.1) includes developing a thriving and varied local economy aided by the provision of super-fast optical broadband access which will enable more people to work close to or in their homes. It also anticipates that the Hinkley Point C project will have been completed having brought a considerable economic stimulus to the area.
61. An important consequential strategic objective is to create an aspirational, enterprising and entrepreneurial culture within West Somerset. This is unlikely to lead to a significant demand for employment land in the traditional sense which the Stage 2 Report puts at no more than 5ha in any event (EB9, #5.21). Of equal if not more importance to the achievement of the vision and this strategic objective is having the right policy framework in place; this is explored under the next issue.

Conclusion on this Issue

62. For the reasons set out above, I consider the figure of 2,900 dwellings to be justified by the evidence. Whether that represents the OAN as the Council considers it to be or a figure beyond that if the other authorities in the HMA are correct seems to me immaterial. It is the figure for which the Council is planning and is the most likely to deliver affordable housing in the numbers required. In view of the structure of the employment sector the traditional approach of making areas of land available for development is less appropriate and it is reasonable for the Council not to follow it.

Issue 3 - Whether the Plan's policies will implement the strategy, deliver the objectively assessed development needs and provide a five year supply of housing against requirements

General

63. The key Plan policies are SC1, SV1 and OC1. This nest of policies gives effect to the spatial strategy and creates the policy framework for the delivery of sustainable development and particularly affordable and other housing and employment generating uses. In order to be effective and consistent with national planning policy it is important therefore that they are consistent with each other, do not overlap and act positively to deliver the required development. As submitted, they do not achieve these soundness tests.
64. The intention is for policy SC1 to be supportive of development in and on the edge of the three main settlements and encouraging of development in the

named primary and secondary villages. In achieving the latter, policy SV1 is intended to maintain or create balanced communities that will enable these villages to thrive. Policy OC1 addresses development everywhere else in the Plan area including those settlements not categorised as primary or secondary villages and is generally supportive of all development other than market housing not required by a worker who needs to live in the countryside.

65. As submitted both policy SC1 and OC1 address development in the open countryside; this is therefore confusing. Moreover, while clause 4 of policy SC1 and bullet 1 of policy OC1 appear to deal with the same issue, the wording is slightly different; this is also confusing. While policy OC1 begins with the words 'residential development' it is obvious from both bullet 2 and the justification that it is intended to apply to all development proposals; the wording is therefore ambiguous. Finally, the way 'open countryside' is defined in the preamble to policy OC1 is inconsistent with that given in bullet 1 of the policy justification; this too is confusing. The Council has put forward a number of changes to these two policies (**MM2** and **MM12**) which will resolve these issues and ensure that in this regard the Plan meets the 'effective' test of soundness.
66. Still with policy OC1, as submitted, bullet 1 and the supporting justification is phrased in terms almost identical to those in the now replaced Planning Policy Statement 7 *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas*. This approach has not been carried forward in the Framework or the relevant paragraphs of the PPG and on a first read the Plan appears potentially inconsistent with national policy. However, the Council explained that in the particular circumstances of West Somerset it was justified to examine the economic and functional case for development in the open countryside so as to prevent the proliferation of isolated buildings, especially dwellings. On the evidence, I have no reason to disagree with that assessment which is not inconsistent with the Framework and Framework paragraph 55 in particular. No changes to policy OC1 are therefore required for soundness in this regard.
67. Representations have been made that the modification to policy OC1 would make it unsound; I do not agree. Framework paragraph 55 is quite clear that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances. It then gives some examples of those circumstances which cannot be an exhaustive list and does not preclude local planning authorities setting their own if justified by the evidence. The Council's approach to the conversion of traditionally constructed buildings is justified in the particular circumstances of West Somerset. Furthermore, the modified policy has to be read together with policies EC8 and EC9 which deal with tourism development to appreciate the full policy framework.
68. Returning to policy SC1, many of those making representations understood the definitions of 'limited development' and 'small-scale development' given in the justification to be overly restrictive as applied to housing development. The Council explained that this was not the intention; that was to achieve a manageable rate of change over time. Given national planning policy and the need for the primary and secondary villages to make an important contribution towards housing supply in the Plan area the Council's intention must be correct. However, using the word 'maximum' does not allow that interpretation and, in any event, is unnecessary as application of policy SV1 would allow balanced communities to be maintained. **MM3** will modify the definitions in the

justification and will more clearly express the Council's intention for the policy. **MM3** also makes clear that the number now given for each named village refers to the settlement rather than the parish.

69. Those making representations on the main modifications expressed concern about this change feeling that it could inhibit the ability of some settlements to grow and thereby preserve important local facilities. However, I consider these concerns to be misplaced and to be reading 'about' as still imposing an upper limit on new development. Read with policy SV1 that would not be the practical application of policy in my judgement.

Housing - Affordable housing

70. The Council has always been clear that its biggest concern is not so much the OAN *per se* but the composition of it and the finding of the original SHMA that the need for social housing would amount to about 60% of the total need over the Plan period (EB7, #50).
71. In essence, the approach of the Plan is to achieve affordable housing on development sites in a ratio of 35:65, affordable: open-market housing. The Council recognises that this will not deliver the amount of affordable housing required but the general consensus at the hearing sessions was that this approach was, nevertheless, realistic. As I will come to later when addressing housing land supply, historic build rates are consistent and almost entirely uninfluenced by plan requirements. There is simply no evidence that imposing an uplift to the OAN in order to help meet identified affordable housing needs would have any practical effect.
72. Nearly 50% of the total housing provision is however proposed on three strategic sites. A significant proportion of the affordable housing requirement will therefore need to be delivered from them. A finding of the Strategic Housing Viability Assessment is that if the required affordable housing threshold is to remain the priority for these sites there would be no residual balance to support the cumulative costs of other policy requirements or a margin to absorb adverse market changes (EB4, page 47, Recommendation 1). Having said that, some participants were more optimistic about the affordable housing that might come forward on these sites pointing to the role of the Homes & Communities Agency in some developments in Minehead.
73. At the time of the hearing sessions the strategy and policy framework for the delivery of affordable housing was nevertheless uncertain for two reasons. First, policy SC4 as submitted was not then in accordance with national planning policy as it stood at that time and, second, the Housing and Planning Bill could have an impact on the scale of affordable housing that might be delivered. These are now dealt with in turn.
74. Although I understand this not to be the Council's preferred approach, policy SC4 as submitted limits the requirement for provision of affordable housing to sites of 11 or more dwellings or, exceptionally, 6-10 dwellings in specific settlements or circumstances. This approach follows that set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of 28 November 2014 and the associated guidance in the

PPG. This was however successfully challenged in the court⁴ in July 2015. The court ordered that the policies in the Written Ministerial Statement must not be treated as a material consideration in development management and development plan procedures and the relevant paragraphs in the PPG were removed. However, on 28 September 2015 the Secretary of State was granted leave to appeal that judgement with the case being heard in the Court of Appeal on 15 March 2016, that is, while the hearing sessions were taking place.

75. On 11 May 2016 and therefore after the close of the hearing sessions but before the main modifications were approved by full council for consultation the Court of Appeal allowed the appeal by the Secretary of State. In effect, the Written Ministerial Statement and the advice in the PPG were reinstated. In this respect, submitted policy SC4 accords with national policy and no modification is required. Since each of the three bullets within criterion 3 of the policy is phrased to apply whatever the current standard is at the time of any planning proposal I do not believe that any can be said to be 'out-of-date' and not reflective of national policy as contended by a respondent to the main modifications consultation.
76. The Housing and Planning Bill was enacted on 12 May 2016. It provides a statutory framework for the delivery of starter homes. There are different views about the effect this will have on the number of affordable homes that will be delivered since the Act requires that planning permission could only be granted if specific requirements relating to starter homes were met (see for example ED32/3, Appendix A).
77. Affordable housing delivery is a matter that the Council will wish to keep under careful review. However, modifications to the Plan already discussed, particularly those relating to that part of the Plan area outside the three main settlements, will assist in the delivery of this much-needed housing type.

Housing in total

78. As already stated above, the Plan allocates specific sites for slightly less than 50% of the overall housing requirement during the Plan period. This is primarily because the Plan started life as a core strategy through which it would have been inappropriate to allocate non-strategic sites. Again as explained above, no further development plan documents are now to be brought forward. The outcome therefore is that just over 50% of the housing provision will have to come forward on sites that are, as yet, unidentified in the Plan.
79. On past evidence the Council is clearly confident that what are in effect windfall developments will continue to come forward in the required numbers (EB7, #81

⁴ *West Berkshire District Council and Reading Borough Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2015] EWHC 2222 (Admin)

- to #84). However, that is the antithesis of the plan-led approach enshrined in the first of the 12 core planning principles set out in Framework paragraph 17.
80. This matter was raised in my initial letter to the Council (ED3, #37) and my second letter seeking clarification of the process by which the suggested interim (early) release sites might be brought forward for consultation (ED7, #8 to #11). A number of additional sites were ultimately approved by Full Council in December 2015 (ED15, ED16, ED18 and ED19) having a combined capacity of about 245 dwellings. These were not subject to any consultation at that stage, the intention, at that time, being for that to take place as part of the consultation on the proposed main modifications that would be required in due course. They were however subject to a sustainability appraisal process with the outcomes (ED18a) informing the decisions of full council. That process did not identify any 'showstoppers' in respect of any of the sites approved.
 81. The interim (early) release sites were selected from the SHLAA Update Report (EB5) where they are referenced as set out in the following text. Some of the sites selected (WAT9 and part of MIN30/MIN41) were discussed during the hearing sessions under Matter 6 since they were also put forward as additional sites at pre-submission consultation. These three and MIN4 and MIN5 are all within or in close proximity to the contiguous built-up areas of Watchet and Minehead/Alcombe respectively. In that respect, their development would be in accordance with the Plan strategy and policy SC1. Their combined capacity is in the order of at least 185 dwellings. Stogursey is defined as a primary village under policy SC1. The identified early release site has a capacity of some 60 dwellings. Whether this site would or would not be in accordance with the strategy and policy SC1 would depend on the rate and phasing of development and thus compliance with the 'limited development' criteria of policy SC1 and the terms of policy SV1.
 82. Other sites were also put forward by landowners and/or developers to be considered if further land for housing needed to be identified in the Plan. These were also discussed under Matter 6. To the extent that matters were in contention, the three allocated sites (MD2, WA2 and WI2) were also discussed under Matter 5.
 83. I shall deal with the allocated site and the two put forward on land at Watchet quite briefly. The allocated site (WA2) is, together with other land, wholly under the control of the Trustees of the Wyndham Estate. Uncontested evidence was given at the hearing sessions that master planning of the site and surrounding area had shown that the mixed-use development proposed could be accommodated while avoiding any effect on the setting of the heritage assets present. Development could be kept below the ridge line thus mitigating any landscape impact. No evidence was presented to suggest that this allocation should not be endorsed.
 84. The allocated site is within an area described in the sustainability appraisal (SD14) as 'Watchet South' while the early release site and the two other proposed sites are in the 'Watchet East' area. The sustainability appraisal is quite clear that the two areas performed similarly when assessed. The sole reason for the allocated site being chosen is said to be that it was better related to the town centre.

85. One of the non-allocated sites put forward (WAT6) is an extension of that now suggested by the Council as an early release site (WAT9) and would be developed in a comprehensive manner with that site to provide around 200 dwellings. The other is land to the south of Doniford Road/Normandy Avenue and could accommodate about 150 dwellings.
86. Both sites have been subject to quite detailed appraisals and master planning, the results of which have been submitted in evidence. These demonstrate that the various constraints affecting each site such as flood risk, highway connections and access, sites of nature conservation interest and landscape impact are capable of resolution subject to normal development management assessment at full planning application stage.
87. Given that the Plan strategy and policy SC1 envisage development in close proximity to the contiguous built-up area of Watchet, once WAT9 (which is so sited) has been developed both other sites will meet this criterion. I see no reason why all three of the suggested sites should not come forward. All would be in accordance with the Plan strategy and policy SC1 and thus acceptable in principle.
88. Turning now to Williton, the land as allocated in the submitted Plan and that proposed by Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd would form, when taken together with the submitted Plan employment allocation under policy EC2, an almost continuous development arc to the west, north and east of the town. The sustainability appraisal (SD14) notes that the land to the east, substantially that site now put forward by Summerfield, was discounted because of the difficulty in accessing the services in the High Street and the high probability of flooding, water pollution risk and drainage challenges.
89. Summerfield has submitted in evidence a number of studies including a draft master plan which seek to address the concerns that led the Council to discount this land on the basis of the sustainability appraisal. This shows how the land could be developed in ways that exclude all but essential infrastructure, open space and community playing fields from Flood Zone 3 and provides pedestrian links to the High Street and some other services with a walking time of around 10 minutes. Although a potential access to the A358 is indicated, this appears to be at the conceptual stage at this time and any benefits arising from this can be given only limited weight.
90. No 'in principle' objection was raised by the Environment Agency on flood risk grounds subject to the sequential and exception tests being met and site specific flood risk assessments being carried out in due course. The Plan strategy reflects the sequential and exception test outcomes. In principle therefore, the suggested site would appear to accord with the Plan strategy and policy SC1 being in close proximity to the contiguous built-up area of Williton.
91. Turning now to the site allocated under policy WI2, following representations at pre-submission consultation from Historic England (SD21/2), the Council proposed to delete part of the site allocation to the north of the school and ensure that the part of the allocation to the west closest to the town is retained as a green buffer to protect the Battlegore Cemetery scheduled monument (ED17). The effect of this proposed change would be to detach the small

northern allocation and somewhat divorce that part of the western allocation to be master planned for development from the town centre.

92. The allocated land is under the control of the Trustees of the Wyndham Estate. The Trustees accept that the requirement to minimise flood risk means that the land that can be made available for housing would not be contiguous with the existing settlement boundary (ED32/5, #2.2). On the face of it, that would appear to undermine one of the reasons for the Council selecting this area rather than the Summerfield land to the east. However, as noted by the Trustees at the hearing session, although the developable land is proposed to be reduced quite considerably in response to both Historic England and the flood risk issue, the development expected to come forward, some 400 dwellings and 3 hectares of appropriate and compatible non-residential uses, remains unchanged.
93. I agree with the Trustees that the changes proposed by the Council are not justified. They would serve to undermine the master planning process that, on the evidence, requires some development to the north of the school to achieve the housing numbers envisaged (ED32/5, #2.1). Retaining the submitted allocation would allow greater opportunity to achieve a development that delivered the requirement of policy WI2 while protecting the heritage asset. As a whole, the allocated site would then remain in accordance with the Plan strategy and policy SC1. Nevertheless, **MM10** is required to ensure that the development achieves through the master planning process the enhancement of the heritage asset. A consequential change to SD5, Figure 5 (the policies map) is also necessary.
94. The land allocated under policy MD2 at Minehead is acknowledged to be challenging. Ownership of the land is fragmented and, unlike the sites in Watchet and Williton, the Council expects to lead the master planning process. A respondent commenting on the main modifications queried whether this was still the Council's intention but who it is prepared by is not a soundness matter. The topography creates some development issues and flood risk off-site from the development of the land is an issue that needs to be addressed. Nevertheless, the consensus view among participants at the hearing session was that as landowners' expectations of land values became more realistic development would occur. Moreover, the involvement already of the Homes & Communities Agency on land in the area gave confidence that the required affordable housing would come forward.
95. The site off Bratton Lane put forward by Mr Shapland is within the Porlock Road area assessed as part of the sustainability appraisal. The reasons for rejecting development in this area are given as significant negative effects on flooding (as parts are in Flood Zone 3) and significant effects on landscape (since parts of the area are clearly visible from Exmoor National Park).
96. Nevertheless, early release sites MIN4, MIN5, MIN30 and MIN41 now suggested by the Council and that put forward on behalf of several owners and within the boundary of MIN30 and MIN41 are all within the Porlock Road area. Evidence from the Environment Agency is that while parts of MIN30 and MIN41 are within Flood Zone 3, Mr Shapland's site is within Flood Zone 1 and thus acceptable, at least on flood risk grounds (ED21).

97. Turning to visual and landscape impact, ENPA advises that the effect on the National Park from development of the suggested early release sites would be neutral on both landscape character and visual amenity provided that screen planting is retained and/or reinforced (ED25/3, #4.2). In considering the effect on the National Park of Mr Shapland's site, ENPA make essentially the same comments under the 'description and discussion' section but conclude that the effect on both landscape character and visual amenity would be 'moderate adverse' (ED25/6). It is not clear why this different conclusion was drawn or why screen planting, as advocated by those representing Mr Shapland in evidence, could not be employed in mitigation.
98. As I saw during my inspection of the area, the topography of this part of Minehead is complex. It seems to me that development of each of these five sites is broadly in accordance with the Plan strategy and policy SC1 since all are in close proximity to the contiguous built-up area. Whether any could be developed would seem to depend on site specific proposals relating to flood risk, access and landscape and visual impact. These are matters of detail for the development management process; in principle they would all appear to be acceptable.
99. The final area of additional land suggested in the event that more or alternative sites need to be identified is Crown Estate land at Dunster Marsh. Indicative development of the land in three roughly equal phases was submitted in evidence and would provide some 215 dwellings (ED23/6). The development would be on the western side of the settlement and would be an extension of a 54 dwelling phase now under construction. The effect would be to begin to close the gap between the settlement and the eastern side of Minehead.
100. As with the other sites that have been put forward by or on behalf of landowners and developers I have little doubt that this land could be master planned to address any issues in sufficient detail to allow consideration through the development management process. However, Dunster Marsh is defined by policy SC1 as a secondary village with a dwelling total at the start of the Plan period of 183. Development of even phase 1 alone, as was suggested at the hearing session, would be completely at odds with even the more flexible interpretation now given to policy SC1 as a result of **MM3**. Furthermore, the facilities that are available in Dunster are on the other side of the busy A39 and not well related to any significant further development at the proposed site. Development here would not therefore be in accordance with the Plan strategy and policy SC1 and would not be acceptable in principle at this time.
101. Finally, I turn briefly to the development proposed at Minehead and Watchet under policy LT1. Both sites are identified for development post-2026 and, in that regard, are intended to be consistent with Framework paragraph 47, bullet 3 in indicating broad locations for development at the end of the 11-15 year period. No development capacity is indicated in the Plan.
102. The site at Minehead adjoins the allocated policy MD2 site and is likely to be phased with development of that land given the linkages in highway access terms. That at Watchet is proposed as it offers an opportunity to realign the B3191, the current route of which will be subject to coastal erosion. The Council explained that this was a vital part of the strategic highway network in the event that the A39 was unavailable for any reason. Changes to the policy

wording in respect of the safeguarding and enhancement of the Daws Castle and associated heritage assets have been agreed with Historic England (ED57). On the evidence before me I see no reason why either site should not be included within the Plan with the change in **MM11** required for consistency with national heritage policy.

103. To summarise my conclusions on this sub-issue, the submitted Plan proposes some 1,440 dwellings on the three strategic sites (MD2, WA2 and WI2). The early release sites suggested by the Council add a further 185 dwellings or 245 dwellings if the development at Stogursey can come forward in accordance with the Plan strategy and policies SC1 and SV1. Other sites which I have concluded would accord with the Plan strategy and policy SC1 would add a further 250 dwellings across the two Watchet sites, between 190 and 250 dwellings at Williton East and about 55 dwellings at Bratton Lane, Minehead. That adds a further 495 to 555 dwellings. In all therefore, land could be developed in accordance with the Plan strategy and policy SC1 with a capacity of between 2,120 and 2,240 dwellings or between 73% and 77% of the Plan requirement of 2,900.
104. During the hearing sessions evidence was given by those directly involved in the proposed development of all of the above sites except MD2, the four early release sites in Minehead and the site at Stogursey. The four Minehead early release sites have a relatively limited capacity of some 85 dwellings. All confirmed that sufficient appraisal and investigative work had taken place to allow master planning to be relatively well advanced. All confirmed that a start could be expected in not later than 24 months and all confirmed that viability testing gave confidence that, in current conditions, affordable housing provision at 35% could be secured. I do not accept the argument now put forward in response to the main modification consultation that these comments were only given on the understanding that the sites would be allocated in the Plan thus creating the appropriate investment climate. The Planning Inspectorate deals with numerous appeals involving development of unallocated sites pursued in any event in what is perceived to be a situation where there is no five year housing land supply.
105. Ideally these sites should be included as specific allocations in the Plan. That is not however the proposal of the Council for the reasons set out briefly (ED58, section 4) and more fully at the Matter 8 hearing session. In essence, this is a concern at the further delay that would be caused to the adoption of the Plan by the likely requirement to re-open the hearing sessions following consultation on the main modifications if they included a number of additional development sites.
106. I have considered carefully the preliminary views expressed at the hearing session and, since Document ED58 could only be tabled at the hearing session, the more considered points made in response to the publication of the main modifications. I do not believe that the Plan would be unsound as proposed to be modified (or, strictly, not modified in this instance) for the following reasons.
107. First, while the uncertainty that prevailed at the time of the hearing sessions concerning the Housing and Planning Bill and the Court of Appeal judgement has now been resolved, an understanding of their effects and the implications for the delivery of affordable housing in particular will take some time to

become apparent. That is an argument for early adoption of the Plan followed by a rapid review once these implications become clear. The future of the Hinkley Point C project remains uncertain at the time of writing.

108. Second, there are advantages in early adoption for those wishing to prepare and complete a Neighbourhood Plan and this was a point made in evidence at the hearing session.
109. Third, while an allocation in a plan is clearly desirable, there is little evidence to suggest that in this case the schemes put forward would be delayed or prevented by not being specifically identified. No insurmountable barriers to development were identified to prevent those sites coming forward. Indeed, all the evidence was to the contrary. Given the strength of the evidence given about the deliverability of each site, it is not clear what additional security will be afforded by allocation in the Plan for those advocating development.
110. Fourth, I consider that development would still be plan-led in the sense that the sites are all in accordance with the Plan strategy and policy SC1. They would not be windfall sites as defined in the Framework Glossary since they would have been specifically identified as available through the local plan process and they would clearly not become available unexpectedly. In the context of West Somerset a residual windfall allowance of some 30% of the total Plan provision would not be inconsistent with Framework paragraph 48.
111. Fifthly, at the hearing sessions the Council has committed to an early review of the Plan to prepare the comprehensive document envisaged by Framework paragraph 153. The Council indicated that this would commence within 18 months to two years. As is clear from the exchange of correspondence (ED62 and ED64) this timescale is now less clear for the reasons set out by the Council. This is unfortunate and I would urge that the review be undertaken as soon as resources permit.
112. With that caveat I nevertheless support the Council's approach subject to the evidence demonstrating that a five year supply of housing land is available now (April 2016). I turn to consider that next.

Five year housing land supply at 1 April 2016

113. The Council has produced three estimates of housing land supply each of which shows that a five year supply can be demonstrated on the assumptions made. Those shown in Document EB7 (#75 to #87) and ED34/4 (#4.3.1 to 4.3.6, Table 4.1) spread the 2,900 dwelling requirement equally over the 20 year period of the Plan (145 dwellings per annum) and apply the buffer required by Framework paragraph 47, bullet 2 at a rate of 5% before adding the shortfall in the first years which itself is spread across the whole of the remaining Plan period (the 'Liverpool' method). Having considered the points made at the relevant hearing session, the final assessment (ED58, #4.1 to #4.7, Appendix B) steps the dwelling requirement and spreads the shortfall in the first years across the next five years of the Plan (the 'Sedgefield' method) before adding a 5% buffer.
114. The 450 dwellings assumed to be required as a result of the Hinkley Point C project represents about 16% of the Plan requirement but some 21% of the calculated OAN for the HMA relied upon by the other local planning authorities

within it (ED25/2, Appendix 4). The way that this is treated in the calculation of the five year housing supply is therefore important since it has a significant effect on the shortfall in the early years in particular.

115. It was not unreasonable for the Council to spread the requirement evenly across the Plan period in the first instance since the project was supposed to have started by now; indeed, 2016 should have been the peak year for workforce numbers (EB7, #68). That has not in fact occurred and it is right therefore for the Council to review its approach. It now assumes that the requirement will arise from 2018/19, year seven of the Plan. For the first six years therefore the long term annual average of 122 dwellings per annum is assumed with 155 dwellings per annum thereafter.
116. I agree that this approach is justified. As a consequence, the Council also now applies the 'Sedgefield' method to the treatment of the shortfall. This is also justified since the 'Liverpool' approach previously advocated was on the basis that the Hinkley Point C effect was also spread across the Plan period; that is no longer now the case. **MM4** adds an explanation to this effect to the supporting text for policy SC2.
117. The Council also now proposes to add the buffer after adding the shortfall. This is widely held to be the correct approach. The issue therefore is whether it should be 5% as the Council suggests or 20% as some, but not all, those making representations contend.
118. The PPG advises that identifying whether or not there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing is a matter of judgement. It does however suggest that the assessment is likely to be more robust if a longer term view is taken so that peaks and troughs in the housing market cycle are likely to be evened out⁵. The Council's evidence (EB7, Table 3) is that over the period 1977 to 2011 the annual average rate of completions over the four Structure Plan periods covered has varied from 116 dwellings per annum to 128 dwellings per annum; a modest variation. The requirements against which this delivery must be set, however, has varied from 108 dwellings per annum to 193 dwellings per annum; a considerably wider range. Over two of the four periods there has been under performance against the target while over the other two there has been an over performance. The most recent (1991 to 2011) is a period of slight over performance, 116 against 108.
119. On the basis of this evidence I see no justification for a buffer of 20% to be added since there is no evidence of persistent under performance.
120. Looking first at the 'demand' side, the Council's calculation of the five year Plan requirement presented at the hearing session ran from April 2015 to April 2020 (ED58, Appendix B). However, it should run from April 2016 to April 2021 and this is what is shown in the main modifications consultation document
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⁵ Paragraph 035 Reference ID: 3-035-20140306

(Appendix C). This shows actual completions to 2015/16 of 405 against a requirement over the same period of 488 giving a shortfall-to-date of 83 dwellings. The overall dwelling requirement (including the 5% buffer) over the next five years would therefore be 832 dwellings (or 166 dwellings per annum) because that period comprises two years at the long term average rate of development (122 dwellings per annum) and three years at the higher 'Hinkley' rate of 155 dwellings per annum.

121. Turning now to the 'supply' side, the PPG is quite clear about what constitutes a deliverable site⁶. These include those with planning permission and allocations in a local plan. However, the latter is not a prerequisite for a site being deliverable in terms of five year supply as contended by some participants at the hearing sessions (emphasis added). The PPG continues by saying that where there are no significant constraints such as infrastructure to be overcome sites not allocated in a development plan or without planning permission can be considered capable of being deliverable within a five year time-frame. This is entirely consistent with Framework footnote 11. The sites promoted by those making representations are clearly deliverable as defined.
122. What constitutes a developable site is set out in Framework footnote 12 and the PPG⁷. In this respect the evidence in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is important and the latest information available (EB5) is reflected in the most up-to-date housing trajectory available (main modifications consultation Appendix C). The evidence given at the hearing session about the development that would come forward on sites that should be included in the Plan is also very important in this context. The sites promoted by those making representations are clearly developable as defined.
123. The Council's housing trajectory and latest assessment (main modifications consultation Appendix C) is drawn from the SHLAA and I have no evidence to suggest that these assumptions will not be delivered for large and small sites with planning permission. Over the period April 2016 to April 2021 this would amount to some 534 dwellings.
124. As set out above, I have concluded that sites put forward either by the Council as either allocated or early release sites and by others in Watchet, Williton and Minehead would be in accordance with the Plan strategy and policy SC1. During the hearing sessions clear evidence was given that each was viable and, after allowing a lead-in time of some two years, could each deliver between 25 and 35 dwellings per annum.
125. The Council has assumed a total of 310 dwellings from these sources over the relevant five year period of the Plan. On the basis of the evidence given during the examination I consider this to be a conservative assumption. Not all of the sites that I believe would be in accordance with the Plan strategy if brought

⁶ Paragraph 031 Reference ID: 3-031-20140306

⁷ Paragraph 032 Reference ID: 3-032-20140306

forward have been included and for those that have, the assumed annual contribution is less than that suggested by the prospective developer or landowner. Against this, some 50 dwellings have been assumed at the Stogursey site which may or may not be in accordance with policy SC1 as set out above.

126. Added to assumed completions, it can be seen that this figure (some 834 dwellings) is almost equal to the requirement without any account being taken of development on windfall sites.
127. I consider the Council's evidence (EB7, #81 to #84) in respect of the numbers that will come forward on windfall sites as defined in the Framework Glossary to be compelling and thus justified in terms of Framework paragraph 48. The Council assumes some 130 dwellings coming forward from this source; 80 on small sites, 50 on large sites. It may well be that development on large sites would, in reality, be on sites coming forward in accordance with Plan strategy that have already been taken into account. There may therefore be an element of double counting in the Council's analysis. Even so, adding the 80 dwellings on small sites still gives a total 'supply' of some 914 dwellings.
128. At a required rate of 166 dwellings per annum, this would amount to a supply of some 5.5 years. Given the conservative nature of some of the assumptions made by the Council I consider that to be a healthy margin and thus conclude that at 1 April 2016 there would have been a five year supply of deliverable and developable housing land. Moreover, adding the assumed annual small site windfall of 40 dwellings to the capacity of between 2,120 and 2,240 dwellings that I consider could come forward on large sites could bring the 'supply' now to within some 300 dwellings of the overall Plan requirement of 2,900. I see no reason on the evidence to believe that a supply of specific developable sites would not come forward in years 6 to 10 of the Plan as indicated in Framework paragraph 47.

Employment

129. In my initial letter to the Council I raised a concern over the deliverability of the major employment site identified at Williton in policy EC2 in view of the evidence given to me in March 2015 at a hearing into an appeal on land within the allocated site area (ED3, #59). In the light of that evidence and confirmation by the Environment Agency that, given the partial location of the land within the functional floodplain, development of the land would not be consistent with the Framework (ED58, page 4), the Council indicated that it would delete the allocation. **MM14** is therefore necessary to achieve soundness in this respect and a consequential change to the submitted policies map is required.
130. As discussed under Issue 2, the employment land allocations in the Plan are indicative rather than required to meet a specific quantitative need. It does however emphasise the need to allow for employment opportunities to come forward in association with the mixed-use developments proposed for the three main towns.
131. In that respect, the Council's proposed change to policy EC6 is welcome. It casts the policy in the much more positive and enabling light suggested by participants at the hearing session and several of those making representations

at pre-submission consultation. The Council will be able to use appropriate conditions to avoid new dwellings being achieved in unsustainable locations which I understand to be the Council's prime concern and the objective of the submitted policy EC6 wording. **MM15** is therefore required to ensure that the Plan is effective in this regard.

Overall conclusion on Issue 3

132. The changes to be made by way of main modifications to policies SC1, OC1 and EC6 will set a positive framework for the delivery of the sustainable development required over the Plan period. The evidence shows that housing can come forward on sites that are both deliverable and developable as defined in the Framework. While it would be preferable for all these sites to be allocated in the Plan now, they can and will contribute to a five year housing land supply now. The further delay to a Plan that has already taken a very long time to prepare that would be caused is not therefore justified. The number of other issues that are now uncertain but which will have to be addressed lends further support to the approach of adoption followed by early review proposed by the Council. The main failing of the Plan is the probable inability to achieve the level of affordable housing needed. However, the steps taken by the Council in the prevailing circumstances are pragmatic. This is one area that is likely to be affected by changes in legislation and is therefore a further justification for adoption and early review once the consequences of those changes are better understood.

Issue 4 - Whether the policies in the Plan are effective and consistent with national policy

133. In my initial letter to the Council (ED3) I referred to a number of policies that I considered either inconsistent with national policy or likely not to be effective; two of the tests of soundness. The changes to some and the reasons for them have already been discussed in relation to policies SC1, OC1, EC2 and EC6. The others are addressed now.

134. Submitted policies EN2 and CC1 both address developments that would generate energy from, among other things, renewable and low carbon sources. The only substantive difference between the two is that policy CC1 relates to small-scale schemes whereas EN2 relates to 'major' proposals. However, neither term is defined so it is wholly unclear which policy would apply to any particular proposal. **MM1** deletes policy EN2 while **MM17** alters the wording of policy CC1 thus addressing these failings. In doing so, the Council makes clear that the criteria-based support given by policy CC1 does not relate to proposals for wind turbines since the Written Ministerial Statement issued on 18 June 2015 does not permit criteria-based policies to be included for such developments in local plans. This is therefore recognised as an interim policy stance pending an early review (ED8, #14), thus lending further weight to this approach.

135. While policy SC3 is intended to give effect to Framework paragraph 50, bullets 1 and 2, the latest Annual Monitoring Report (EB24) illustrates the weakness of the policy as drafted. While the percentages of dwellings provided in each category measured is set out in the Annual Monitoring Report, there is no benchmark against which to set it and thus no indication of the success or

- otherwise of the policy. **MM5** addresses this by an addition to the 'justification' wording.
136. As submitted, policy CF1 is not consistent with Framework paragraph 70 since it implies that it is only recreational facilities whose loss should be replaced. **MM16** rectifies this inconsistency with national policy and has been supported by the Theatres Trust following the main modifications consultation.
137. Submitted policy NH5 introduces without any local justification a threshold of 10 hectares below which the best and most versatile agricultural land would not be protected from significant development. No such threshold is stated or implied in Framework paragraph 112 and, in the West Somerset context, many of the development sites coming forward could therefore not be protected. **MM24** is necessary to bring the policy into consistency with national policy.
138. **MM26** introduces a new policy (NH11) that is required for consistency with national policy and the advice in the PPG. Framework paragraph 115 is clear that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the AONB while the PPG makes clear also that this extends to development proposals outside of an AONB but which might nevertheless have an impact upon its setting⁸.
139. The form of words put forward at the main modifications consultation attracted significant objection from the Quantock Hills AONB Service, Natural England and ENPA. The policy wording that is subject of **MM26** is that which derives from the exchange of correspondence with the Council (ED66 and ED67).
140. Similarly, **MM27** reflects the same exchange of correspondence. As submitted, there was a mismatch between the wording of policy GT1, which appears supportive, and the justification which could be interpreted as being negative. Moreover, the Plan gave no guidance as to how any proposal coming forward would be assessed. The changed wording consulted upon was roundly criticised by the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and was not consistent with national policy at all. That now put in the Plan by **MM27** is an interim policy pending the identification of specific sites through either the early review of the Plan or the preparation of another, perhaps joint, local plan and further work with other authorities. It is not inconsistent with *Planning policy for traveller sites* published in August 2015.
141. The Council and EDF Energy have produced a statement of common ground with the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ED56). This contains modifications that include a re-instated policy NH7. I have considered carefully the statements made by EDF Energy, particularly the representation (SD21/34) and the various references to the Framework and the PPG within it. In my view, all of these are in the form of procedural advice to local authorities on the way to carry out the development management function so as to comply with the requirements of

⁸ Paragraph 003 Reference ID: 8-003-20140306

the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015. The representations and further statements do not explain why the Plan would be unsound without the policy. Nevertheless, to the extent that a policy is required for the Plan to be effective in this regard **MM25** and the consequential changes to the policies map achieve that purpose.

142. At pre-submission stage and during the examination Historic England has made a number of detailed representations about the extent to which the policies in the Plan reflect national policy. This has been the subject of considerable correspondence with the Council (ED3, ED4, ED59, ED60, ED62 and ED66). As a consequence a number of changes are necessary for consistency with national policy (**MM20** and **MM21**) and clarity (**MM6** to **MM9** inclusive). In the main these modifications reflect the wording suggested by Historic England and particularly that put forward in its main modification consultation response⁹, which was prepared in the light of my remarks in ED62. Having reflected on that response and my observations on it (ED66) the Council has asked me to recommend the wording now proposed by Historic England (ED67). **MM20** and **MM21** as now drafted correctly reflect the balance between statute and national policy on the one hand and local circumstances on the other. In its main modification consultation response Historic England also made a number of suggested changes to the supporting text for clarity. As these do not affect the soundness of the Plan it is for the Council to consider if it wishes to make them
143. Finally, **MM13**, **MM18**, **MM19**, **MM22** and **MM23** address some slight ambiguities and anomalies in the submitted policies rather than matters of substance. They are nevertheless necessary to ensure that the 'effective' test of soundness is met. **MM28** and **MM29** simply replace the words 'proposals map' by 'policies map' but, since some are within the body of a policy they are strictly required to be main modifications.

Public Sector Equality Duty

144. In conducting the examination I have had due regard to the above Duty and s149 of the Equality Act 2010. In particular I do not consider that policy GT1 as submitted or the policy as proposed to be changed by the Council and consulted upon as part of the post-hearing sessions consultation on the main modifications would respect the qualified rights of the gypsy and traveller community in relation to respect for private and family life. **MM27** introduces a modified policy that does.

Assessment of Legal Compliance

145. My examination of the compliance of the Plan with the legal requirements is summarised in the table below. I conclude that the Plan meets them all.

⁹ <https://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Docs/WSLP-Proposed-Modifications-Representations/Historic-England.aspx>

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS	
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	The West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 is identified within the approved LDS January 2015 which sets out an expected adoption date of Month Year. The Local Plan's content and timing are compliant with the LDS up to formal submission.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and relevant regulations	The SCI was adopted in December 2014 and consultation has been compliant with the requirements therein, including the consultation on the post-submission proposed 'main modification' changes (MM)
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	SA has been carried out and is adequate.
Appropriate Assessment (AA)	The Habitats Regulations AA Screening Report (December 2014) sets out that the policies within the draft local plan are unlikely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European and/or Ramsar site provided that policies NH3, NH8 and NH9 are maintained which they are.
National Policy	The Local Plan complies with national policy except where indicated and modifications are recommended.
2004 Act (as amended) and 2012 Regulations.	The Local Plan complies with the Act and the Regulations.

Overall Conclusion and Recommendation

146. The Plan has a number of deficiencies in relation to soundness for the reasons set out above which mean that I recommend non-adoption of it as submitted, in accordance with Section 20(7A) of the 2004 Act. These deficiencies have been explored in the main issues set out above.
147. The Plan is not the single plan for the area envisaged by Framework paragraph 153. Importantly, it does not identify a full range of housing sites. A number of sites have been discussed and found to be in accordance with the Plan strategy. It would clearly be preferable if they were to be included in the Plan now as was the Council's initial intention in responding to my preliminary queries and concerns. However, these would have to be proposed as MMs. It is quite likely that new matters would be raised through consultation that may lead to the hearing sessions being re-opened. The delay to the adoption of the Plan would run counter to the very clear message from Government referred to at the end of the Preamble. Allied to the commitment to an early review to address the major uncertainties regarding infrastructure provision and policy effects highlighted in this report I consider that the balance of advantage for the proper planning of the area is for the Council to adopt the Plan now with the main modifications the Council has requested that I recommend to make the Plan sound and capable of adoption.

148. I conclude that with the recommended main modifications set out in the Appendix the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 satisfies the requirements of Section 20(5) of the 2004 Act and meets the criteria for soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Inspector Signature

Brian Cook

Inspector

This report is accompanied by the Appendix containing the main modifications

Appendix: Main Modifications

Main Modification number	Policy ref. & page number	POLICY/Text
MM 1	<p>POLICY EN2: MITIGATION IMPACT OF MAJOR ENERGY GENERATING PROPOSALS</p> <p>(delete)</p> <p>p.17</p>	<p>MAJOR ENERGY GENERATING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE SUPPORTED WHERE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ THEY RESPECT THE LOCAL NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY ARE LOCATED; ○ THE IMPACTS ON THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ARE LESS THAN SUBSTANTIAL AND CAN BE MITIGATED; ○ THEY RESPECT THE POSITIVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITIES AFFECTED ESPECIALLY THOSE NEIGHBOURING THEM; AND, ○ ADEQUATE MEASURES ARE TAKEN TO MITIGATE THE CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF ANY RELATED DEVELOPMENT ON THE COMMUNITIES AFFECTED, BOTH IN THE SHORT AND THE LONGER TERM.
	Purpose p.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy seeks to ensure that appropriate mitigation of adverse impacts and optimisation of beneficial impacts arising from major energy generating proposals is provided.
	Assumptions p.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Major energy generating proposals can give rise to a range of both positive and negative impacts depending on the nature of the energy generating technology involved and the scale, location and design of the scheme; ○ Some of these impacts may be on a very significant scale, ○ They will range in timescale between short and long term.
	Justification including any references p.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The search for new and more sustainable energy generating capacity has led to the development of novel technologies such as large scale photovoltaic arrays and windfarms. All energy generating facilities have locational requirements related to the nature of the energy source being captured. ○ The desire for more low carbon energy generation has led to more large scale generating development away from traditional sources of hydrocarbon energy such as the coalfields. Wind, hydro, biomass and solar energy schemes are frequently located in remote rural areas of high landscape and or ecological value, great care is necessary in order to balance the benefits of low or zero carbon energy generation with the appropriate level of protection for highly valued environments. ○ A Renewable Energy Potential Study forms part of the evidence base. <p>Sources:</p> <p>Department of Energy and Climate Change; <u>Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy – June 2011 (EN-1)</u>; DECC; 2011.</p> <p>Department of Energy and Climate Change; <u>National policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure – June 2011 (EN-3)</u>; DECC; 2011.</p> <p>Department of Energy and Climate Change; <u>National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure – June 2011 (EN-5)</u>; DECC; 2011.</p> <p>Department of Energy and Climate Change; <u>National Policy Statement</u></p>

		<p>Nuclear Power Generation Vols. 1 & 2 – June 2011 (EN-6); DECC; 2011. 110 Turner, Cllr. K.H.; West Somerset Council Full Council 23rd March 2011 Agenda Item 8: West Somerset Council Position Statement on Proposed Major Energy Generation and Associated Infrastructure Projects (Full Council Report No. WSC 42/11); West Somerset Council; 2011.</p> <p>Stuart Todd Associates; West Somerset Local Planning Authority Area Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Potential Study – September 2011; West Somerset Council; 2012.</p>
<p>MM 2</p>	<p>POLICY SC1: HIERARCHY OF SETTLEMENTS</p> <p>p.19</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL BE CONCENTRATED IN THE DISTRICT'S MAIN CENTRE, MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE, AND IN THE RURAL SERVICE CENTRES OF WATCHET AND WILLITON, THIS WILL BE ON A SCALE GENERALLY PROPORTIONATE TO THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS TO THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES AND THOSE IN SURROUNDING SETTLEMENTS THAT RELY ON THEIR LARGER NEIGHBOURS FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES. 2. LIMITED DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRIMARY VILLAGES: BICKNOLLER, CARHAMPTON, CROWCOMBE, KILVE, STOGUMBER, STOGURSEY, WEST QUANTOXHEAD AND WASHFORD, WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT IT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO WIDER SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS FOR THE AREA. 3. AT THE SECONDARY VILLAGES: HOLFORD, DUNSTER MARSH, BROMPTON RALPH, BATTLETON AND, BRUSHFORD, SMALL SCALE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT IT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO WIDER SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS FOR THE AREA. 4. DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WILL BE LIMITED TO THAT FOR WHICH THERE IS AN ESTABLISHED LONG-TERM NEED AND FOR WHICH SUCH A LOCATION IS ESSENTIAL, INCLUDING AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, HORTICULTURE, EQUINE AND, HUNTING. DEVELOPMENT IN SUCH LOCATIONS WILL ALSO NEED TO DEMONSTRATE GOOD PROXIMITY AND EASY ACCESSIBILITY TO THE EXISTING HIGHWAY NETWORK, OR ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT MODES, AND SETTLEMENTS PROVIDING ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES. 5.— 4. DEVELOPMENT WITHIN OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY (WITHIN 50 METRES) TO THE CONTIGUOUS BUILT-UP AREA OF MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE, WATCHET, WILLITON AND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY VILLAGES WILL ONLY BE CONSIDERED WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. IT IS WELL RELATED TO EXISTING ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND SOCIAL FACILITIES WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT, AND; B. THERE IS SAFE AND EASY PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO THE ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND SOCIAL FACILITIES WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT, AND; C. IT RESPECTS THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND COMPLEMENTS THE CHARACTER OF THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT, AND; D. IT DOES NOT GENERATE SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS OVER MINOR ROADS TO AND FROM THE NATIONAL PRIMARY AND COUNTY HIGHWAY ROUTE NETWORK

		<p>E. IT DOES NOT HARM THE AMENITY OF THE AREA OR THE ADJOINING LAND USES.</p> <p>DEVELOPMENT ELSEWHERE IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WILL BE CONSIDERED UNDER POLICY OC1.</p>
<p>MM 3</p> <p>Justification including any references</p> <p>pp.20 - 21</p>		<p><u>Definitions:</u></p> <p><u>Limited Development:</u></p> <p>In clause 2 of the policy above, in terms of housing, “limited development” means individual schemes of up to ten dwellings providing a maximum of about a 10% increase in a settlement’s total dwelling number during the Local Plan period, limited to a maximum of about 30% of this increase in any five year period.</p> <p><u>Small Scale Development:</u></p> <p>In clause 3 of the policy above, in terms of housing, “small scale development” means individual schemes of up to five dwellings providing a maximum of about a 10% increase in a settlement’s total dwelling number during the Local Plan period, limited to a maximum of about 30% of this increase in any five year period.</p> <p><u>Primary Villages</u> (showing dwelling numbers at the start of the plan period):</p> <p>Bicknoller (495 122), Carhampton (467 317), Crowcombe (230 89), Kilve (486 110), Stogumber (332 164), Stogursey (633 388), West Quantoxhead (485 124) and Washford (part of Old Cleeve Parish – settlement total 304). These are the larger villages with a shop and some built community facilities which are not significantly constrained by poor access from the County Highway Network.</p> <p><u>Secondary Villages</u> (showing dwelling numbers at the start of the plan period):</p> <p>Holford (452 85), Dunster Marsh (483 168), Battleton (43), Brompton Ralph (83 23) and Brushford (267 179). These are mainly smaller villages without a shop, but with some built community facilities, and also some with a shop but which are constrained by poor access from the County Highway Network.</p> <p><i>NB Where the settlement name is the same as the Parish the stock figure of the latter has been used as a proxy for the former unless the Parish falls within two LPA’s. See also, Table 4 in the Strategy and Housing topic paper.</i></p> <p><u>Built up area:</u></p> <p>An amalgam of buildings and built structures that collectively form a distinct developed form with a relatively continuous outer boundary / limit. The extent of the built up area excludes parkland, parks, public gardens, formal and informal public open space, playing fields (including those associated with sports and educational institutions) and groups of farm and agriculture-related buildings where they are not wholly surrounded by other built development.</p> <p>Sources:</p> <p>(as existing)</p>
<p>MM 4</p>	<p>POLICY SC2: HOUSING PROVISION</p> <p>Assumptions</p> <p>p.22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That directing the majority of new development in approximate proportion to the relative level of services provided at the District’s main service centres will maximise their sustainability in terms of the range and quality of facilities available for the community and minimising longer trips from the area to centres elsewhere should local facilities be lost.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The housing provision figure for the West Somerset LPA area includes a specific allowance of 450 dwellings which arises from the likely impact on the local housing market of the Hinkley Point C project. This requirement would not arise in the event the new nuclear power station was not constructed.
	<p>Justification including any references p. 22 - 23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ c.80% of completions are consistently provided at Minehead/Alcombe Watchet and Williton, this level of provision (at approximately the annual rate now proposed on the basis of the SHMA's evidence) has proved remarkably successful in maintaining Minehead/Alcombe as the main service centre with a good range of service provision for a town of its scale, and Watchet and Williton as two successful secondary service centres. ○ Village services have fared less well, with closures of village shops and post offices a particular issue. The population of rural West Somerset is relatively small and is thinly scattered in small settlements and farms. It is therefore appropriate to encourage limited development within villages subject to appropriate location and scale. ○ The NPPF requires that the Councils should meet the full objectively identified assessed need for housing (OAHN). which was c3800 at the time of the 2008 Northern Peninsula SHMA, and is c.2400 in the updated study rather than the 2500 dwellings that were required by the draft RSS at the time the Core Strategy was commenced. In the light of these variations it is considered appropriate to provide for c2900 dwellings over the period to 2032 to take account of cyclical fluctuations within the operation of the housing market that these differing values represent. In the case of the West Somerset Local Planning Authority area, a significant proportion of the housing need arises from the likely impacts on the local housing market of the Hinkley Point C project. As such it is appropriate for this to be reflected accordingly when assessing the amount of new housing which should be delivered over the Plan Period. ○ In terms of distribution, it is anticipated that new housing within the Local Plan area will be delivered at an average annualised rate of 145 dwellings per year over the whole of the plan-period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Of these the strategic sites will provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An annualised average of 38 dwellings per year at Minehead/ Alcombe, ▪ An annualised average of 15 dwellings per year at Watchet, ▪ An annualised average of 21 dwellings per year at Williton, ▪ In addition to the key strategic sites, provision will be made for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An annualised average of 43 dwellings per year through other development at Minehead/Alcombe, Watchet and Williton, and; ▪ An annualised average of 30 dwellings per year will be provided at the Primary and Secondary Villages. ▪ It should be noted that housing delivery in the Local Plan area has consistently provided an average of about 125 120 completions annually over the last 35 40 years. Windfalls have formed a major part of these completions. ▪ Due to the long period of construction of the proposed new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point and the

		<p>variable rate of people employed on site during this, it is anticipated that the impact on the local housing market will take a while to create its own demand. In order to account for this in estimating an average future delivery-rate, a two-step approach has been adopted to reflect this, comprising;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For the first six years from 2012/13 to 2017/18, an average delivery rate of 122 dwellings per annum, and ▪ For the remaining fourteen years from 2018/19 to 2031/32, an average delivery rate of 155 dwellings per annum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The small scale of development proposals and opportunities within West Somerset's major communities, and their distance from the M5 corridor have combined to reduce the level of interest in the area by major housebuilders. ▪ The limited range of employment opportunities in West Somerset (and their generally low wage levels) has had the effect of reducing the demand for open market housing within its main communities where development is acceptable in principle. (However, the market for characterful houses of comparatively high value in more remote rural locations remains strong.) ▪ Much of the assessed need is for affordable housing, the delivery of which is only likely to be viable if provided through planning agreements or cross subsidy by market housing. <p>Definition:</p> <p><u>Annualised average</u> = average rate of development for each year derived from the relevant total amount divided by the plan period (20 years).</p> <p><i>NB: This should not be interpreted as an annual absolute, rationing development.</i></p> <p>Sources:</p> <p><i>(as existing)</i></p>
<p>MM 5</p>	<p>POLICY SC3: APPROPRIATE MIX OF HOUSING TYPES AND TENURES</p> <p>Justification including any references</p> <p>pp. 24 - 26</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) include information about the demographic breakdown of the area's population. New housing to be provided in the area should most appropriately reflect the range of people who are likely to inhabit the various parts of the area. This should be assessed within the constraints of the available data. ○ The West Somerset SHMA Update 2013 provides an assessment of the future type (as determined by number of bedrooms) and tenure required to meet the future housing need. Development proposals would need to demonstrate their contribution to meeting these needs unless, more up-to-date, localised housing assessments can demonstrate otherwise.

Projected net housing requirements for West Somerset 2011-2031, without backlog

Tenure	Sector	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total No.	Total %
Affordable	Social Rent	588	74	593	-4	1,251	52.16
	Affordable Rent	111	14	112	-1	236	9.86
Intermediate	Shared Ownership	198	25	200	-1	421	17.57
Market	Private Rent	32	4	32	0	68	2.84
	Owner Occupier	198	25	200	-1	421	17.57
Total no.	All sectors	1,127	142	1,136	-8	2,398	100.00
Total %	All sectors	46.99	5.94	47.40	0.33		100.00

Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment: West Somerset Update – Final Report, November 2013

As part of the future housing requirements in the LPA area, it is calculated that there will be a specific need for 351 units (14.64%) of specialised housing for older households

Sources:

Department for Communities and Local Government; National Planning Policy Framework – March 2012; Department for Communities and Local Government; 2012; ISBN 978 1 4098 3413 7

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Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment: West Somerset Update - Draft Final Report, April November 2013; **West Somerset Council; 2013.**

<p>MM 6</p>	<p>POLICY MD1: MINEHEAD DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>p.32</p>	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AT MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE, MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE SETTLEMENT'S ROLE AS THE MAIN SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT CENTRE IN WEST SOMERSET, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF THE DIVERSITY AND QUALITY OF ITS HISTORIC AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AND; • SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE TO MINIMISE THE IMPACT ON THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE URBAN AREA; • MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE ITS ATTRACTIVENESS AS A TOURIST DESTINATION, AND; <p>WHERE APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS MUST ALSO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS RESOLVING THE FLOOD RISK ISSUES WHICH AFFECT THE SETTLEMENT INCLUDING IMPROVING THE SEA DEFENCES PROTECTING THE EASTERN END OF THE TOWN, • GIVE APPROPRIATE TREATMENT TO THE TOWN'S SURROUNDINGS IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL DESIGNATIONS INCLUDING THE EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK.
<p>MM 7</p>	<p>POLICY MD2: KEY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATION AT MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE</p> <p>pp.34 - 35</p>	<p>WITHIN THE AREA IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS POLICIES MAP SOUTH OF THE A39, HOPCOTT ROAD, MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE A MIXED DEVELOPMENT WILL BE DELIVERED SUBJECT TO AN INDICATIVE MASTERPLAN INCORPORATING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPROXIMATELY 750 DWELLINGS, • A DISTRIBUTOR ROAD THROUGH THE SITE LINKING THE DEVELOPMENT TO THE A39 AT TWO POINTS, ONE CLOSE TO EACH END OF THE SITE, • PROVIDE SPACE FOR THE FUTURE LINKAGE OF THE DISTRIBUTOR ROAD TO THE LT1 SITE TO THE WEST, AND; • A MINIMUM OF 3 HECTARES OF APPROPRIATE AND COMPATIBLE, NON-RESIDENTIAL USES. • MEASURES TO PREVENT HARM TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORIC ASSETS OF THE LATE 19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY VILLAS ON HOPCOTT ROAD/PERITON ROAD; LOWER HOPCOTT; PERITON & PERITON COTTAGES; GRADE II LISTED BUILDINGS AND HIGHER HOPCOTT, AND; • WHICH PROVIDES AN APPROPRIATE DESIGN RESPONSE TO THE SITE'S PROXIMITY TO THE EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK <p>THE DEVELOPMENT MUST BE FACILITATED BY THE APPROPRIATE INTEGRATED PROVISION OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY AND FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE.</p>
<p>MM 8</p>	<p>POLICY WA1: WATCHET DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>p.37</p>	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AT WATCHET, MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE SETTLEMENT'S ROLE AS A LOCAL SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT CENTRE FOR THE NORTH EASTERN PART OF WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF ITS SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AND • MAINTAIN SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE THE ATTRACTIVENESS

		<p>OF THE HISTORIC CHARACTER AND HERITAGE ASSETS AS A TOURIST DESTINATION, INCLUDING THE OPERATION OF THE MARINA. ITS ATTRACTIVENESS AS A TOURIST DESTINATION AND THE OPERATION OF ITS MARINA.</p> <p>WHERE APPROPRIATE, DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS MUST ALSO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS RESOLVING THE FLOOD RISK ISSUES WHICH AFFECT THE SETTLEMENT, • ALLOW FOR POTENTIAL REALIGNMENT OF THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY WHICH MAY BE NECESSITATED BY COASTAL EROSION, • IMPROVE LINKAGES BETWEEN THE TOWN CENTRE AND THE PARTS OF THE TOWN TO THE SOUTH OF THE RAILWAY, • PROVIDE ADDITIONAL ALLOTMENTS FOR THE TOWN, AND; <p>COMPLEMENT THE PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN NEIGHBOURING WILLITON.</p>
<p>MM 9</p>	<p>POLICY WA2: STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATION AT PARSONAGE FARM, WATCHET p.39</p>	<p>WITHIN THE AREA IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS POLICIES MAP AT PARSONAGE FARM, WATCHET, A MIXED DEVELOPMENT WILL BE DELIVERED INCLUDING SUBJECT TO AN INDICATIVE MASTERPLAN INCORPORATING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPROXIMATELY 290 DWELLINGS, • APPROXIMATELY 3 HECTARES OF APPROPRIATE AND COMPATIBLE, NON-RESIDENTIAL USES AT THE FARM BUILDING COMPLEX, AND; • MEASURES TO PREVENT HARM TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORIC ASSETS AT PARSONAGE FARM, GRADE II LISTED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SETTINGS, AND; • PROVIDE ADDITIONAL ALLOTMENTS <p>THE DEVELOPMENT MUST BE FACILITATED BY THE APPROPRIATE INTEGRATED PROVISION OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY AND FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE TO INCLUDE WALKING AND CYCLING LINKS CONNECTING THE NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH THE TOWN CENTRE.</p>
<p>MM 10</p>	<p>POLICY WI2: KEY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATIONS AT WILLITON pp. 42 - 43</p>	<p>WITHIN THE AREAS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS POLICIES MAP TO THE WEST AND NORTH OF WILLITON, MIXED DEVELOPMENT WILL BE DELIVERED SUBJECT TO AN INDICATIVE MASTER-PLAN INCORPORATING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPROXIMATELY 406 DWELLINGS, AND; • APPROXIMATELY 3 HECTARES OF APPROPRIATE AND COMPATIBLE, NON-RESIDENTIAL USES, AND; • ENHANCEMENT OF THE DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET BATTLEGORE BARROW CEMETERY AND ITS SETTING SHOULD TAKE PLACE. THE SITE SHOULD BE ENHANCED TO ENSURE ITS USE AS A COMMUNAL ASSET AND CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THE COMMUNITY. THIS SHOULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH LANDSCAPING, PUBLIC ACCESS, APPROPRIATE USE OF THE SITE AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN AGREED WITH HISTORIC ENGLAND. <p>THE DEVELOPMENT MUST BE FACILITATED BY THE</p>

		<p>APPROPRIATE INTEGRATED PROVISION OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY ¹¹⁷ AND FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE TO INCLUDE WALKING AND CYCLING LINKS CONNECTING THE NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH THE VILLAGE CENTRE. IT MUST ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET BATTLEGORE BARROW CEMETERY AND ITS SETTING THROUGH LANDSCAPING, LAND USE CHANGE AND SITE MANAGEMENT REGIME.</p>
MM 11	<p>POLICY LT1: POST 2026 KEY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES.</p> <p>P. 45</p>	<p>WITHIN THE TWO AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR LONGER TERM STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ON THE PROPOSALS POLICIES MAP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TO THE SOUTH OF PERITON ROAD, MINEHEAD FOR WHICH ACCESS WOULD BE VIA A DISTRIBUTOR ROAD THROUGH THE SITE LINKING THE DISTRIBUTOR ROAD FOR THE MD2 SITE WITH THE SITE'S A39 FRONTAGE AND; • TO THE WEST OF WATCHET AT CLEEVE HILL, WHERE DEVELOPMENT MUST CONTRIBUTE TO ENHANCING THE UNIQUE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE TOWN INCLUDING MITIGATING THE EROSION OF DAW'S CASTLE AND ENCOURAGING VISITORS TO THE MONUMENT THROUGH FUNDING EXCAVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENT OF SITE MANAGEMENT, AND ALSO TO PROVIDING A NEW ALIGNMENT FOR THE B3191 TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF COASTAL EROSION, • PROPOSALS FOR THE WATCHET SITE MUST SUSTAIN AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, ENHANCE THE HISTORIC ASSETS OF DAW'S CASTLE AND THE ADJACENT LIME KILNS AND THEIR SETTINGS. • DEVELOPMENT OF BOTH OF THESE SITES WOULD BE GUIDED BY THE PROVISION OF INDICATIVE MASTERPLANS. • IN RESPECT OF THE MINEHEAD LONG TERM SITE, THE MASTERPLAN SHOULD PROVIDE FOR AN APPROPRIATE DESIGN RESPONSE TO THE SITE'S PROXIMITY TO THE EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK. • THE MASTERPLAN FOR THE WATCHET LONG TERM SITE SHOULD INCLUDE THE USE OF SOFT LANDSCAPING, GREEN SPACES AND SYMPATHETIC DESIGN IN TERMS OF APPEARANCE TO MITIGATE HARM. <p>PROVISION IS MADE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE LATTER PART OF THE PLAN PERIOD POST 2026.</p>
MM 12	<p>POLICY OC1: OPEN COUNTRYSIDE DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>pp. 48 - 49</p>	<p>THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE INCLUDES ALL LAND OUTSIDE OF EXISTING SETTLEMENTS, WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS NOT GENERALLY APPROPRIATE. IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DEVELOPMENT MAY BE PERMITTED WHERE THIS IS BENEFICIAL FOR THE COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ECONOMY.</p> <p>RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE (LAND NOT ADJACENT OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE MAJOR SETTLEMENTS, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY VILLAGES) WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUCH A LOCATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR A RURAL WORKER ENGAGED IN E.G.: AGRICULTURAL, EQUESTRIAN, FORESTRY, HORTICULTURE OR, HUNTING EMPLOYMENT, OR;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT IS PROVIDED THROUGH THE CONVERSION OF EXISTING, TRADITIONALLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDINGS IN ASSOCIATION WITH EMPLOYMENT OR TOURISM PURPOSES AS PART OF A WORK / LIVE DEVELOPMENT, OR; • IT IS NEW-BUILD TO BENEFIT EXISTING EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN THE AREA THAT COULD NOT BE EASILY ACCOMMODATED WITHIN OR ADJOINING A NEARBY SETTLEMENT IDENTIFIED IN POLICY SC1, OR; • IT MEETS AN ONGOING IDENTIFIED LOCAL NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE NEARBY SETTLEMENT WHICH CANNOT BE MET WITHIN OR CLOSER TO THE SETTLEMENT, OR; • IT IS AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING EXCEPTIONS SCHEME ADJACENT TO, OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO, A SETTLEMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE PERMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY SC4(5). <p>APPLICATIONS FOR DWELLINGS UNDER THIS POLICY THAT WOULD NOT BE LOCATED IN A SETTLEMENT IDENTIFIED IN POLICY SC1 OR ANY OTHER SETTLEMENT, WOULD BE CONSIDERED SUBJECT TO A FUNCTIONAL AND FINANCIAL ECONOMIC TEST. WHERE PERMISSION IS GRANTED CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO THIS BEING INITIALLY MADE ON A TEMPORARY BASIS.</p>
MM 13	POLICY EC1: WIDENING AND STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL ECONOMY p.51	<p>PROPOSALS WHICH WILL MAKE THE WEST SOMERSET ECONOMY STRONGER AND MORE DIVERSE AND THAT ARE LIKELY TO INCREASE THE PROPORTION OF HIGHER PAID JOBS LOCALLY WILL BE SUPPORTED.</p> <p>NEW DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT AND, CONVERSION PROPOSALS FOR ALL TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT GENERATING ACTIVITIES WILL BE ENCOURAGED AND DIRECTED TO EXISTING AND EXTANT PREMISES AND SITES FOR SIMILAR AND COMPATIBLE USES AND WOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE AMENITY OF EXISTING NEIGHBOURING LAND USES.</p> <p>WHERE POSSIBLE, SUCH PROPOSALS SHOULD MAKE USE OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES, OR OF SITES WITH SIMILAR AND COMPATIBLE USES WHERE THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED WOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE AMENITY OF EXISTING NEIGHBOURING USES.</p>
MM 14	POLICY EC2: <u>MAJOR</u> EMPLOYMENT SITES LAND p.52	<p>THE EMPLOYMENT SITES AT MART ROAD, MINEHEAD AND ROUGHMOOR, WILLITON ARE IS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS POLICIES MAP. WITHIN THESE THIS SITES THERE WILL BE A GENERAL PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF USES IN THE B1, B2 AND B8 USE CLASSES.</p> <p>EMPLOYMENT AND SERVICE BASED LAND USES FALLING OUTSIDE THESE USE CLASSES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THESE CAN BE DEMONSTRATED TO MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE OVERALL VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY.</p>
MM 15	POLICY EC6: WORK/LIVE DEVELOPMENTS p.57	<p>PROPOSALS FOR WORK/LIVE DEVELOPMENTS THROUGH NEW BUILD OR CONVERSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS WILL BE SUPPORTED WHERE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE EMPLOYMENT ELEMENT WITHIN EACH UNIT FORMS AND REMAINS A MAJORITY OF THE GROSS FLOORSPACE OF

		<p>EACH UNIT, 119</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE EMPLOYMENT AND RESIDENTIAL ELEMENTS ARE INTEGRATED WITH ONE ANOTHER AND CANNOT BE SEPARATED OR SOLD OFF AS SEPARATE UNITS AND ACTIVITIES AT A SUBSEQUENT POINT IN TIME, • THERE WOULD BE NO ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT PROVISION WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT OR IN NEIGHBOURING SETTLEMENTS, AND; • THERE IS NO GENERATION OF SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS TO AND FROM THE PREMISES AS A RESULT OF THE NEW BUSINESS ACTIVITY. <p>NEW-BUILD WORK/LIVE UNITS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE NEED TO BE IN SUCH A LOCATION IS ESSENTIAL TO THE BUSINESS ACTIVITY AND IT CANNOT BE PROVIDED ELSEWHERE.</p>
<p>MM 16</p>	<p>POLICY CF1: MAXIMISING ACCESS TO HEALTH, SPORT, RECREATIONAL AND, CULTURAL FACILITIES p.67</p>	<p>THE PROVISION OF NEW, AND IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING, HEALTH, SPORT, RECREATION AND CULTURAL FACILITIES WILL BE SUPPORTED, WHERE THIS HELPS TO STRENGTHEN AND OR ENHANCE A BALANCED RANGE OF PROVISION FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND VISITING TOURISTS.</p> <p>THE UNNECESSARY LOSS OF VALUED SERVICES AND FACILITIES SHOULD BE PREVENTED, PARTICULARLY WHERE THIS WOULD REDUCE THE COMMUNITY'S ABILITY TO MEET ITS DAY TO DAY NEEDS.</p> <p>WHERE A DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF RECREATIONAL SUCH FACILITIES, EQUIVALENT OR GREATER REPLACEMENT FACILITIES SERVING THE SAME AREA MUST BE PROVIDED AS PART OF THE PROPOSALS.</p> <p>THE APPROPRIATE PROVISION OF FORMAL SPORTS FACILITIES AND/OR INFORMAL PUBLIC AMENITY OPEN SPACE/PLAY SPACE WILL BE REQUIRED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF NEW DEVELOPMENT.</p>
<p>MM 17</p>	<p>POLICY CC1: CARBON REDUCTION = SMALL SCALE NON-WIND ENERGY GENERATING SCHEMES pp.69 – 70</p>	<p>SMALL SCALE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LOW OR ZERO CARBON ECONOMY WILL BE SUPPORTED.</p> <p>SUCH PROPOSALS MAY INCLUDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOODFUEL OR OTHER RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES, AND PROVISION OF LOW ENERGY SYSTEMS TO SERVE NEW AND EXISTING DEVELOPMENT.</p> <p>ENERGY GENERATING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS (OTHER THAN THOSE FOR WIND TURBINES) WILL BE SUPPORTED WHERE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THEY RESPECT THE LOCAL NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY ARE LOCATED; • THEY RESPECT THE LOCAL HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ANY DESIGNATED AND IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN AND NEIGHBOURING IT; AND, • THEY RESPECT THE POSITIVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITIES AFFECTED ESPECIALLY THOSE NEIGHBOURING THEM; AND,

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADEQUATE ¹²⁰ MEASURES ARE TAKEN TO MITIGATE THE CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF ANY RELATED DEVELOPMENT ON THE COMMUNITIES AFFECTED, BOTH IN THE SHORT AND THE LONGER TERM.
MM 18	POLICY CC2: FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT p.72	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD BE LOCATED AND DESIGNED SO AS TO MITIGATE AGAINST, AND TO AVOID INCREASED FLOOD RISK TO NEW AND EXISTING DEVELOPMENT ELSEWHERE, WHILST HELPING TO PROVIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT SEQUENTIAL TEST, AND WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE APPLICATION OF THE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT EXCEPTION TEST.</p> <p>DEVELOPMENT MUST BE DESIGNED TO MITIGATE ANY ADVERSE FLOODING IMPACT WHICH WOULD ARISE FROM ITS IMPLEMENTATION, AND WHERE POSSIBLE SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE RESOLUTION OF EXISTING FLOODING ISSUES.</p>
MM 19	POLICY CC6: WATER MANAGEMENT p.76	<p>DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE AVAILABILITY AND USE OF EXISTING WATER RESOURCES; • THE EXISTING WATER TABLE LEVEL • ACCESSIBILITY TO EXISTING WATERCOURSES FOR MAINTENANCE AND, • AREAS AT CUMULATIVE RISK OF FLOODING BY TIDAL, FLUVIAL AND/OR SURFACE WATER RUN-OFF <p>WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF ADEQUATE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MEASURES ARE INCORPORATED THAT PROVIDE SUITABLE PROTECTION AND MITIGATION BOTH ON-SITE AND THROUGH DISPLACEMENT TO ADJOINING LAND.</p>
MM 20	POLICY NH1: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT pp. 77 - 78	<p>PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD SAFEGUARD AND/OR ENHANCE THE BUILT AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF THE DISTRICT WHILST CONTRIBUTING APPROPRIATELY TO THE REGENERATION OF THE DISTRICT'S COMMUNITIES.</p> <p>PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD SUSTAIN AND/OR ENHANCE THE HISTORIC RURAL URBAN AND COASTAL HERITAGE OF THE DISTRICT WHILST CONTRIBUTING APPROPRIATELY TO THE REGENERATION OF THE DISTRICT'S COMMUNITIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE ELEMENTS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE AREAS DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER AND SENSE OF PLACE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PROPOSALS WILL BE SUPPORTED WHERE THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE ASSETS AND THEIR SETTINGS ARE SUSTAINED AND/OR ENHANCED IN LINE WITH THEIR INTEREST AND SIGNIFICANCE. PLANNING DECISIONS WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE CONTRIBUTION HERITAGE ASSETS CAN HAVE TO THE DELIVERY OF WIDER SOCIAL, CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES. 2. ELEMENTS OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT WHICH CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE UNIQUE IDENTITY OF AREAS

		AND HELP ¹²¹ CREATE A SENSE OF PLACE WILL BE SUSTAINED AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, ENHANCED.
MM 21	POLICY NH1x: MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS (NEW) pp. 80 - 83	DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT; A. ARE LIKELY TO AFFECT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A HERITAGE ASSET, INCLUDING THE CONTRIBUTION MADE TO ITS SETTING SHOULD DEMONSTRATE AN APPROPRIATELY EVIDENCED UNDERSTANDING OF THE SIGNIFICANCE IN SUFFICIENT DETAIL TO ALLOW THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO BE ADEQUATELY ASSESSED. B. DEMONSTRATE A SYMPATHETIC AND CREATIVE RE-USE AND ADAPTATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS WILL BE ENCOURAGED. C. AFFECT A CONSERVATION AREA SHOULD PRESERVE OR ENHANCE ITS CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE, ESPECIALLY THOSE ELEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN ANY CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL. D. WILL HELP TO SECURE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR WEST SOMERSET'S HERITAGE ASSETS, ESPECIALLY THOSE IDENTIFIED AS BEING AT GREATEST RISK OF LOSS OR DECAY, WILL BE SUPPORTED. E. RESULT IN AN AGREED MATERIAL CHANGE TO A HERITAGE ASSET SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY RECORDING AND INTERPRETATION, UNDERTAKEN IN ORDER TO DOCUMENT AND UNDERSTAND THE ASSET'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, ARTISTIC AND/OR HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE WITH THE SCOPE OF THE RECORDING BEING PROPORTIONATE TO THE ASSET'S SIGNIFICANCE AND THE IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT UPON IT. THE INFORMATION SHOULD BE MADE PUBLICALLY AVAILABLE THROUGH THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD
	Purpose p.81	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To conserve and enhance the built and historic environment and the heritage assets that comprise it, in such a way that they continue to contribute positively to the communities' sense of identity and their attractiveness for residents and visitors.
	Assumptions p.81	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That the heritage assets and the historic landscape features are a finite and irreplaceable resource of immense cultural value at both the national and local level. ○ These heritage assets contribute to the local historic environment and play an important role in giving the area its distinctive character and its cultural identity. ○ They have a significant economic value in terms of helping to attract tourists to the area. ○ A definition of items qualifying as heritage assets is provided in the Glossary of the NPPF. Designated heritage assets can include Listed Buildings, buildings within Conservation Areas and, structures identified on a Historic Environment Record held by South West Heritage Trust.
	Justification including any references pp.81 - 83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The heritage assets that comprise the historic environment of West Somerset contribute, along with the local landscape in making the area an attractive place to live and visit. ○ The heritage assets that make up the local historic environment of the area are unique and irreplaceable. Their cultural importance forming an essential part of the area's identity and sense of place.

- The historic environment and its heritage assets components are also of considerable economic importance within the area, because of the contribution they make to the area's attractiveness.
- Well designed and sited development proposals can protect and enhance the historic environment and its heritage assets, conversely, poorly designed or located development can result in significant damage to, or loss of, heritage assets. It is therefore essential to ensure that heritage assets are properly considered when making development management decisions and in the consideration and design of development schemes. Development proposals affecting the historic environment and its heritage asset components would also need to take account of the relevant provisions in Policies NH1, NH1A and/or, NH1B as appropriate.
- Where a development proposal is likely to affect the significance of a heritage asset and its setting, the understanding of the significance the proposed change and the justification for it. This should be informed by available evidence, desk-based evaluations and, where appropriate, further site investigation to establish the significance of both known and/or any potential heritage assets that might be affected.
- Where a development proposal affects a heritage asset in such a way that it the existing format is likely to be changed, irretrievably lost or, hidden, it is necessary to ensure that a complete record and associated interpretation of it is made before such works commence. The information and understanding gained through this recording process should be made publicly available through an appropriate update of any existing Historical Environment Record (HER) or creation of a new record as a minimum. Also, where appropriate, at the asset itself through on-site interpretation.
- A variety of approaches will be used to assist in the protection and enjoyment of the historic environment including:
 - the use of appraisals and management plans of existing and potential conservation areas
 - taking opportunities for removing assets from the at risk register,
 - considering the use of article 4 directions,
 - working with partners, owners and developers to identify ways to positively manage and make better use of historic assets,
 - considering improvements to the public realm and the setting of heritage assets within it,
 - ensuring that information about the significance of the historic environment is publicly available,
 - where there is a loss in whole or in part to the significance of an identified historic asset then evidence should be recorded of its importance, and;
 - considering the need for the preparation of local evidence or plans.

Particular attention will be given to heritage assets at risk of harm or loss of significance, or where a number of heritage assets have significance as a group or give context to a wider area.
- The local planning authority will monitor buildings or other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other

		<p>threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk through discussions with owners and a willingness to consider positively, development schemes that would ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset and, as a last resort, using its statutory powers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prior to submission of any development proposals, it is advised that the Somerset Historic Environment Record (Somerset HER) facility held by South West Heritage Trust is consulted in order to establish whether any important national, regional or local heritage assets and/or their setting could be affected by it. <p>Sources:</p> <p>Department for Communities and Local Government; <u>National Planning Policy Framework – March 2012</u>; Department for Communities and Local Government; 2012; ISBN 978 1 4098 3413 7</p> <p>Department of Communities and Local Government; <u>National Planning Policy Framework – National Planning Practice Guidance (as amended)</u>; Department for Communities and Local Government Planning Portal (web-site http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/); 2014.</p> <p>H.M. Government; <u>Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Chapter 9 (as amended)</u>; HMSO; 1990; ISBN 0 10 540990 1</p> <p>H.M. Government; <u>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979</u>; HMSO; 1979; ISBN 0 10 544679 7</p> <p>English Heritage; <u>Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England (as amended)</u>; English Heritage; 2004.</p> <p>Somerset County Council; <u>County Sites and Monuments Record (as amended)</u>; Somerset County Council; 1979</p> <p>West Somerset District Council; <u>West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006</u>; West Somerset District Council; 2008.</p> <p>Somerset County Council; <u>Somerset Historic Environment Records (HERS)</u>; Somerset County Council; 1984 (data-set).</p> <p>Historic England; <u>Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Designation, Appraisal and Management – February 2016</u>; Historic England; 2016</p> <p>Historic England; <u>Historic England Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets – February 2016</u>; Historic England; 2016.</p> <p>Historic England; <u>Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans – October 2015</u>; Historic England; 2015</p> <p>English Heritage; <u>Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans – March 2015 (GPA 1)</u>; Historic England; 2015.</p> <p>English Heritage; <u>Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment – March 2015 (GPA 2)</u>; Historic England; 2015.</p> <p>English Heritage; <u>Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets – March 2015 (GPA 3)</u>; Historic England; 2015.</p> <p>Wessex Archaeology Ltd.; <u>Parsonage Farmhouse, Parsonage Farm, Watchet, Somerset: Heritage Assessment – August 2015</u>; West Somerset Council; 2015.</p>
MM 22	POLICY NH3: NATURE CONSERVATION AND THE PROTECTION AND	<p>PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT WILL BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE APPLICATION DEMONSTRATING THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT GENERATE UNACCEPTABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS ON BIODIVERSITY; • MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO PROTECT OR MITIGATE TO

	<p>ENHANCEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY p.86</p>	<p>ACCEPTABLE LEVELS (OR, AS A LAST RESORT, PROPORTIONATELY COMPENSATE FOR) ADVERSE IMPACTS ON BIODIVERSITY. MEASURES SHALL ENSURE A NET GAIN IN BIODIVERSITY WHERE POSSIBLE. THE SOMERSET 'HABITAT EVALUATION PROCEDURE' WILL BE USED IN CALCULATING THE VALUE OF A SITE TO SPECIES AFFECTED BY A PROPOSAL AS APPROPRIATE. WHERE THE CONSERVATION VALUE OF THE HABITAT IS TO BE REPLACED REPLACEABLE, MITIGATION TECHNIQUES NEED TO BE PROVEN;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE COUNCIL WILL USE THE LOCAL PLANNING PROCESS WILL BE USED TO PROTECT, ENHANCE AND RESTORE THE ECOLOGICAL NETWORK WITHIN WEST SOMERSET. THE WEIGHT OF PROTECTION AFFORDED TO A SITE THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE DISTRICT'S BIODIVERSITY WILL REFLECT ITS ROLE IN MAINTAINING CONNECTIVITY AND RESILIENCE OF THE LOCAL ECOLOGICAL NETWORK; AND • A 'HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT' WILL BE REQUIRED FOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECTS EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONALLY DESIGNATED SITES AND FOR AREAS THAT ECOLOGICALLY SUPPORT THE INTEGRITY OF THESE SITES.
<p>MM 23</p>	<p>POLICY NH4: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE p.88</p>	<p>THE CREATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK WILL BE SUPPORTED. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD BE USED TO HELP PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE HERITAGE ASSETS OF THE AREA.</p>
<p>MM 24</p>	<p>POLICY NH5: PROTECTION OF BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND (REPLACEMENT POLICY) pp.90 - 91</p>	<p>SUBJECT TO A MINIMUM THRESHOLD OF 10 HECTARES THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND (GRADES 1, 2 AND 3A) WILL BE PROTECTED FROM SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS. PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING SUCH LAND WILL ONLY BE GRANTED EXCEPTIONALLY IF THE PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OUTWEIGHS THE NEED TO PROTECT IT AND EITHER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUFFICIENT LAND OF A LOWER GRADE (GRADES 3B, 4 AND 5) IS UNAVAILABLE IN AN APPROPRIATE LOCATION TO PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT; OR • AVAILABLE LOWER GRADE LAND HAS AN ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE RECOGNISED BY A STATUTORY OR NON-STATUTORY WILDLIFE, HISTORIC OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESIGNATION WHICH OUTWEIGHS THE AGRICULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS. • IF BEST AND MOST VERSATILE LAND NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED AND THERE IS A CHOICE BETWEEN SITES IN DIFFERENT GRADES, LAND OF THE LOWEST GRADE AVAILABLE SHOULD BE USED. <p>THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND (GRADES 1, 2 AND 3A) WILL BE PROTECTED FROM SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS. PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING SUCH LAND WILL ONLY BE GRANTED EXCEPTIONALLY IF THE PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OUTWEIGHS THE NEED TO PROTECT IT AND EITHER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUFFICIENT LAND OF A LOWER GRADE (GRADES 3B, 4 AND 5) IS UNAVAILABLE IN AN APPROPRIATE LOCATION TO PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT; OR

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVAILABLE¹²⁵ LOWER GRADE LAND HAS AN ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE RECOGNISED BY A STATUTORY OR NON-STATUTORY WILDLIFE, HISTORIC OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESIGNATION WHICH OUTWEIGHS THE AGRICULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS. <p>IF BEST AND MOST VERSATILE LAND NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED AND THERE IS A CHOICE BETWEEN SITES IN DIFFERENT GRADES, LAND OF THE LOWEST GRADE AVAILABLE SHOULD BE USED.</p>						
<p>MM 25</p>	<p>POLICY NH7: DEVELOPMENT IN PROXIMITY TO HINKLEY POINT NUCLEAR POWER STATION (NEW) pp.92 - 93</p>	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN THE CONSULTATION ZONES WILL BE CONSIDERED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION (ONR), HAVING REGARD TO THE SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED, ITS LOCATION, POPULATION DISTRIBUTION OF THE AREA AND THE IMPACT ON PUBLIC SAFETY, TO INCLUDE HOW THE PROPOSAL WOULD IMPACT ON LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS AND OTHER PLANNING CRITERIA.</p> <p>CONSULTATION ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN WITH ONR ON THE BASIS OF THE TABLE BELOW:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ZONE</th> <th>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>INNER</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN RESIDENTIAL OR NON-RESIDENTIAL POPULATIONS THUS IMPACTING ON THE EMERGENCY PLAN. • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD CAUSE AN EXTERNAL HAZARD TO THE SITE. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>OUTER</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION THAT WILL LEAD TO A MATERIAL INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT, WHICH IS OTHERWISE LIKELY TO IMPACT ON THE OFF-SITE EMERGENCY PLAN • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION THAT WILL LEAD TO A MATERIAL INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE EXTENDIBILITY OF COUNTERMEASURES BEYOND THE DEPZ. • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD POSE AN EXTERNAL HAZARD TO THE SITE. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ZONE	DEVELOPMENT TYPE	INNER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN RESIDENTIAL OR NON-RESIDENTIAL POPULATIONS THUS IMPACTING ON THE EMERGENCY PLAN. • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD CAUSE AN EXTERNAL HAZARD TO THE SITE. 	OUTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION THAT WILL LEAD TO A MATERIAL INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT, WHICH IS OTHERWISE LIKELY TO IMPACT ON THE OFF-SITE EMERGENCY PLAN • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION THAT WILL LEAD TO A MATERIAL INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE EXTENDIBILITY OF COUNTERMEASURES BEYOND THE DEPZ. • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD POSE AN EXTERNAL HAZARD TO THE SITE.
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	<p>Purpose p.93</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To consider the impact of any increase in population within the areas close to Hinkley Point Power Station. 						
	<p>Assumptions p.93</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As part of managing the (very small) risk of accident involving the release of radiological material it is prudent to consider increases in population living or having other business within close proximity of nuclear sites. 						

	<p>Justification including any references</p> <p>pp.93 - 94</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation zones are those identified by ONR and shown on the map in Appendix X (potential applicants are advised to contact ONR in respect of any changes to the extent of the zones shown on the map). • ONR provide guidance on Land Use Planning in close proximity to Nuclear Installations (www.onr.uk/land-use-planning.htm). This provides advice about the need for consultations about proposed developments in the vicinity of licensed nuclear installations. • Consultation with ONR supports the Government's long-standing policy objective requiring appropriate control of development around licensed nuclear sites to limit the radiological consequences to the public in the unlikely event of an accident. • The policy is a measure of prudence over and above the stringent regulatory requirements placed upon nuclear operators by ONR. • ONR when consulted will provide advice to the Council which should be considered when making decisions on planning applications within the consultation zones. • All new residential developments within consultation zones around Hinkley Point Power Station will be monitored and reported to ONR on an annual basis. <p>Sources:</p> <p>Department of Energy and Climate Change; <u>National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN-6), Volume II of II: Annexes – July 2011</u>; Department of Energy and Climate Change; 2011; (p.266).</p> <p>Department for Communities and Local Government; <u>National Planning Policy Framework – March 2012</u>; Department for Communities and Local Government; 2012; ISBN 978 1 4098 3413 7; (paras. 172 & 194)</p> <p>Department for Communities and Local Government; <u>National Planning Policy Framework – National Planning Practice Guidance (as amended): Hazardous Substances</u>; Department for Communities and Local Government Planning Portal (web-site http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/); 2014;</p> <p>(Handling development proposals around hazardous installations, paras. O68, 075 & 078).</p>
<p>MM26</p>	<p>POLICY NH11: NATIONALLY DESIGNATED LANDSCAPE AREAS (NEW)</p> <p>pp.98 – 99</p>	<p>MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WITHIN THE QUANTOCK HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY WILL BE DETERMINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY.</p> <p>WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS LIKELY TO AFFECT THE QUANTOCK HILLS AONB OR EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK, REGARD WILL BE HAD TO THEIR STATUTORY PURPOSES.</p> <p>APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD HAVE REGARD TO LOCATION, SITING, ORIENTATION AND LANDSCAPING TO ACHIEVE HIGH QUALITY DESIGN AND TO ENSURE THAT THE PROPOSALS CONSERVE OR ENHANCE THE NATURAL BEAUTY, WILDLIFE, CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TRANQUILLITY OF THE AONB OR THE NATIONAL PARK AND THEIR SETTINGS. DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD CONFLICT WITH THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE STATUTORY PURPOSES OF THE AONB OR THE NATIONAL PARK, OR THEIR SETTINGS OR WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE UNDERSTANDING OR</p>

		ENJOYMENT OF THE NATIONAL PARK'S SPECIAL QUALITIES, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.
	Purpose p.99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To protect the high quality landscape characteristics of the Quantock Hills AONB within the West Somerset LPA area. ○ The policy provides for the appropriate consideration of protected landscapes when considering the design of development schemes. ○ The policy provides for the appropriate consideration of functional and design issues in locations outside but would impact on nationally designated areas and their associated landscape characteristics.
	Assumptions p.99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The care with which development is designed and sited in high quality designated rural landscapes makes a considerable difference to the positive or negative impact which it can have on the area and, on its setting. ○ Landscape impact can potentially be reduced through the careful design, location and, orientation of new development. ○ Small-scale development is not referred to directly in the context of protected landscapes. It follows that impact is generally likely to be lesser than that associated with major schemes but, nonetheless it is important to recognise that any impact should be minimised.
	Justification including any references pp.99 - 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nationally designated landscapes account for almost 75% of the West Somerset local authority area in the form of, Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and, Exmoor National Park (ENP). West Somerset Council is the LPA for the AONB but the development within the National Park is determined by its own separate LPA, the Exmoor National Park Authority. ○ The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located across three separate LPA's and there is a need for a general consistency in the planning policy approach to development within it. ○ Development in the areas outside of but surrounding/adjoining nationally designated landscape areas, can have an impact on the latter. It is an important contextual issue when dealing with development proposals within such areas and requires additional/ careful consideration as part of the development management process. ○ Where development proposals are made in locations surrounding/adjoining nationally designated landscape area, it will be assessed in the context of its impact on the designated area itself, not the setting. ○ The policy is not intended to prevent the principle of development within the AONB or, surrounding it or other nationally designated landscape areas. However, it does require that the character of such areas, should be treated as an important factor when designing and deciding on development proposals. ○ Where development is deemed to be necessary and acceptable, preference will be sought to ensure that the new-build can be successfully integrated with, either; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) adjoining existing structures whether as part of the built-form of a nearby settlement or, b) as part of a cluster of existing permanent buildings.

		<p>This is so as to minimise the impact of the new-build on the surrounding area and landscape and to avoid drawing attention to the structure as a feature in the landscape in its own right.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where development is considered to be necessary and acceptable, particular attention will be paid to the design taking account of; siting, scale, form, height, massing, detail and/or use of local materials as appropriate. <p>Definitions:</p> <p>Nationally designated landscapes – those designated by the Secretary of State through relevant primary and secondary legislation e.g. Designation Order, Statutory Instrument (S.I.).</p> <p>Major development – proposals for 10 or more dwellings and/or, large structures, whose intrusion on the local and surrounding landscape would be difficult to effectively mitigate through traditional screening and landscaping techniques without drawing attention to this, itself.</p> <p>Sources:</p> <p>Department for Communities and Local Government; <u>National Planning Policy Framework – March 2012</u>; Department for Communities and Local Government; 2012; ISBN 978 1 4098 3413 7 (paras. 115 and 116)</p> <p>Land Use Consultants and Swannick, C. (University of Sheffield); <u>Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland</u>; The Countryside Agency; 2002.</p> <p>Ministry of Housing and Local Government; <u>National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949: The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956</u>; Ministry of Housing and Local Government; 1957.</p> <p>H.M. Government; <u>National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949: Exmoor National Park (Designation) Order 1954 (HLG 92/176)</u>; HMSO; 1954.</p> <p>H.M. Government; Environment Act 1995, Chapter 5 (as amended); H.M.S.O.; 1995; ISBN 0 10 542595 8</p> <p>WS Atkins; <u>West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment</u>; West Somerset District Council, November 1999.</p> <p>The Countryside Agency; <u>The Quantock Hills Landscape: An Assessment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</u>; The Countryside Agency; 2003; ISBN 0 86170 617 X</p> <p>Quantock Hills AONB JAC; <u>Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Management Plan 2009-2014</u>; Quantock Hills JAC; 2009.</p>
<p>MM27</p>	<p>POLICY GT1: GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE POLICY (REPLACEMENT POLICY) pp.100 - 101</p>	<p>APPROPRIATE PROVISION WILL BE MADE TO MEET AN IDENTIFIED NEED FOR UP TO 10 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER PITCHES DURING THE PLAN PERIOD.</p> <p>PROVISION WILL BE MADE IN A LOCAL PLAN TO MEET AN IDENTIFIED NEED FOR UP TO 10 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER PITCHES DURING THE PLAN PERIOD. APPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION WILL BE DETERMINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL POLICY.</p>
<p>MM28</p>	<p>PROPOSALS MAP (title)</p>	<p>WEST SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN TO 2032 PROPOSALS MAP WEST SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN TO 2032 POLICIES MAP</p>

MM 29	Policy MD2: (p.34) Policy WA2: (p.39) Policy WI2: (p.42) Policy LT1: (p.44) Policy EC2: (p.52) Policy NH1A: (p.83) Policy NH8: (p.94) Policy NH9: (p.95)) 129))))) – Delete in policy wording; “PROPOSALS MAP” and,) – insert; “POLICIES MAP”)))))
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NB *The page numbers refer to the Post-Hearings version of the Local Plan, amended to incorporate the changes included in this table from the Publication version.*

WEST SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN TO 2032



ADOPTED - NOVEMBER 2016

Based on: Publication Draft WSLP to 2032 – post Council 21.1.15 – word version

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1.0	INTRODUCTION
1.1	<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>The Local Plan for West Somerset aims to help make West Somerset a better place to live in, go to school in, do business in, retire in and also where people can enjoy life. The Local Plan's policies, created with the involvement of the area's communities, will help to guide the sustainable development of the parts of West Somerset District outside the Exmoor National Park.</p> <p>In order to provide the housing and other development which the area needs to maintain thriving communities and economy the Local Plan's approach will be to find ways of saying 'yes' rather than 'no' to development unless the sustainability principles of the plan are compromised.</p>
1.2	<p><u>The legal requirement to prepare a Local Plan, and the change of the title of the document from 'Core Strategy' to 'Local Plan'.</u></p> <p>The Localism Act 2011¹ requires the Council to prepare a Local Plan, the associated Local Planning Regulations² set out how it must go about doing this. The Localism Act changed the previous title of "Core Strategy" to "Local Plan" accordingly all references to the Core Strategy apart from this explanatory paragraph, or references to documents from previous stages in the process, have been changed to "Local Plan". It must be stressed that the Council is continuing with the preparation of essentially the same document. Once adopted, the Local Plan will have powerful planning policies which form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area.</p> <p>The new West Somerset Local Plan covering the period from 2012 to 2032 should not be confused with the old West Somerset District Local Plan adopted in 2006,³ whose saved policies continue to have some influence on development as a material consideration where they do not conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework. The old plan, where referred to in this document will be known as the "saved West Somerset District Local Plan".</p>
1.3	<p><u>Localism, Neighbourhood Planning and the Local Plan</u></p> <p>The Local Plan's importance has increased with the passage of the Localism Act 2011⁴ and the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework, which have enabled the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies and all national housing targets as well as saved structure plan policies. This means that the Local Plan must set out a strategy for the area which is justified by the evidence in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework. This in turn will provide a context for the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans.</p>
1.4	<p><u>A presumption in favour of sustainable development:</u></p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework⁵ includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development as the driver of the planning system. Accordingly, the</p>

¹ H.M. Government; Localism Act 2011, Chapter 20 (as amended); The Stationary Office; 2011; ISBN 978 0 10 542011 8

² H.M. Government; The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 - Statutory Instrument 2012 No.767 (S.I. 2012:767); The Stationary Office; 2012; ISBN 978 0 11 152192 2

³ West Somerset District Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset District Council; 2008.

⁴ H.M. Government; Localism Act 2011, Chapter 20 (as amended); op. cit.

⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government; National Planning Policy Framework – March 2012; Department for Communities and Local Government; 2012; ISBN 978 1 4098 3413 7

	<p>Local Plan sets out a vision for the sustainable development of the District's communities over the next 20 years and provides the means of achieving it through the application of strategic planning policies.</p> <p>The Local Plan does not provide a detailed set of development control policies like those in the saved West Somerset District Local Plan.⁶ Many of the saved West Somerset District Local Plan's policies will remain of material importance until replaced by new adopted planning policies either in the new Local Plan or other future planning policy documents. The Local Plan will provide a context for other planning policy documents which will assist with the implementation of the Local Plan's vision.</p>
1.5	<p><u>Preparing the Local Plan - A brief outline of the Local Plan preparation process:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering evidence about the area covered by the Local Plan through a mix of existing data and commissioned studies to inform and justify strategy / policies. • Formal announcement of the preparation of the document to the community as well as statutory and non-statutory consultees as well as a consultation exercise to identify the key issues affecting the area, which the document's policies will have to address. • Input the aims and objectives of the Community Strategy for the area and the Council's corporate objectives. • Preparation of sustainability appraisal objectives and baseline study – subject to consultation with the Government's statutory advisors (English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency). • The identification of a Local Plan vision, key and critical issues, strategic objectives and a series of strategy options which are tested both through community and stakeholder engagement as well as through the application of Sustainability Appraisal. • A Preferred Strategy is produced embodying the most favourable option as identified through the process outlined above; this is subject to community and stakeholder engagement. • Following consideration of responses to the consultation on the Preferred Strategy and any necessary amendments, the Local Plan is formally published, and then submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. Following the receipt of the Inspector's Report the document will be adopted by the Council with any appropriate amendments. <p><i>(IMPORTANT - This is not a full description of the Local Plan preparation process, for which reference should be made to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012⁷ as amended, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance⁸).</i></p>

⁶ West Somerset District Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

⁷ H.M. Government; The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 - Statutory Instrument 2012 No.767 (S.I. 2012:767); op. cit.

⁸ Department of Communities and Local Government; National Planning Policy Framework – National Planning Practice Guidance (as amended); Department for Communities and Local Government Planning Portal (website <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>); 2014.

1.6	<u>Community engagement :</u> Community engagement is being carried out in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement ⁹ as amended by subsequent changes to the Regulations. This has involved a range of methods, and using both formal and informal consultation exercises.
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⁹ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Core Strategy Statement of Community Involvement: Adopted, December 2014; West Somerset Council; 2014.

2.0	A SPATIAL PORTRAIT OF THE WEST SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN AREA
2.1	<p>Apart from the three main settlements, services are relatively thinly spread amongst the rural communities. A large, thinly populated hinterland looks mainly to the relatively self-contained main settlements of Minehead / Alcombe, Watchet and Williton for its everyday services. In the southern and eastern fringes of the Local Plan area communities also look to Taunton, Wiveliscombe, Bridgwater, Dulverton and Tiverton. The propensity to use various service centres relates, to a significant degree, to the varying quality of the road network and the relative ease with which they can be reached. Whilst villages tend to have a minor role in terms of service provision (if any), most do have at least a village hall. In terms of sustainable development principles, it is the community and cultural life of the District which relies heavily on the village communities because a substantial minority of the Local Plan area's population lives in the villages.</p>
2.2	<p><u>Location and population:</u></p> <p>West Somerset District lies on the north coast of the south west peninsula between North Devon and Sedgemoor Districts. More than half of the District's area is within the Exmoor National Park (which has its own local planning authority). About three quarters of West Somerset's 34,675 population¹⁰ (ONS 2011 Census of Population) lives within the area for which this Local Plan is being prepared, outside the National Park. The West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 area extent plan (Fig 1). shows the Local Plan area including the larger settlements and parish boundaries. About two thirds of the Local Plan area's population (c.18,000 out of c.27,000 people) live on or near the coast in the three main settlements of Minehead / Alcombe, Watchet and Williton.</p> <p>A marked characteristic of the area's demographic profile is the unusually high proportion of elderly people compared with the national average.</p>
2.3	<p><u>The Local Plan area Comprises:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a coastal zone between Minehead in the west and Steart Peninsula in the east, • the north western part of the Quantock Hills, notable for its exposed, moorland character, • to the south, part of the Brendon Hills and • A further, detached southern area at Brushford in the Barle Valley to the south of Exmoor. <p>The area's geography is complex ranging from the coastal levels, parts of which are vulnerable to sea flooding between Blue Anchor and Minehead and at the Steart Peninsula, and the Brendon and Quantock Hills rising to over 300 metres.</p>
2.4	<p><u>How the settlements relate to each other and the surrounding area:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The largest settlement is the Victorian seaside resort town of Minehead with 11,981 population¹¹ together with the smaller adjacent settlement of

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics; Census 2011: Neighbourhood Statistics: West Somerset Local Authority: Key Statistics; Office for National Statistics; 2013. (data-set at, www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)

¹¹ Office for National Statistics; Census 2011: Neighbourhood Statistics: Area – Minehead (Parish): Key Statistics; Office for National Statistics; 2013.

	<p>Alcombe. It is the main service centre in the District, having a community hospital, a community college, middle school and a substantial shopping centre. It is also the location of a Butlins holiday centre, which in the peak holiday season is home to up to c.6,000 visitors at a time. Its service centre role relates to a wider area including much of Exmoor and parts of North Devon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two other settlements with a significant secondary service provision role beyond their immediate area: the historic port of Watchet (3,785 population¹²) and the nearby rural service centre village of Williton (2,602 population¹³) which is also the location of the West Somerset Council's main offices. • As well as relying on Minehead, the southern extremity of the Local Plan area around Brushford looks to nearby Dulverton in the National Park and also the more distant larger centre of Tiverton. • Villages and hamlets in the eastern part of the Brendon Hills look to Wiveliscombe for local services. • Crowcombe and Stogumber tend to look to Taunton for their services • Villages to the east of the Quantocks look mainly towards Bridgwater for their services.
2.5	<p><u>West Somerset settlement transport and access:</u></p> <p>The growth of the main settlements has been substantially influenced by the development of modes of transport over the years. Watchet and Minehead grew initially because of their accessibility from the sea; Minehead only took on its status as the main settlement in the area following the extension of the railway from Taunton to the town in 1874¹⁴ and development of the town's tourism industry. Since the motor vehicle became the dominant means of transport in the years after 1945 the nature of the road network has influenced the function of settlements. Williton sits at the junction of the two major road links in West Somerset, the A39 from Minehead to Bridgwater, and the A358 from Taunton to Williton. Neither of these are trunk roads, they are both relatively narrow A roads. The A39 is restricted by a number of pinch points such as that at Kilve, where two HGVs cannot pass each other, whilst the A358 is constrained by three limited headroom railway bridges. These roads serve the settlements in the coastal strip and on both sides of the Quantock Hills. The remaining inland parts of the Local Plan area, on the Brendon Hills and the Brushford area are relatively poorly accessed via the A396 south from Dunster or by the B roads over the top of the Brendon Hills via Raleigh's Cross.</p> <p>Minehead lies some 25 miles / 45 minutes' drive from M5 J25 at Taunton via the A358 and A39 and 27 miles / 50 minutes' drive from M5 J24 at Bridgwater via the A39. At peak hours these timings increase significantly. Journey times to settlements away from the main roads increase considerably depending on the additional distance involved. Many parts of the minor road network, besides being narrow and winding, are severely constrained by the local geography and a lack of good road links between some parts of the District.</p>

¹² Office for National Statistics; Census 2011: Neighbourhood Statistics: Area – Watchet (Parish): Key Statistics; Office for National Statistics; 2013.

¹³ Office for National Statistics; Census 2011: Neighbourhood Statistics: Area – Williton (Parish): Key Statistics; Office for National Statistics; 2013.

¹⁴ Minehead Railway Company; The Minehead Railway Act 1871; H.M.S.O.; 1871.

	<p>The use of walking as a means of transport is inhibited in some of the local settlements by the lack of safe footways in key locations. Minehead however has a good level of access to its services and facilities by a range of transport modes including walking and cycling.</p>
<p>2.6</p>	<p><u>The West Somerset Local Plan area and neighbouring Housing Market Areas</u></p> <p>The District lies within two overlapping housing market areas:</p> <p><u>The Taunton and South Somerset HMA (T&SSHMA):¹⁵</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Taunton' and 'South Somerset' were treated as two separate HMAs in the study due to their relatively self-contained nature. West Somerset is treated as part of the Taunton HMA. This showed that whilst there was a high overall degree of self-containment within the HMA in relation to the main centres of employment, Taunton and Bridgwater (a 70% travel to work self-containment level), this applied rather less in West Somerset where there was more internal self-containment focused on Minehead. • West Somerset's population is mainly concentrated in the coastal area settlements. These relate most strongly to Taunton, Bridgwater and to a lesser extent Tiverton in terms of housing market, employment and higher level service provision. The thinly populated area of Exmoor to the south and west of Minehead, which has a poor highway network, extends into Devon creating a barrier to service access in that direction. <p><u>The Northern Peninsula HMA (NPSHMA):¹⁶</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula provides a more detailed reflection of West Somerset's housing market. Outside the HMA links to the rest of Somerset and the Bristol housing market are stated to be stronger than those with the Exeter housing market¹⁷. • A further marked characteristic is the strength of connections with distant housing markets – in particular those in London, the South East and East of England, and the West Midlands. Moves to the Northern Peninsula HMA are particularly strong for families with dependent children, people in middle age and early retirees¹⁸. These connections, particularly with the higher value housing markets of the south east, are a significant driver of increasing local property values and increasing proportion of over 50s in the West Somerset population. • A review of the Northern Peninsula Strategic Housing Market Assessment was recently carried out in order to ensure that the provisions of the NPPF regarding housing requirements are properly fulfilled in the light of up to date evidence.¹⁹

¹⁵ Fordham Research; Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessments: Final Report – February 2009; Taunton and South Somerset Areas Strategic Housing Market Partnership; 2009.

¹⁶ Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula – December 2008; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Partnership; 2008

¹⁷ Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula – December 2008: Executive Summary; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Partnership; 2008 (para. 2.2 page vii)

¹⁸ Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula – December 2008: Executive Summary; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Partnership; 2008 (para. 2.3 page vii)

¹⁹ Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment: West Somerset Update - Final Report, November 2013; West Somerset Council; 2013.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to events elsewhere in the country it has been necessary to commission a limited review of the NPSHMA taking into account the latest DCLG population projections for 2012. This work has been commissioned jointly with the other Northern Peninsula HMP partner Local Planning Authorities.²⁰
2.7	<p><u>Land use and economy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the Local Plan area's economic activity is located in the coastal strip. • Most of the District is in agricultural or forestry use, pastoral farming being a particularly substantial part. The two major sources of employment within the District are agriculture and tourism, in particular the Butlins holiday centre in Minehead. • Nuclear power generation at Hinkley Point is also a significant employer with c.600 workers at the existing power station. This is likely to increase significantly in the future assuming that the proposed development of the Hinkley Point C power station proceeds. • As a consequence of the age profile of the District, social care is also a growing employment sector, like tourism and farming it is not particularly well paid. • The District's other major tourist attraction is the substantially volunteer run West Somerset Steam Railway running for over 20 miles between Bishop's Lydeard near Taunton and its western terminus in Minehead linking the three largest settlements in the District by rail for much of the year. It should be noted that due to the nature of the railway it does not provide a commuter service. Notwithstanding this, it has been recently used on a number of occasions for revenue earning through freight services from Network Rail carrying very substantial loads of rock for coastal protection purposes.
2.8	<p><u>Drainage and flooding:</u></p> <p>Much of the Local Plan area drains through short, relatively steep catchments to the Bristol Channel, however there is land in the south and east of the area which drains into either the Exe or Parrett catchments respectively. Each of the main three settlements has areas affected by a high risk of flooding either from local watercourses, and in the case of Minehead and Watchet, also from the sea. The issue of flood risk in planning for new development will be an important task for the Local Plan.</p>
2.9	<p><u>Landscape protection and biodiversity:</u></p> <p>A substantial part of the Local Plan area borders onto the Exmoor National Park,²¹ within which the landscape is subject to statutory protection. The part of the Quantock Hills within the Local Plan area is designated as an Area of</p>

²⁰ Housing Vision; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Area Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update: Final Report – January 2015; Northern Peninsula Strategic Housing Market Partnership; 2015

²¹ H.M. Government; National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949: Exmoor National Park (Designation) Order 1954 (HLG 92/176); HMSO; 1954.

	<p>Outstanding Natural Beauty²² which is also protected. There are a number of significant areas protected as Natura 2000 sites under the 1992 European Community Habitats Directive²³ for their ecological value as well as nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest.²⁴</p>
<p>2.10</p>	<p><u>Hinkley Point nuclear power station:</u></p> <p>The existing Hinkley Point nuclear power station lies within the north-eastern part of the District. Whilst Hinkley Point A is currently being decommissioned, Hinkley Point B remains an operational power station. A Development Consent Order was granted by Parliament in March 2013 for the development of Hinkley Point C power station with two new nuclear reactors.²⁵ Assuming that the project proceeds, it would constitute the largest investment in the District for many years, and would involve the influx of a substantial additional workforce (with an estimated peak of c.5600 workers) over a period of several years. Most site workers living to the south of West Somerset would be expected to use the B3190 from Bampton to Watchet in order to access the Smithyard park and ride site near Williton having left the M5 at Junction 27.</p>

²² H.M. Government ; National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949: Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; HMSO; 1956

²³ European Economic Community; Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21st May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended); European Economic Community; 1992

²⁴ H.M. Government; The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Chapter 69 (as amended); HMSO; 1981; ISBN 978 0 10 546981 0

²⁵ H.M. Government; Infrastructure Planning: The Hinkley Point C (Nuclear Generating Station) Order 2013 – Statutory Instrument 2013 No.648 (S.I. 2013:648); The Stationary Office; 2013; ISBN 978 0 11 153278 2.

3.0	THE EVIDENCE BASE
3.1	<p>The policies of the Local Plan are justified by the evidence gathered together with data already available on the area and its characteristics so that it should be found legally sound when examined. The NPPF advises that local plans should be based on: "...adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. Local planning authorities should ensure that their assessment of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses are integrated, and that they take full account of relevant market and economic signals."</p> <p>The evidence base consists of two elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of community and stakeholder participation in the preparation of the Local Plan, and; • Research setting out factual evidence which underpins the vision, objectives and policies of the Local Plan.
3.2	<p><u>The evidence base research studies which have been prepared are:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessments 2008;²⁶ • The Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula 2008;²⁷ • Northern Peninsula Strategic Housing Market Assessment: West Somerset Update – November 2013²⁸ • Northern Peninsula Housing Market Area Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update: Final Report – January 2015²⁹ • Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (jointly with other Somerset LPA's)³⁰ • Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment Update 2013³¹ • West Somerset Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment;³² • West Somerset Employment Land Review;³³

²⁶ Fordham Research; Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessments: Final Report – February 2009; op. cit.

²⁷ Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula – December 2008; op. cit.

²⁸ Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment: West Somerset Update – Final Report - November 2013; West Somerset Council; 2013.

²⁹ Housing Vision; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Area Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update: Final Report – January 2015; Northern Peninsula Strategic Housing Market Partnership; 2015

³⁰ De Montfort University; Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment – Final Report, October 2010; Somerset Strategic Housing Market Partnership; 2010.

³¹ De Montfort University; Somerset Local Planning Authorities Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment Update: Final Report – October 2013; Somerset Strategic Housing Market Partnership; 2013.

³² Hunter Page Planning Ltd.; West Somerset District Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment – March 2010; West Somerset Council; 2010.

³³ Hunter Page Planning Ltd.; Employment Land Review: Report Stages 1 – 3, May 2009 – April 2010; West Somerset Council; 2010.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (jointly with the Exmoor National Park Authority)³⁴ • Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (for areas where pressure for strategic development exists);³⁵ • West Somerset Town Centre Uses Study (jointly with the Exmoor National Park Authority);³⁶ • West Somerset Council LPA Historic Environment Issues Paper³⁷ • West Somerset Renewable Energy Potential Study³⁸ • West Somerset Sport and Recreation Study³⁹ • The West Somerset Economic Strategy 2009⁴⁰ & 2011⁴¹
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³⁴ Scott Wilson; West Somerset Council & Exmoor National Park Authority Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1: Final Report – March 2009; West Somerset Council; 2009

³⁵ Scott Wilson; West Somerset Council Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: Final Report – October 2010; West Somerset Council; 2010

³⁶ Todd, Stuart; West Somerset Local Planning Authority Area Town and Village Centres Study – November 2011; West Somerset Council; 2012.

³⁷ Somerset County Council, Historic Environment Service; West Somerset Council Local Planning Authority Historic Environment Issues Paper – April 2014; West Somerset Council; 2014

³⁸ Stuart Todd Associates; West Somerset Local Planning Authority Area Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Potential Study – September 2011; West Somerset Council; 2012.

³⁹ Stuart Todd Associates; West Somerset Council Local Planning Authority Sport and Recreation Facilities Study – March 2012; West Somerset Council; 2012.

⁴⁰ EKOS Consulting; The West Somerset Economic Strategy: Delivering the Equilibrium – April 2009; West Somerset Council; 2009.

⁴¹ ARUP; West Somerset Economic Strategy Refresh: Responding to Change: Draft Strategy Document – August 2011; West Somerset Council; 2011.

4.0	THE KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING THE PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS.
4.1	<u>Housing and Community:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The provision of significantly more affordable housing ▪ Providing appropriate facilities for the older people amongst the District's population (relating particularly to appropriate housing provision), ▪ Improved provision of sport and recreation facilities ▪ Fuel poverty (resulting from a high proportion of properties without access to mains gas, and a high proportion of houses which are difficult to heat) ▪ Providing an appropriate level of facilities for young people ▪ Meeting the challenge of the impacts of the new nuclear proposals at Hinkley Point
4.2	<u>Settlement hierarchy and development distribution:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying a hierarchy of settlements within West Somerset in terms of their functions ▪ The need to maintain and increase the self-containment of West Somerset settlements ▪ The identification of the most appropriate locations for new development
4.3	<u>Transport:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing the proportion of non-private car travel within the District ▪ Improving accessibility to and from West Somerset
4.4	<u>Employment / Business / Tourism:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting tourism and in particular more sustainable tourism ▪ Increasing the amount of, and broadening the variety of employment opportunities within the District, particularly the knowledge based, high income sector ▪ Continuing to encourage appropriate training and educational opportunities locally ▪ The importance of the agricultural industry to the area and its contribution to sustainable food production ▪ The need to retain more young people within the community (19 to 45 age group particularly)
4.5	<u>Climate Change:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The management of flood risk ▪ The efficient use of water supplies ▪ Encouraging the creation of a low / zero carbon economy ▪ Mitigating the effects of climate change

4.6	<p><u>Historic and Natural Heritage protection:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protecting the landscape and built heritage of West Somerset ▪ Protection of the environment ▪ Protecting and strengthening biodiversity within the District
4.7	<p><u>Other key issues:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-ordinating policy development with the Exmoor National Park Authority
4.8	<p><u>The critical issues for the Local Plan area:</u></p> <p>These are the challenges which really stand out, the successful management of which provides the key to addressing other key issues and enabling positive place shaping to take place within the plan area. This is the essential purpose for preparing a Local Plan. The Critical Issues are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mitigating the effects of the Hinkley Point C new nuclear proposals; 2. The extreme degree of disparity between average house prices and average earnings, with consequent high level of unmet affordable housing need; 3. The need to provide c. 2,900 dwellings during the period 2012 to 2032; 4. The demographic imbalance in the area, with its low proportion of 19 – 45 year olds, and high proportion of 50+ age group; 5. The narrow base of the economy, and the predominance of low income jobs in agriculture, tourism and social care; 6. Poor level of accessibility between the West Somerset communities and the M5 corridor; 7. Reducing the relatively high per capita level of Co₂ production within West Somerset; 8. Management of flood risk in and around the main settlements, and; 9. The importance of protecting the West Somerset landscape. <p>These critical issues are also the driving force for the themes and objectives of the Somerset and West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategies^{42, 43} and also the Council's Corporate Plan.⁴⁴</p>

⁴² Somerset Strategic Partnership; Somerset, a Landscape for the Future: Sustainable Community Strategy for Somerset 2008 – 2026; Somerset County Council; 2009.

⁴³ West Somerset Strategic Partnership; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; West Somerset Council; 2007.

⁴⁴ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Council Corporate Plan 2013 – 16; West Somerset Council; 2013.

5.0	THE SPATIAL VISION FOR WEST SOMERSET SHOWING HOW THE AREA AND THE PLACES IN IT SHOULD DEVELOP:
5.1	ECONOMY - By 2032 the area's main service and employment centre: Minehead / Alcombe, the secondary service and employment centres of Watchet and Williton and rural employment sites such as Brushford / Dulverton will be the centres of a thriving and increasingly varied local economy within West Somerset, aided by the provision of super-fast optical broadband access, all of which will enable more people to work close to, or in their homes. People will have the skills to enable them to work and thrive in this more diverse economy. The tourism industry will also have diversified with a wider range of sustainable enterprises. The Hinkley Point C new nuclear project will have been completed having brought considerable economic stimulus to the area whilst the temporary adverse impacts of the construction phase should be in the past.
5.2	HOUSING – By 2032 there will have been a significant increase in the amount of affordable housing provided in the area. More people will be able to afford housing which is appropriate to their circumstances. New housing development will have been delivered in locations which will help to secure a reduction in transport demand and more self-contained settlements. About 2,900 additional houses will have been provided in the Local Plan area, the largest part of these being provided at Minehead / Alcombe.
5.3	ENVIRONMENT – By 2032 there will be a marked increase in the low carbon economy locally. Biodiversity will have been strengthened and flood risk will have been managed positively in accommodating new development. More of the District's food supply will be produced locally.

6.0	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR WEST SOMERSET FOCUSING ON THE KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED:
6.1	<p>Strategic objectives for the area based on the key issues⁴⁵ identified in the initial Regulation 18⁴⁶ consultation exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the roles and functions of Minehead as the District's main service centre, and Watchet and Williton as secondary service centres. • Implementation of types and quantities of development in locations appropriate to meet the requirements of the Strategy based on the evidence and engagement. • Increase self-containment within Minehead, Watchet and Williton. • successfully managing flood risk in implementing new development at Minehead Watchet and Williton • Make a step change in the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local needs • Make a significant reduction in Co₂ emissions for the Local Plan area. • Create an aspirational, enterprising and entrepreneurial culture within West Somerset • Develop the quality of the tourism offer within the Local Plan area • Protect and enhance biodiversity in the Local Plan area • Conserve and enhance the character of historic settlements, buildings and landscapes • Deliver high quality design in new development which will contribute to the area's heritage in a positive way.

⁴⁵ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Core Strategy Options Paper – January 2010; West Somerset Council; 2010 (Section 3.0, p.6)

⁴⁶ H.M. Government; The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 - Statutory Instrument 2012 No.767 (S.I. 2012:767); op. cit.

THE LOCAL PLAN'S POLICIES

SUSTAINABILITY	
POLICY SD1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	
	<p>WHEN CONSIDERING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THE DECISION MAKER WILL TAKE A POSITIVE APPROACH THAT REFLECTS THE PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONTAINED IN THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK. IT WILL ALWAYS WORK PROACTIVELY WITH APPLICANTS JOINTLY TO FIND SOLUTIONS WHICH MEAN THAT PROPOSALS CAN BE APPROVED WHEREVER POSSIBLE, AND TO SECURE DEVELOPMENT THAT IMPROVES THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, HISTORIC AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IN THE AREA.</p> <p>PLANNING APPLICATIONS THAT ACCORD WITH THE POLICIES IN THIS LOCAL PLAN (AND, WHERE RELEVANT, WITH POLICES IN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS) WILL BE APPROVED WITHOUT DELAY, UNLESS MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS INDICATE OTHERWISE.</p> <p>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 DECISION MAKER WILL GRANT PERMISSION UNLESS MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS INDICATE OTHERWISE – TAKING INTO ACCOUNT WHETHER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This draft policy, provided by the Planning Inspectorate, articulates the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF's) emphasis on the requirement for all development to contribute towards the objectives of sustainable development and embeds it in the Local Plan. ○ Sustainable development is seen as having three distinct roles; economic, social and, environmental, as far as the NPPF is concerned. It is defined for the purposes of this plan as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type, and in the right places, is available in the right places at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure; • Social – 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 supports its health, social and cultural wellbeing; and • Environmental – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve

	<p>biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low-carbon economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Local Plan seeks to encourage and manage development throughout the Local Planning Authority area in a way that supports sustainable patterns of movement and interaction of communities, the individuals within them, and, visitors to the area. Development proposals will be supported throughout the area where they accord with the overall strategy of focusing it in the preferred locations set out in other policies within the Local Plan. Development proposals that do not accord with the strategy and policies will be considered provided that it can be demonstrated that; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a need for the development in that location, and, • It cannot be sited elsewhere in a more sustainable location <p>Such proposals would be expected to provide detailed evidence and a clear justification as to how they meet the terms of these criteria.</p>
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing the land and policies to deliver the development types required in various places to allow the economy and local communities to fulfil their potential will provide good outcomes for the community in terms of the protection of its environment, the prosperity of its population and the convenience and utility of the facilities they are able to enjoy within a reasonable distance of their homes.
Justification	<p>The inclusion of the policy is a requirement of the NPPF. The policies included in the draft preferred strategy aim to deliver the development which is needed to maximise the self-containment of the main settlements, whilst allowing the larger villages to continue to have a modest amount of development proportionate to their size and available facilities.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17 and, 120</p>
POLICY EN1: MITIGATION OF IMPACT OF HINKLEY POINT NEW NUCLEAR PROPOSALS	
	<p>PROPOSALS FOR THE MITIGATION OF IMPACTS ARISING FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW NUCLEAR POWER STATION AT HINKLEY POINT MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THEY RESPECT THE POSITIVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITIES AFFECTED ESPECIALLY THOSE NEIGHBOURING THEM, THAT; • ADEQUATE MEASURES ARE TAKEN TO MITIGATE THE ADVERSE CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE RELATED DEVELOPMENT, (BOTH TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT AND, PREPARATORY AND ANCILLARY) ON THE COMMUNITIES AFFECTED, BOTH IN THE SHORT AND THE LONGER TERM, AND THAT;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THEY RESPECT THE LOCAL NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY ARE LOCATED.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy requires that appropriate mitigation of adverse impacts and the optimisation of beneficial impacts arising from the Hinkley Point new nuclear development proposals is provided. ○ This policy does not apply to development covered by the NSIP process and to which the DCO applies.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That a construction project on the scale of a new nuclear power station in a remote rural location will bring a wide range of impacts, both positive and negative. ○ Some of these impacts will be on a very significant scale, ○ They will range in timescale between short and long term.
Justification	<p>The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has identified the need to upgrade the energy generation capacity and associated infrastructure within the UK and make provision for a more secure system of supply in order to meet the existing and future demands for energy. Energy from nuclear sources is seen as making a valuable contribution to the anticipated future demand. Hinkley Point has been a focus of nuclear power generation development since 1957 and has been identified as a suitable location for a new generation of nuclear power supply. Following an Examination in Public by an independent Panel from the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC)/Major Infrastructure Planning Unit (MIPU) and a recommendation to the Secretary of State of Energy & Climate Change, a decision letter was issued on 19th March 2013.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 1, 28, 48, 61, 79, 80, 113 and, 120.</p>
SPATIAL STRATEGY	
POLICY SC1: HIERARCHY OF SETTLEMENTS	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL BE CONCENTRATED IN THE DISTRICT'S MAIN CENTRE, MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE, AND IN THE RURAL SERVICE CENTRES OF WATCHET AND WILLITON, THIS WILL BE ON A SCALE GENERALLY PROPORTIONATE TO THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS TO THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES AND THOSE IN SURROUNDING SETTLEMENTS THAT RELY ON THEIR LARGER NEIGHBOURS FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES. 2. LIMITED DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRIMARY VILLAGES: BICKNOLLER, CARHAMPTON, CROWCOMBE, KILVE, STOGUMBER, STOGURSEY, WEST QUANTOXHEAD AND WASHFORD, WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT IT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO WIDER SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS FOR THE AREA.

	<p>3. AT THE SECONDARY VILLAGES: HOLFORD, DUNSTER MARSH, BROMPTON RALPH, BATTLETON AND, BRUSHFORD, SMALL SCALE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT IT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO WIDER SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS FOR THE AREA.</p> <p>4. DEVELOPMENT WITHIN OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY (WITHIN 50 METRES) TO THE CONTIGUOUS BUILT-UP AREA OF MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE, WATCHET, WILLITON AND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY VILLAGES WILL ONLY BE CONSIDERED WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT:</p> <p>A. IT IS WELL RELATED TO EXISTING ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND SOCIAL FACILITIES WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT, AND;</p> <p>B. THERE IS SAFE AND EASY PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO THE ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND SOCIAL FACILITIES WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT, AND;</p> <p>C. IT RESPECTS THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND COMPLEMENTS THE CHARACTER OF THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT, AND;</p> <p>D. IT DOES NOT GENERATE SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS OVER MINOR ROADS TO AND FROM THE NATIONAL PRIMARY AND COUNTY HIGHWAY ROUTE NETWORK</p> <p>E. IT DOES NOT HARM THE AMENITY OF THE AREA OR THE ADJOINING LAND USES.</p> <p>DEVELOPMENT ELSEWHERE IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WILL BE CONSIDERED UNDER POLICY OC1.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy seeks to achieve a beneficial distribution of new development within the Local Plan area, so as to maintain or strengthen the current service roles and functions of the various settlements. ○ The policy provides clear guidance about the appropriate scale and location of new development within the Local Plan area.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Directing new development proportionately to the area's larger settlements which currently provide most of the retail, employment, education and other service facilities within the area will help to maintain and enhance their attractiveness to service providers. ○ This will help to maximise the number of trips to service destinations which are completed within the local area and, particularly, within the main settlements. ○ The number of service sector jobs provided in the local area will also be maintained or increased ○ Quality of life benefits will be experienced by the local population through maintaining or improving the range of services which are available within the local area.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The West Somerset Town Centre Study details the type and location of town centre uses across the Local Plan area.

- The majority of town centre uses within the area are located in Minehead/Alcombe, which serves a wider area including a large part of the Exmoor National Park.
- Historically approximately 80% of new development within the Local Plan area has taken place at the area's main service centre of Minehead/Alcombe, and the secondary service centres of Watchet and Williton. This pattern of development has served to sustain a good level of local services in these three settlements. Maintaining this pattern of development should continue to support the health of the service functions of the three main settlements. This is likely to require some adjustment to their development limits.
- Village based services have shown a tendency to decline over time, with the loss of many local shops, post offices, pubs and petrol filling stations. This is partly a result of greater mobility arising from higher levels of private car ownership and use, and the greater choice offered by services accessible in larger settlements. Development of an appropriate scale in villages can help to secure the range of services and employment opportunities available in the villages.
- The continuing health and sustainability of villages was identified as an important issue in the Taylor Report. A balance must be reached by means of which a modest amount of new development including both affordable and market housing can help to secure the future of these settlements. Such development should be limited according to the size and character of each settlement in order to maintain their vitality. This could be achieved by a mechanism which related consideration of new development proposals to a proportion of existing dwelling numbers within the settlement over a given time period subject to caveats about protection of the character of the settlement.

Definitions:

Limited Development:

In clause 2 of the policy above, in terms of housing, "limited development" means individual schemes of up to ten dwellings providing about a 10% increase in a settlement's total dwelling number during the Local Plan period, limited to about 30% of this increase in any five year period.

Small Scale Development:

In clause 3 of the policy above, in terms of housing, "small scale development" means individual schemes of up to five dwellings providing about a 10% increase in a settlement's total dwelling number during the Local Plan period, limited to about 30% of this increase in any five year period.

Primary Villages (showing dwelling numbers at the start of the plan period):

Bicknoller (122), Carhampton (317), Crowcombe (89), Kilve (110), Stogumber (164), Stogursey (388), West Quantoxhead (124) and Washford (304).

These are the larger villages with a shop and some built community facilities which are not significantly constrained by poor access from the County Highway Network.

	<p><u>Secondary Villages</u> (showing dwelling numbers at the start of the plan period): Holford (85), Dunster Marsh (168), Battleton (43), Brompton Ralph (23) and Brushford (179).</p> <p>These are mainly smaller villages without a shop, but with some built community facilities, and also some with a shop but which are constrained by poor access from the County Highway Network.</p> <p><u>Built up area:</u></p> <p>An amalgam of buildings and built structures that collectively form a distinct developed form with a relatively continuous outer boundary / limit. The extent of the built up area excludes parkland, parks, public gardens, formal and informal public open space, playing fields (including those associated with sports and educational institutions) and groups of farm and agriculture-related buildings where they are not wholly surrounded by other built development.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u></p> <p>See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17, 108, 112, 118, 119 and, 123.</p>
POLICY SC2: HOUSING PROVISION	
	<p>THE PLAN WILL DELIVER APPROXIMATELY 2,900 DWELLINGS TO PROVIDE FOR THE AREA'S HOUSING NEEDS DURING THE PERIOD TO 2032, OF WHICH A MINIMUM OF 1,450 WILL BE PROVIDED ON ALLOCATED KEY STRATEGIC SITES AT MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE, WATCHET AND WILLITON.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To set out the approximate quantity of dwellings to be provided at each of the major settlements and in the primary and secondary villages as a whole, ○ To provide an appropriate level of development to support the continuing role and function of the respective settlements including the larger villages which have an elementary service provision role.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That directing the majority of new development in approximate proportion to the relative level of services provided at the District's main service centres will maximise their sustainability in terms of the range and quality of facilities available for the community and minimising longer trips from the area to centres elsewhere should local facilities be lost. ○ The housing provision figure for the West Somerset LPA area includes a specific allowance of 450 dwellings which arises from the likely impact on the local housing market of the Hinkley Point C project. This requirement would not arise in the event the new nuclear power station was not constructed.

<p>Justification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ c.80% of completions are consistently provided at Minehead/ Alcombe Watchet and Williton. This level of provision (at approximately the annual rate now proposed on the basis of the SHMA's evidence) has proved remarkably successful in maintaining Minehead/Alcombe as the main service centre with a good range of service provision for a town of its scale, and Watchet and Williton as two successful secondary service centres. ○ Village services have fared less well, with closures of village shops and post offices a particular issue. The population of rural West Somerset is relatively small and is thinly scattered in small settlements and farms. It is therefore appropriate to encourage limited development within villages subject to appropriate location and scale. ○ The NPPF requires that the Councils meet the full objectively assessed need for housing (OAHN). In the case of the West Somerset Local Planning Authority area, a significant proportion of the housing need arises from the likely impacts on the local housing market of the Hinkley Point C project. As such it is appropriate for this to be reflected accordingly when assessing the amount of new housing which should be delivered over the Plan Period. ○ In terms of distribution, it is anticipated that new housing within the Local Plan area will be delivered at an average annualised rate of 145 dwellings per year over the whole of the plan-period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Of these the strategic sites will provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An annualised average of 38 dwellings per year at Minehead/ Alcombe, ▪ An annualised average of 15 dwellings per year at Watchet, ▪ An annualised average of 21 dwellings per year at Williton, ● In addition to the key strategic sites, provision will be made for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An annualised average of 43 dwellings per year through other development at Minehead/Alcombe, Watchet and Williton, and; ▪ An annualised average of 30 dwellings per year will be provided at the Primary and Secondary Villages. ● It should be noted that housing delivery in the Local Plan area has consistently provided an average of about 120 completions annually over the last 40 years. Windfalls have formed a major part of these completions. ● Due to the long period of construction of the proposed new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point and the variable rate of people employed on site during this, it is anticipated that the impact on the local housing market will take a while to create its own demand. In order to account for this in estimating an average future delivery-rate, a two-step approach has been adopted to reflect this, comprising; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For the first six years from 2012/13 to 2017/18, an average delivery rate of 122 dwellings per annum, and ▪ For the remaining fourteen years from 2018/19 to 2031/32, an average delivery rate of 155 dwellings per annum. ● The small scale of development proposals and opportunities within West Somerset's major communities, and their distance from the M5 corridor have combined to reduce the level of interest in the area by major housebuilders.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The limited range of employment opportunities in West Somerset (and their generally low wage levels) has had the effect of reducing the demand for open market housing within its main communities where development is acceptable in principle. (However, the market for characterful houses of comparatively high value in more remote rural locations remains strong.) • Much of the assessed need is for affordable housing, the delivery of which is only likely to be viable if provided through planning agreements or cross subsidy by market housing. <p>Definition:</p> <p><u>Annualised average</u> = average rate of development for each year derived from the relevant total amount divided by the plan period (20 years).</p> <p><i>(NB: This should not be interpreted as an annual absolute, rationing development.)</i></p> <p><u>Sources:</u></p> <p>See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 47, 49, 68, 69, 71, 94, 111, 118, 119 and, 123.</p>
POLICY SC3: APPROPRIATE MIX OF HOUSING TYPES AND TENURES	
	RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD PROVIDE A MIX OF HOUSING SIZES, TENURES AND TYPES TO MEET THE DEMONSTRATED NEEDS OF THE AREA'S COMMUNITIES.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure that development proposals take account of the housing needs of different groups within West Somerset's communities, and in particular the elderly. Proposals must include a statement of how the nature and design of the development takes account of the needs of different groups within the community. ○ To encourage the provision of lifetime homes and a proportion of bungalows etc. this is particularly important in view of the demographic changes occurring in the District and particularly the imbalance in the proportion of old/young people.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That the increasing proportion of elderly people in the population is not reflected in the proportion of different types of dwelling within the area. ○ Many elderly people in the Local Plan area are over-housed in properties which, in some cases, no longer offer practical living accommodation for them. ○ The provision of a wider range of house types would offer people the opportunity to move to more appropriate accommodation whilst remaining in their local area.

Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) include information about the demographic breakdown of the area's population. New housing to be provided in the area should most appropriately reflect the range of people who are likely to inhabit the various parts of the area. This should be assessed within the constraints of the available data. ○ The West Somerset SHMA Update 2013 provides an assessment of the future type (as determined by number of bedrooms) and tenure required to meet the future housing need. Development proposals would need to demonstrate their contribution to meeting these needs unless, more up-to-date, localised housing assessments can demonstrate otherwise. <p style="text-align: center;">Projected net housing requirements for West Somerset 2011-2031, without backlog</p>																																																																				
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Tenure</th> <th>Sector</th> <th>1 bed</th> <th>2 bed</th> <th>3 bed</th> <th>4+ bed</th> <th>Total No.</th> <th>Total %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Affordable</td> <td>Social Rent</td> <td>588</td> <td>74</td> <td>593</td> <td>-4</td> <td>1,251</td> <td>52.16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Affordable Rent</td> <td>111</td> <td>14</td> <td>112</td> <td>-1</td> <td>236</td> <td>9.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Intermediate</td> <td>Shared Ownership</td> <td>198</td> <td>25</td> <td>200</td> <td>-1</td> <td>421</td> <td>17.57</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Market</td> <td>Private Rent</td> <td>32</td> <td>4</td> <td>32</td> <td>0</td> <td>68</td> <td>2.84</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Owner Occupier</td> <td>198</td> <td>25</td> <td>200</td> <td>-1</td> <td>421</td> <td>17.57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total no.</td> <td>All sectors</td> <td>1,127</td> <td>142</td> <td>1,136</td> <td>-8</td> <td>2,398</td> <td>100.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total %</td> <td>All sectors</td> <td>46.99</td> <td>5.94</td> <td>47.40</td> <td>-0.33</td> <td></td> <td>100.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment: West Somerset Update – Final Report, November 2013</p> <p>As part of the future housing requirements in the LPA area, it is calculated that there will be a specific need for 351 units (14.64%) of specialised housing for older households.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 6, 15, 33, 46, 47, 66, 68, 69, 112, 118 and, 122.</p>								Tenure	Sector	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total No.	Total %	Affordable	Social Rent	588	74	593	-4	1,251	52.16	Affordable Rent	111	14	112	-1	236	9.86	Intermediate	Shared Ownership	198	25	200	-1	421	17.57	Market	Private Rent	32	4	32	0	68	2.84	Owner Occupier	198	25	200	-1	421	17.57	Total no.	All sectors	1,127	142	1,136	-8	2,398	100.00	Total %	All sectors	46.99	5.94	47.40	-0.33	
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POLICY SC4: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1. WHERE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IS PROPOSED, ON-SITE PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THOSE WITH A LOCAL CONNECTION TO WEST SOMERSET WHO CANNOT AFFORD TO ACCESS THE OPEN HOUSING MARKET THROUGHOUT THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY AREA ON ALL SITES OF 11 OR MORE DWELLINGS.
2. AFFORDABLE HOUSING WILL BE PROVIDED FROM DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MINIMUM RATIO OF 35 AFFORDABLE UNITS FOR EVERY 65

	<p>OPEN-MARKET (PRO-RATA) BASED ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLINGS TO BE PROVIDED IN THE DEVELOPMENT.</p> <p>3. THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING ELEMENT WILL BE PROVIDED ON THE FOLLOWING BASIS:</p> <p>A. PROPORTIONATE, LIKE-FOR-LIKE BASIS IN TERMS OF HOUSING SIZE AND TYPE, WITH A MINIMUM OF 2 BEDROOMS, UNLESS THE LATEST HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY EVIDENCE INDICATES OTHERWISE</p> <p>B. BUILT TO THE MINIMUM HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY STANDARD SIZES FOR TYPE OF DWELLING OR LARGER</p> <p>C. BUILT TO A MINIMUM OF HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY DESIGN CODE 3 UNLESS THIS HAS BEEN SUPERSEDED BY HIGHER CODE LEVELS DETERMINED BY THE HCA, SUCCESSOR AGENCIES AND/OR THE RELEVANT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT.</p> <p>4. WHERE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF BETWEEN 6 AND 10 DWELLINGS IS PROPOSED AT SETTLEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN POLICY SC1, BUT EXCLUDING MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE AND WATCHET, FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING WILL BE SOUGHT IN LIEU OF PROVISION ON-SITE. THESE WILL BE CALCULATED ON THE BASIS OF THE CRITERIA IN 2 AND, 3 ABOVE.</p> <p>5. WHERE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR THOSE IN HOUSING NEED WITH A LOCAL CONNECTION IS JUSTIFIED AT SETTLEMENTS NOT IDENTIFIED IN POLICY SC1, A PROPORTION OF MARKET HOUSING MAY BE APPROPRIATE IN ORDER TO ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT TO TAKE PLACE. IN SUCH CASES THE OPEN MARKET ELEMENT WILL BE RESTRICTED TO THE MINIMUM REQUIRED. THE MINIMUM PROPORTION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MARKET HOUSING SHOULD BE 35% : 65%.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy will help to secure a significant percentage of affordable houses (with a target of 35%) to be provided as part of any development of over 10 dwellings depending on its location as set out in the policy. In Williton and other settlements identified in Policy SC1 except for Minehead/Alcombe and Watchet, these fall within the definition of 'designated Rural Areas' and commuted financial contributions towards affordable housing can sought on developments of between 6 and 10 dwellings through Section 106/Planning Obligations agreements for provision off-site. ○ This policy will also provide for affordable housing in rural communities.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The provision of additional affordable housing as part of the costs of development is one means of improving access to a decent home in a suitable location for those on the locally prevalent low incomes. ○ In order to secure the benefit of affordable housing for the community it must be secured to meet such needs in the long term by means of appropriate legal agreements.

<p>Justification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ West Somerset District has one of the highest disparities between average earnings and average house price in the Country. ○ West Somerset is very attractive, and is a highly desirable area within which to relocate, particularly for those seeking a lifestyle change and/or retiring early from even higher value housing markets such as the south east of England and London. This flow of capital rich in-migrants, together with the high incidence of holiday cottage / second home purchases in the area has raised property values to a level which many local people cannot afford. ○ A lack of sufficient social housing for rent to meet local needs means that many of those on lower incomes cannot afford to remain in West Somerset, or have to live in other people's households, causing overcrowding and loss of privacy to the detriment of all concerned. ○ It is essential that workers in a wide range of occupations are able to live and work locally, many jobs here are in the lower end of the earnings range. The removal of such workers from the local labour market will impact adversely on the local economy (particularly retail and tourism) and also on the provision of essential services such as social care. ○ Provision will normally be made on-site for developments of 11 or more dwellings. Exceptionally, on sites of 6 – 10 dwellings at identified settlements (in Policy SC1) that are in a designated Rural Area as set out in Statutory Instrument S.I.1997: No.621 or, that are in situations where an appropriate justification is demonstrated, off-site provision may be accepted. ○ The need for affordable housing in a particular settlement, including the preferred type and tenure, will be informed by an up to date housing needs survey. ○ Affordable housing will be considered on sites in and around settlements where there is, and is likely to continue to be a clear ongoing housing need for that type of housing in the settlement. There should be a clear employment, social and / or long-term family linkage between potential occupants and the settlement. There should be good access to basic essential facilities within the settlement or via access to good public transport connection nearby to neighbouring larger settlements. <p><u>Definitions:</u></p> <p><u>Affordable Housing:</u></p> <p>Term used for any form of housing, rented or ownership, which is delivered for those people who are unable to access housing within the market, usually but not exclusively for financial reasons. This would include the new affordable rent model (80% of market rent) championed by central government as well as traditional social rent, shared equity and low cost home ownership models.</p> <p><u>Exceptions site:</u></p> <p>Where there is a demonstrable need for affordable housing for people with a local connection to the parish in question at a settlement entirely within the open countryside, exceptionally, an appropriate amount of affordable housing may be permitted together with the minimum amount of market housing necessary to enable the development to come forward.</p>
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	<p><u>Sources:</u></p> <p>See Appendix 1 nos.; 10, 15, 18, 24, 35, 47, 58, 59, 60, 65, 67, 68, 69, 112, 117, 118, 120, 122 and,123.</p>
POLICY SC5: SELF CONTAINMENT OF SETTLEMENTS.	
	DEVELOPMENT WHICH IMPROVES THE BALANCE OF LAND USES WITHIN A SETTLEMENT IN TERMS OF MINIMISING OVERALL TRANSPORT USE WILL BE ENCOURAGED.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To seek to bring about a better balance in the provision of employment, services, housing and transport infrastructure so as to minimise transport demand insofar as is practical in West Somerset.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The highly dispersed settlement pattern and thinly spread population within most of the Local Plan area mean that the private car is the only realistic form of transport for making the journeys necessary for everyday life for much of West Somerset's population. ○ If enough uses can be located in the main service settlements, close to the (limited number of) effective public transport routes which do exist, ie: the A39 between Minehead and Bridgwater, and the A358 between Williton and Taunton, then what potential there is for the public having opportunities to use public transport is maximised. The potential for car borne journeys to be multi-purpose is also increased. ○ Employment location is a particularly powerful factor in this policy field. Additional employment uses, particularly of higher status will reduce the amount of commuting from West Somerset to the M5 corridor. ○ It is accepted that some journeys to access services and employment will be to larger centres such as Bristol, Exeter or Taunton. The impending new nuclear project at Hinkley Point is also likely to increase the amount of commuting from other parts of West Somerset and beyond.
Justification	<p>Whilst it is recognised that planning for the car is the reality in West Somerset, national policy, and in particular the objectives of sustainable development require that a better mix of transport modes is encouraged. Effective planning policies can help to ensure that patterns of new development provision aim to minimise transport demand and maximise the attractiveness of walking and cycling as modes of transport in places such as Minehead in particular. The provision of the best range of services and facilities which can be achieved will help to increase the self-containment of the larger settlements, and this again applies particularly to Minehead.</p>

	<p><u>Definition:</u></p> <p><u>Settlement:</u></p> <p>In the context of these policies, ‘settlement’ means Minehead/Alcombe, Watchet, Williton and the Primary and Secondary Villages as identified in Policy SC1.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u></p> <p>See Appendix 1 nos.; 10, 15, 47, 68, 108, 112, 118, 119 and, 122.</p>
POLICY SC6: SAFEGUARDING OF VILLAGE FACILITIES.	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT RESULTING IN THE LOSS OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES SUCH AS PUBLIC HOUSES AND SHOPS WHERE THESE ARE THE LAST SUCH FACILITIES IN, OR SERVING A SETTLEMENT, WILL BE RESISTED UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE BUSINESS IS NOT AND CANNOT BE MADE VIABLE, AND THAT ALL REASONABLE EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO SELL, RENT AND /OR LEASE THE BUSINESS (AT A COMPETITIVE PRICE FOR COMPARABLE USES) FOR A MINIMUM OF TWELVE MONTHS AND HAS GENERATED NO INTEREST</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whilst appropriate additions to the mix of uses can serve to enhance self-containment, the loss of local facilities can have an adverse impact. The policy seeks to ensure that all avenues have been explored and exhausted before valuable economic local facilities such as a shop or public house are lost.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The highly dispersed settlement pattern and thinly spread population within most of the Local Plan area mean that the private car is the only realistic form of transport for making the journeys necessary for everyday life for much of West Somerset’s population. ○ If enough uses can be located in the main service settlements, close to the (limited number of) effective public transport routes which do exist, ie: the A39 between Minehead and Bridgwater, and the A358 between Williton and Taunton, then what potential there is for the public having opportunities to use public transport is maximised. The potential for car borne journeys to be multi-purpose is also increased. ○ The retention of local facilities particularly in the villages can help to minimise transport demand as well as maintaining community life. ○ Employment location is a particularly powerful factor in this policy field. Additional employment uses, particularly of higher status will reduce the amount of commuting from West Somerset to the M5 corridor. ○ It is accepted that some journeys to access services and employment will be to larger centres such as Bristol, Exeter or Taunton. The impending new nuclear project at Hinkley Point is also likely to increase the amount of commuting from other parts of West Somerset and beyond.

<p>Justification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whilst it is recognised that planning for the car is the reality in West Somerset, national policy, and in particular the objectives of sustainable development require that a better mix of transport modes is encouraged. Effective planning policies can help to ensure that patterns of new development provision aim to minimise transport demand and maximise the attractiveness of walking and cycling as modes of transport in places such as Minehead in particular. The provision of the best range of services and facilities which can be achieved will help to increase the self-containment of the larger settlements, and this again applies particularly to Minehead. ○ Recognition of the identification of local economic facilities as Assets of Community Value under the provisions of the Localism Act. <p><u>Definition:</u></p> <p><u>Settlement:</u></p> <p>In the context of these policies, ‘settlement’ means Minehead/ Alcombe, Watchet, Williton and the Primary and Secondary Villages as identified in Policy SC1.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u></p> <p>See Appendix 1 nos.; 10, 15, 47, 68, 108, 112, 118, 120 and 122.</p>
POLICY MD1: MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE DEVELOPMENT	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AT MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE, MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE SETTLEMENT’S ROLE AS THE MAIN SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT CENTRE IN WEST SOMERSET, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF THE DIVERSITY AND QUALITY OF ITS HISTORIC AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AND; • SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE URBAN AREA; • MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE ITS ATTRACTIVENESS AS A TOURIST DESTINATION, AND; <p>WHERE APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS MUST ALSO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS RESOLVING THE FLOOD RISK ISSUES WHICH AFFECT THE SETTLEMENT INCLUDING IMPROVING THE SEA DEFENCES PROTECTING THE EASTERN END OF THE TOWN, • GIVE APPROPRIATE TREATMENT TO THE TOWN’S SURROUNDINGS IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL DESIGNATIONS INCLUDING THE EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK.
<p>Purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To protect and enhance Minehead & Alcombe’s key role in the local economy and also in the provision of community services for the wider area. ○ To address the shortcomings in the town’s coastal flood defences at the eastern end of the town.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To fulfil these aims whilst protecting the town's high quality landscape setting
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That maintaining and strengthening the range of service, recreation, education and employment facilities in Minehead & Alcombe will improve the quality of life for the town's inhabitants (and those of its hinterland) and ○ It will also reduce the number of journeys to other main centres to access services not available in the town.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minehead/Alcombe is the major centre of population in the District (11,981), having approximately a third of the total population (including the Exmoor National Park area). It performs a critical role in the servicing of a large and thinly populated rural hinterland extending well outside the Local Plan area that is relatively remote from larger settlements such as Barnstaple, Bridgwater, Taunton and, Tiverton. The continuing economic health of the town is essential not only to the quality of life of residents and visitors, but also to the maintenance of the relatively high level of self-containment which the area enjoys. Development proposals which could damage its importance by reducing the range and level of service facilities available should therefore be resisted, whilst it would be beneficial to encourage proposals which support the services which already exist, or add to them at an appropriate level. ○ Minehead/Alcombe provides a wide range of facilities for a large and relatively inaccessible area. Facilities include the community hospital, community college (sixth form), middle school, police, fire and ambulance stations, town centre and foodstores. ○ It is also an important tourism destination with hotels / guest houses, seafront, holiday camp, steam railway and easy access to Exmoor. ○ Minehead is the focus of public transport services linking to the M5 at both Taunton and Bridgwater ○ Environmental considerations include a substantial area in the south east of the settlement which is at high risk of coastal flooding for which sea defences exist, and the high quality landscape which surrounds the town to the north, west and south. ○ A surface water management plan has been prepared for Minehead. ○ Minehead lies relatively close to the designated area of the Exmoor National Park which lies some distance beyond the southern and western fringes of the town. Development proposals particularly on these edges of the town should be designed in such a way as to respond sympathetically to the National Park's historic and traditional landscape. ○ The design of lighting schemes for development at Minehead should seek to minimise the amount of light pollution created in order to minimise any adverse impact on the Exmoor National Park Dark Sky Reserve. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 10, 37, 47, 68, 70, 71, 72, 82, 89, 108, 109, 110, 112, 118, 120, 121, 122 and, 126.</p>

POLICY MD2: KEY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATION AT MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE	
	<p>WITHIN THE AREA IDENTIFIED ON THE POLICIES MAP SOUTH OF THE A39, HOPCOTT ROAD, MINEHEAD/ALCOMBE A MIXED DEVELOPMENT WILL BE DELIVERED SUBJECT TO AN INDICATIVE MASTERPLAN INCORPORATING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPROXIMATELY 750 DWELLINGS, • A DISTRIBUTOR ROAD THROUGH THE SITE LINKING THE DEVELOPMENT TO THE A39 AT TWO POINTS, ONE CLOSE TO EACH END OF THE SITE, • PROVIDE SPACE FOR THE FUTURE LINKAGE OF THE DISTRIBUTOR ROAD TO THE LT1 SITE TO THE WEST, AND; • A MINIMUM OF 3 HECTARES OF APPROPRIATE AND COMPATIBLE, NON-RESIDENTIAL USES. • MEASURES TO PREVENT HARM TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORIC ASSETS OF THE LATE 19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY VILLAS ON HOPCOTT ROAD/PERITON ROAD; LOWER HOPCOTT; PERITON & PERITON COTTAGES; GRADE II LISTED BUILDINGS AND HIGHER HOPCOTT, AND; • WHICH PROVIDES AN APPROPRIATE DESIGN RESPONSE TO THE SITE'S PROXIMITY TO THE EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK <p>THE DEVELOPMENT MUST BE FACILITATED BY THE APPROPRIATE INTEGRATED PROVISION OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY AND FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To provide for an appropriate additional amount of housing, commercial and community land uses in the most sustainable location available at Minehead.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That the provision of a significant amount of housing (and supporting mixed use) development at Minehead / Alcombe will serve to maintain and strengthen Minehead's role and function as a main service centre for the wider area and minimise the need to travel out of the local area to access facilities in more distant centres. ○ The development of the site will be subject to an overall master-plan including phasing where appropriate. ○ The provision of strategic development at this location will: ○ Help to minimise the risk from flooding ○ Minimise the walking time from the new development into the town centre and to other local facilities.
Justification	<p>The strategy requires that the largest part of the strategic housing provision in the plan should be provided at Minehead/Alcombe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ So that additional transport demand is minimised and access to non-private car transport modes is maximised (notwithstanding the recognised limitations of public transport in the area), it is essential to locate the largest

part of it where the best range of services are available. Also Minehead is the main focus for public transport services in West Somerset.

- The necessity of accessing the site properly, addressing constraints and providing a comprehensively planned approach to open space, movement routes and biodiversity means that a masterplan will be required to guide the implementation of development on the site. The Masterplan must also provide for future linkage of the distributor road through the longer term development site LT1 to a third junction with the A39.
- So that flood risk within the area is appropriately managed, and especially that the potential for flood risk in the area to the north east of Seaward Way is addressed as part of any development.
- So that impact on the landscape is managed appropriately. The land identified by this policy is unconstrained by specific flooding or landscape designations. Detailed design of schemes can address this the biodiversity issue identified in the Habitat Regulations Assessment. However, there are potentially impacts on the Barbastelle bat feature of the outside of designated boundary the Exmoor and Quantocks Oak Woodlands SAC which nonetheless ecologically support its conservation objectives.
- So that any impacts on the Barbastelle bat feature of the Exmoor and Quantocks Oak Woodlands SAC can be offset within the Areas of Search (A4, A5 and A6) see Plan 1 attached. Biodiversity offsetting is likely to be required as a result of the assessment under the Habitats Regulations 2010 at a project level for these sites.
- So that impact upon the natural and historic heritage is managed in an appropriate way,
- To avoid the provision of large amounts of new residential development in less well serviced parts of the District.
- Commits West Somerset Council to the preparation of an indicative masterplan in order to help to guide the emerging development proposals for the site so that the Plan's strategy will not be prejudiced.
- Minehead lies relatively close to the designated area of the Exmoor National Park which lies some distance beyond the southern and western fringes of the town. Development proposals particularly on these edges of the town should be designed in such a way as to respond sympathetically to the National Park's historic and traditional landscape.
- The design of lighting schemes for development at Minehead should seek to minimise the amount of light pollution created in order to minimise any adverse impact on the Exmoor National Park Dark Sky Reserve.

Sources:

See Appendix 1 nos.; 71, 72, 108, 118, 119, 122, 124 and, 126.

POLICY WA1: WATCHET DEVELOPMENT	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AT WATCHET, MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE SETTLEMENT'S ROLE AS A LOCAL SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT CENTRE FOR THE NORTH EASTERN PART OF WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF ITS SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AND • SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE HISTORIC CHARACTER AND HERITAGE ASSETS AS A TOURIST DESTINATION, INCLUDING THE OPERATION OF THE MARINA. <p>WHERE APPROPRIATE, DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS MUST ALSO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS RESOLVING THE FLOOD RISK ISSUES WHICH AFFECT THE SETTLEMENT, • ALLOW FOR POTENTIAL REALIGNMENT OF THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY WHICH MAY BE NECESSITATED BY COASTAL EROSION, • IMPROVE LINKAGES BETWEEN THE TOWN CENTRE AND THE PARTS OF THE TOWN TO THE SOUTH OF THE RAILWAY, • PROVIDE ADDITIONAL ALLOTMENTS FOR THE TOWN, AND; • COMPLEMENT THE PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN NEIGHBOURING WILLITON.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To protect and enhance Watchet's important service and employment role in the local economy and also in the provision of community services for the wider area in conjunction with the neighbouring settlement of Williton. ○ To address the severance of the town centre from the bulk of the town's residential property which lies to the south east of the railway. There is currently a single road crossing, a bridge with no footways, as well as a pedestrian level crossing and a traditional railway footbridge. Options for improvement are limited but should be explored in conjunction with the additional traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, which would arise from further development south of the railway line. ○ Watchet is a tourist centre in its own right; this forms an important part of the local economy. The encouragement of tourism development is of benefit to the town and the surrounding area. ○ Active coastal erosion affects the coastline around the town, including the section at Helwell Bay between Watchet and Doniford, where the West Somerset Railway runs close to the edge of the sea cliff. As this cliff erodes, it will be necessary to re-align the railway if this key piece of tourism infrastructure is to remain intact.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That maintaining and strengthening the range of service, recreation, education and employment facilities in Watchet will improve the quality of life for the town's inhabitants (and those of its hinterland) and ○ It will also reduce the number of journeys to other main centres to access services not available in the town.

<p>Justification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Watchet is the second largest centre of population in the District (population 3,785). It has a role along with the neighbouring settlement of Williton, of being an important secondary service centre to Minehead/Alcombe, helping to serve the north eastern part of the District in particular. ○ Development proposals which could damage its importance by reducing the range and level of service facilities available should therefore be resisted, whilst it would be beneficial to encourage proposals which support the services which already exist, or add to them at an appropriate level. ○ The paper mill is the most significant employers within the District, its retention is highly desirable. Watchet is also a significant tourism destination with hotels/guest houses, esplanade, marina, steam railway and coast. ○ Since the railway was built in the 1860s the town has expanded significantly to the south east, such that the majority of the town's population lives on the other side of the railway from the town centre. Links across the railway are limited to a single road bridge with no footways, a traditional railway footbridge and a pedestrian level crossing. In particular, better provision for those using pushchairs, wheelchairs or mobility scooters in the general vicinity of the road bridge would be of considerable benefit for the local population. ○ Environmental considerations include an area in the valley bottom in the vicinity of the paper mill which is at high risk of flooding. <p><u>Sources:</u></p> <p>See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 10, 34, 37, 47, 68, 70, 71, 74, 83, 108, 112, 114, 118, 120, 122, 124 and, 126.</p>
<p>POLICY WA2: STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATION AT PARSONAGE FARM, WATCHET</p>	
	<p>WITHIN THE AREA IDENTIFIED ON THE POLICIES MAP AT PARSONAGE FARM, WATCHET, A MIXED DEVELOPMENT WILL BE DELIVERED INCLUDING SUBJECT TO AN INDICATIVE MASTERPLAN INCORPORATING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPROXIMATELY 290 DWELLINGS, • APPROXIMATELY 3 HECTARES OF APPROPRIATE AND COMPATIBLE, NON-RESIDENTIAL USES AT THE FARM BUILDING COMPLEX, AND; • MEASURES TO PREVENT HARM TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORIC ASSETS AT PARSONAGE FARM, GRADE II LISTED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SETTINGS, AND; • PROVIDE ADDITIONAL ALLOTMENTS <p>THE DEVELOPMENT MUST BE FACILITATED BY THE APPROPRIATE INTEGRATED PROVISION OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY AND FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE TO INCLUDE WALKING AND CYCLING LINKS CONNECTING THE NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH THE TOWN CENTRE.</p>

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To provide for an appropriate additional amount of housing, commercial and community land uses in the most sustainable location available at Watchet in order to support and enhance the services and role of the town.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That a significant allocation of new development to the town will increase activity in the local economy serving to improve the viability of local services to the benefit of both the residents of Watchet and the wider community. ○ The development of the site will be subject to an overall master-plan including phasing where appropriate. ○ The master-plan will also take account of the significance of the ‘Listed’ historic assets at Parsonage Farm and their settings as described in the, Parsonage Farm Heritage Assessment.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As set out above, the plan proposes to provide for 2,900 dwellings over the plan period on the basis of the evidence. In order to meet this level of provision in the most sustainable way it is desirable to deliver the majority of these dwellings at the three main settlements of Minehead/Alcombe, Watchet and Williton including some 290 dwellings at Watchet. ○ Such a distribution will help to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Watchet’s important service provision role for the north eastern part of the District will be strengthened. ○ Flood risk within the area is not made worse. There are areas at high risk of flooding at Watchet, principally within the old town and the valley running inland including much of the paper mill site. ○ Impact on the landscape is managed appropriately. The land identified by this policy is unconstrained by flooding, landscape or nature conservation designations. It will be necessary to ensure that development proposed under this policy does not become visible from the south above the ridge forming the landscape boundary between Watchet and Williton. ○ The provision of pedestrian and cycleway links to the town centre from the new development is essential in order to avoid severance. ○ Impact upon the natural and historic heritage is managed in an appropriate way taking account of the significance of the ‘Listed’ historic assets at Parsonage Farm and their settings as described in the, Parsonage Farm Heritage Assessment. ○ This development is proposed along with that in Williton and Minehead/Alcombe to avoid the provision of large amounts of residential development in less well serviced parts of the District. ○ West Somerset Council will lead the preparation of an indicative masterplan in order to help to guide the emerging development proposals for the site so that the Plan’s strategy will not be prejudiced. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 71, 72, 108, 118, 119, 122, 124 and, 126</p>

POLICY WI1: WILLITON DEVELOPMENT	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AT WILLITON MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE SETTLEMENT'S ROLE AS A LOCAL SERVICE, ADMINISTRATIVE AND EMPLOYMENT CENTRE FOR THE NORTH EASTERN PART OF WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF ITS SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AND; • CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE VILLAGE, AND; • COMPLEMENT THE PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN NEIGHBOURING WATCHET <p>WHERE APPROPRIATE, DEVELOPMENT MUST CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS RESOLVING THE FLOOD RISK ISSUES WHICH AFFECT THE SETTLEMENT.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To protect and enhance Williton's important service and employment role in the local economy and also in the provision of community services for the wider area in conjunction with the neighbouring settlement of Watchet. ○ To address the traffic management issues which affect the village due to a combination of narrow streets with narrow or absent footways and the fact that the two busiest roads in the District – the A358 and the A39 – meet in the centre of the village causing significant levels of congestion at peak times. There is also considerable conflict with local traffic movements connected with local shops and services which exacerbate the problems. ○ Williton lies at the confluence of the Doniford Stream and the Monksilver Stream, the latter passes close to the centre of the village in a narrow and constrained channel. There is a history of flooding relating to both streams, and also to the area to the west of the village which used to be managed as water meadows and which retains a small watercourse linking the Monksilver Stream upstream of the village, with the Doniford Stream downstream of the main confluence. Any management changes proposed to these watercourses in association with Strategic development at Williton should be considered in the context of the legal requirements of the Water Framework Directive in order to protect their 'Good Ecological Status'. ○ Williton is the main administrative centre for the District, having the District Council offices. There is also a community hospital, fire station, middle school library and police station. This service role is of benefit to the wider area and the District as a whole. It is essential that this level of provision should be retained or improved.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That maintaining and strengthening the range of service, recreation, education and employment facilities in Williton will improve the quality of life for the village's inhabitants (and those of its hinterland) and ○ It will also reduce the number of journeys to other main centres to access services not available in the village.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Williton is the third largest centre of population in the District (population 2,697). It has a role along with the neighbouring settlement of Watchet, of

	<p>being an important secondary service centre to Minehead/Alcombe, helping to serve the north eastern part of the District in particular.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development proposals which could damage its importance by reducing the range and level of service facilities available should therefore be resisted, whilst it would be beneficial to encourage proposals which support the services which already exist, or add to them at an appropriate level. ○ Traffic congestion is a severe problem at peak times, particularly in the main holiday season. Williton, in common with other settlements on the A39 corridor for which by-pass schemes were planned in the past but which failed to be prioritised for funding and have since been cancelled. ○ Environmental considerations include significant areas of the village which are at high risk of flooding. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 10, 37, 47, 68, 70, 71, 84, 91, 108, 112, 118, 120, 122, 124, 125 and, 126.</p>
POLICY WI2: KEY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATIONS AT WILLITON	
	<p>WITHIN THE AREAS IDENTIFIED ON THE POLICIES MAP TO THE WEST AND NORTH OF WILLITON, MIXED DEVELOPMENT WILL BE DELIVERED SUBJECT TO AN INDICATIVE MASTERPLAN INCORPORATING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPROXIMATELY 406 DWELLINGS, AND; • APPROXIMATELY 3 HECTARES OF APPROPRIATE AND COMPATIBLE, NON-RESIDENTIAL USES. • ENHANCEMENT OF THE DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET BATTLEGORE BARROW CEMETERY AND ITS SETTING SHOULD TAKE PLACE. THE SITE SHOULD BE ENHANCED TO ENSURE ITS USE AS A COMMUNAL ASSET AND CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THE COMMUNITY. THIS SHOULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH LANDSCAPING, PUBLIC ACCESS, APPROPRIATE USE OF THE SITE AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN AGREED WITH HISTORIC ENGLAND. <p>THE DEVELOPMENT MUST BE FACILITATED BY THE APPROPRIATE INTEGRATED PROVISION OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY AND FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE TO INCLUDE WALKING AND CYCLING LINKS CONNECTING THE NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH THE VILLAGE CENTRE.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To provide for an appropriate additional amount of housing, commercial and community land uses in the most sustainable location available at Williton in order to support and enhance the services and role of the village.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That a significant allocation of new development to the town will increase activity in the local economy serving to improve the viability of local services to the benefit of both the residents of Williton and the wider community.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The development of the site will be subject to an overall master-plan including phasing where appropriate.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As set out above, the plan proposes to provide for 2,900 dwellings over the plan period on the basis of the evidence. In order to meet this level of provision in the most sustainable way it is desirable to deliver the majority of these dwellings at the three main settlements of Minehead/Alcombe, Watchet and Williton including some 406 dwellings on sites at Williton. ○ Such a distribution will help to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Williton's important service provision role for the north eastern part of the District will be strengthened. ○ Flood risk within the area is not made worse. There are areas at high risk of flooding at Williton, both within and around the village in association with the Monksilver Stream and its related watercourses and the Doniford Stream which it joins close to the railway station. ○ Impact on the landscape is managed appropriately. The land identified by this policy is unconstrained by landscape or nature conservation designations, however it is adjacent to land affected by flooding, and an appropriate flood risk management strategy will have to be implemented as part of the proposed development. ○ development is proposed to the west and north of the village because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The village's commercial and service centre is well related to the proposed strategic sites. Development in these locations will help to ensure that the maximum number of local trips are made on foot or by bicycle. • It will also increase the likelihood that the new residents will use the local shops and facilities, helping to sustain the vitality of the village centre. • Other potential strategic development locations to the east of the village are more difficult to access such that inhabitants would be more likely to use their cars to access the centre. Once in their cars, residents are more likely to drive further to the wider range of facilities available in the next nearest service centres of Minehead, Taunton or Bridgwater, giving rise to higher carbon dioxide emissions and reducing the amount of business in the village shops. Other adverse factors affecting this area are that achieving an appropriate vehicular access for this location is likely to prove difficult, and that the area falls within the proposed Bat Consultation Zone (see policy NH8 and, for more detail, the Preferred Strategy Habitat Regulations Assessment). ○ The provision of pedestrian and cycleway links to the village centre from the new development is essential in order to avoid severance. ○ The Battlegore barrow cemetery lies close to the area identified for development, it will be essential to protect and enhance its heritage value in designing and implementing the development. ○ This development is proposed along with that in Watchet and Minehead/Alcombe to avoid the provision of large amounts of residential development in less well serviced parts of the District. ○ West Somerset Council will lead the preparation of an indicative masterplan in order to help to guide the emerging development proposals for the sites so that the Plan's strategy will not be prejudiced.

	<p><u>Sources:</u></p> <p>See Appendix 1 nos.; 71, 108, 118, 120, 122, 124 and, 126.</p>
POLICY LT1: POST 2026 KEY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES.	
	<p>WITHIN THE TWO AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR LONGER TERM STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ON THE POLICIES MAP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TO THE SOUTH OF PERITON ROAD, MINEHEAD FOR WHICH ACCESS WOULD BE VIA A DISTRIBUTOR ROAD THROUGH THE SITE LINKING THE DISTRIBUTOR ROAD FOR THE MD2 SITE WITH THE SITE'S A39 FRONTAGE AND; • TO THE WEST OF WATCHET AT CLEEVE HILL, WHERE DEVELOPMENT MUST CONTRIBUTE TO ENHANCING THE UNIQUE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE TOWN INCLUDING MITIGATING THE EROSION OF DAW'S CASTLE AND ENCOURAGING VISITORS TO THE MONUMENT THROUGH FUNDING EXCAVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENT OF SITE MANAGEMENT, AND ALSO TO PROVIDING A NEW ALIGNMENT FOR THE B3191 TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF COASTAL EROSION, • PROPOSALS FOR THE WATCHET SITE MUST SUSTAIN AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, ENHANCE THE HISTORIC ASSETS OF DAW'S CASTLE AND THE ADJACENT LIME KILNS AND THEIR SETTINGS. • DEVELOPMENT OF BOTH OF THESE SITES WOULD BE GUIDED BY THE PROVISION OF INDICATIVE MASTERPLANS. • IN RESPECT OF THE MINEHEAD LONG TERM SITE, THE MASTERPLAN SHOULD PROVIDE FOR AN APPROPRIATE DESIGN RESPONSE TO THE SITE'S PROXIMITY TO THE EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK. • THE MASTERPLAN FOR THE WATCHET LONG TERM SITE SHOULD INCLUDE THE USE OF SOFT LANDSCAPING, GREEN SPACES AND SYMPATHETIC DESIGN IN TERMS OF APPEARANCE TO MITIGATE HARM. <p>PROVISION IS MADE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE LATTER PART OF THE PLAN PERIOD POST 2026.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In order to provide for the strategic development needs of the area in the later part of the plan period, it is essential to reserve some strategic development sites for development at that stage.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There will remain a need for strategic development sites in the post-2026 part of the Local Plan period, without taking steps to reserve land for this purpose such land may not be available when it is needed. ○ The development of the sites will be subject to an overall master-plan including phasing where appropriate.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These two sites are held in reserve as a contingency and could potentially be released early if monitoring demonstrates a significant, ongoing shortfall in the rate of development of the Key Strategy Sites for Minehead and

	<p>Watchet, or if those sites deliver less housing than anticipated in the Plan. The Watchet LT1 site could also be brought forward if the need to realign the B3191 becomes imperative due to coastal erosion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Land between Hopcott and Periton, south of the A39 Periton Road at Minehead is the next most sustainable strategic development option for Minehead after the development of the land allocated by policy MD2. It would be proposed for development subject to similar conditions as policy MD2 regarding the treatment of biodiversity including the barbastelle bats, and the landscape setting of the site. ○ Minehead lies relatively close to the designated area of the Exmoor National Park which lies some distance beyond the southern and western fringes of the town. Development proposals particularly on these edges of the town should be designed in such a way as to respond sympathetically to the National Park's historic and traditional landscape. ○ The design of lighting schemes for development at Minehead should seek to minimise the amount of light pollution created in order to minimise any adverse impact on the Exmoor National Park Dark Sky Reserve. ○ The site at Cleeve Hill, Watchet is relatively close to the town centre, and also offers the potential to re-align the B3191 where coastal erosion is threatening to destroy the current alignment of the road. ○ Options for rescue archaeology excavations in advance of further coastal erosion of Daws Castle will be sought through Section 106 Agreements with developers. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 10, 37, 47, 68, 70, 71, 72, 108, 112, 118, 120, 122, 124 and, 126.</p>
POLICY SV1: DEVELOPMENT AT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY VILLAGES	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT AT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY VILLAGES SHOULD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BE DESIGNED TO FORM AN INTEGRAL, HARMONIOUS ADDITION TO THE SETTLEMENT'S EXISTING CHARACTER • HELP TO MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE THEIR EXISTING LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVISION, AND ALSO HELP TO CREATE BALANCED COMMUNITIES AT A LEVEL APPROPRIATE TO THEIR ROLE AND FUNCTION.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy is proposed in order to enhance and sustain the economic and social vitality of the larger rural villages ○ It will provide a spatial strategy for the villages in the A39 and A358 corridors and also for the Brendon Hills and Exmoor fringe communities.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That a modest amount of new development can help to maintain the vitality of the larger villages, particularly if economic as well as residential development is provided, for example in the form of work-live units.

<p>Justification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are a number of factors which justify a policy seeking to bring new residential and employment development to villages in West Somerset: ○ There is a strong demand for second homes and holiday cottages which increases property prices ○ In-migration of early retirees and families from areas such as the west midlands and south east of England where property values are higher also increases property values ○ The predominantly low wage economy in the area, which reduces the ability of local people to afford access to the West Somerset housing market. ○ The Taylor Report concluded that development in village communities was an appropriate way of addressing the need to retain vital communities in rural areas, without which rural populations will become increasingly reliant on urban areas for their services. <p><u>Sources:</u></p> <p>See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 10, 15, 37, 47, 68, 70, 712, 108, 112, 118, 119, 122, 124 and, 126.</p>
<p>POLICY OC1: OPEN COUNTRYSIDE DEVELOPMENT</p>	
	<p>THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE INCLUDES ALL LAND OUTSIDE OF EXISTING SETTLEMENTS, WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS NOT GENERALLY APPROPRIATE. IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DEVELOPMENT MAY BE PERMITTED WHERE THIS IS BENEFICIAL FOR THE COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ECONOMY.</p> <p>DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE (LAND NOT ADJACENT OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE MAJOR SETTLEMENTS, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY VILLAGES) WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUCH A LOCATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR A RURAL WORKER ENGAGED IN EG: AGRICULTURAL , FORESTRY, HORTICULTURE, EQUESTRIAN OR HUNTING EMPLOYMENT, OR; • IT IS PROVIDED THROUGH THE CONVERSION OF EXISTING, TRADITIONALLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDINGS IN ASSOCIATION WITH EMPLOYMENT OR TOURISM PURPOSES AS PART OF A WORK/LIVE DEVELOPMENT, OR; • IT IS NEW-BUILD TO BENEFIT EXISTING EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN THE AREA THAT COULD NOT BE EASILY ACCOMMODATED WITHIN OR ADJOINING A NEARBY SETTLEMENT IDENTIFIED IN POLICY SC1, OR; • IT MEETS AN ONGOING IDENTIFIED LOCAL NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE NEARBY SETTLEMENT WHICH CANNOT BE MET WITHIN OR CLOSER TO THE SETTLEMENT, OR; • IT IS AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING EXCEPTIONS SCHEME ADJACENT TO, OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO, A SETTLEMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE PERMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY SC4(5). <p>APPLICATIONS FOR DWELLINGS UNDER THIS POLICY THAT WOULD NOT BE LOCATED IN A SETTLEMENT IDENTIFIED IN POLICY SC1 OR ANY</p>

	OTHER SETTLEMENT, WOULD BE CONSIDERED SUBJECT TO A FUNCTIONAL AND ECONOMIC TEST. WHERE PERMISSION IS GRANTED CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO THIS BEING INITIALLY MADE ON A TEMPORARY BASIS.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To protect the open countryside from damaging development whilst exceptionally allowing development which is beneficial to the health of the community and / or the local economy to take place.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That it is generally desirable to protect the open countryside from development. ○ That there are circumstances in which it is appropriate to allow a strictly limited amount of development in the open countryside for land management, social or economic reasons.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New-build development for employment generating activities already established in the local area will be considered where the type of activity in its existing location is incompatible with existing neighbouring uses. The re-location of any relevant employment generating activity would also need to take account of any relevant parts of Policy EC5 and Policy EC9. ○ Essential dwellings for rural workers may be permitted subject to a rigorous assessment of the necessity for the development in the location proposed, and in particular, why an existing dwelling in the local area cannot suffice. The justification for such dwellings must include setting out the functional need for a dwelling in that location and economic evidence to demonstrate the potential viability of the scheme. These will include the following criteria; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there is an existing and established need for the activity in the area, ▪ the need requires the presence of a full-time worker employed in the activity on-site to provide availability to meet local emergencies associated with it, on a 24/7 basis, ▪ the need could not be met effectively through use of existing off-site accommodation nearby, and, ▪ other planning requirements, such as siting and access, can be satisfied. Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the activity can demonstrate that it has been generating an regular on-going need for at least three years, and, ▪ the proposed accommodation should be commensurate with the established functional need for accommodation in that location. <p>Because it will not be clear whether an enterprise will prove to be viable in advance, initial permissions under this policy may be granted on a temporary basis.</p> ○ The re-use and conversion of existing traditional buildings in the open countryside for alternative uses can, if sensitively implemented in order to maximise the retention of the traditional character of the buildings, make a significant contribution to protecting the character and heritage of the rural landscape. ○ Reasons for preventing development in the open countryside are that:

- dispersed development disproportionately increases transport demand which can usually only be fulfilled by use of the private car.
- It is significantly more expensive per capita to deliver services to a dispersed rural population than for population concentrated in larger settlements.
- Development in the open countryside changes its character frequently bringing an undesirable modern urban element into it with adverse heritage impact.
- The attractiveness of the area to tourists, who form an essential part of the local economy, depends to a great extent on the beauty and historic character of the landscape and rural settlements.
- There is a high suppressed demand for houses in rural settings reflected in the higher prices which houses in such locations command on the open market, without planning policy restraint there would be a large number of new dwellings constructed in a scattered pattern across the District. This would be harmful in its impact for the reasons set out above.
- Reasons for allowing development in the open countryside are that:
 - Certain types of agricultural, forestry, equine, horticultural or hunting enterprise need close supervision which can only be provided by having someone living on or near to the site. In exceptional cases, this need cannot be met through the use of existing housing stock in the local area, subject to a detailed and compelling justification, there may be an economic case for allowing a new dwelling.
 - Where traditional buildings are being conserved through conversion for a business use including tourism accommodation or a live / work development, a new residential dwelling may be permitted as part of the conversion scheme in order to assist with the provision of jobs in rural areas.
 - Affordable housing where there is a demonstrated local need can be allowed in order to maintain the balance and health of the local community.
 - All of these subject to the need to minimise additional transport demand. This is particularly important in relation to tourism or business activities.
- See also transport policy TR2.

Sources:

See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 10, 15, 37, 47, 68, 70, 712, 108, 112, 118, 119, 122, 124 and, 126.

ECONOMY	
POLICY EC1: WIDENING AND STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL ECONOMY	
	<p>PROPOSALS WHICH WILL MAKE THE WEST SOMERSET ECONOMY STRONGER AND MORE DIVERSE AND THAT ARE LIKELY TO INCREASE THE PROPORTION OF HIGHER PAID JOBS LOCALLY WILL BE SUPPORTED.</p> <p>NEW DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT AND, CONVERSION PROPOSALS FOR ALL TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT GENERATING ACTIVITIES WILL BE ENCOURAGED.</p> <p>WHERE POSSIBLE, SUCH PROPOSALS SHOULD MAKE USE OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES, OR OF SITES WITH SIMILAR AND COMPATIBLE USES WHERE THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED WOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE AMENITY OF EXISTING NEIGHBOURING USES.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o To encourage a widening of the employment base within the area. o This includes taking advantage of the new economic activity brought by the Hinkley Point C proposals, which potentially offers a significant supply of relatively well paid and secure employment for the District's population. o To provide an appropriate supply of employment land.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o That having a more diverse economy including more, higher paid employment will attract more people of working age to remain in West Somerset, or will encourage them to move here to work. o This in turn will improve the ratio of average earnings to average house price in the area.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o One of the key weaknesses of the West Somerset economy is the predominantly low waged economy based on the tourism business, agriculture and social care. Bringing a wider range of work, and more, higher paid jobs to the area would increase the prosperity of the area and improve its facilities to the benefit of the population as a whole. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 15, 36, 37, 50, 53, 108, 118, 119, 124 and, 126.</p>
POLICY EC2: MAJOR EMPLOYMENT SITE	
	<p>THE EMPLOYMENT SITE AT MART ROAD, IS IDENTIFIED ON THE POLICIES MAP. WITHIN THIS SITE THERE WILL BE A GENERAL PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF USES IN THE B1, B2 AND B8 USE CLASSES.</p> <p>EMPLOYMENT AND SERVICE BASED LAND USES FALLING OUTSIDE THESE USE CLASSES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THESE CAN BE DEMONSTRATED TO MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE OVERALL VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY.</p>

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing for the expansion of existing businesses. ○ Providing for businesses requiring specific and/or bespoke premises. ○ Maintaining a key element in the local employment base.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employment development should be accommodated on existing allocated employment land unless there is a sound reason why it should be located elsewhere. ○ It is beneficial to the local economy (and therefore the community) to have a secure supply of land for economic activity / employment use.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employment land is allocated so as to be conveniently located for access by a range of employees and other visitors to the businesses situated there. ○ It can be more attractive to develop a business on a new unallocated site elsewhere, however this can have the effect of undermining the success of existing business areas, which can harm the local economy. In identifying locations for future employment development, consideration will be taken of the existing uses adjoining the site and/or are proposed to be approved or allocated nearby in order to avoid incompatible activities being located next to each other. ○ Priority will be given to those sites and land identified as being available and suitable for employment uses identified through the Employment Land Review and, they are consistent with other policies within the Local Plan and, they meet the relevant requirements of the NPPF. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 15, 37, 50, 70, 108, 124 and, 126.</p>
POLICY EC3: GREENFIELD EMPLOYMENT GENERATING DEVELOPMENT	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS REQUIRING A GREENFIELD LOCATION WILL BE DIRECTED TO EXISTING IDENTIFIED AND/OR ALLOCATED SITES FOR THOSE TYPE OF USES UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE PROPOSED LOCATION IS ESSENTIAL TO THE BUSINESS AND THAT IT COULD NOT BE LOCATED ELSEWHERE, AND, • IT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF EXISTING CENTRES, AND; • IT COMPLEMENTS EXISTING SERVICE AND FACILITY PROVISION IN THE SETTLEMENT AND SURROUNDING AREA WITHOUT GENERATING NEW UNSUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PATTERNS.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing for the expansion of existing businesses ○ Providing for businesses requiring specific and/or bespoke premises
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employment development should be accommodated on existing allocated employment land unless there is a sound reason why it should be located elsewhere.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sometimes, when other options have been tested and rejected, Greenfield sites may be the most appropriate choice for new employment development.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It can be more attractive to develop a business on a new unallocated site elsewhere, however this may have the effect of undermining the success of existing business areas, causing harm to the local economy. ○ Whilst the first choice for new employment proposals from the community's point of view will generally be existing employment land, there are occasions when the requirements for a new business, or one needing to expand, cannot be accommodated on existing employment sites. In such cases it can be the best economic option for the local economy to seek to accommodate the business on a greenfield site subject to the safeguards set out in the policy. ○ Priority will be given to those sites and land identified as being available and suitable for employment uses identified through the Employment Land Review, they are consistent with other policies within the Local Plan and, they meet the requirements of the NPPF. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 10, 15, 37, 50, 70, 108, 124 and, 126.</p>
POLICY EC4: HOME-BASED BUSINESS ACTIVITIES	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR NEW OR INTENSIFICATION OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT GENERATING ACTIVITIES WITHIN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES, WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE ESSENTIALLY RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING AND AREA IS MAINTAINED BY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LIMITING THE TYPE AND LEVEL OF ACTIVITY, INCLUDING THE HOURS OF WORK AND DELIVERIES, TO THAT CONSISTENT WITH THE RESIDENTIAL AMENITY OF THE AREA, AND; ● PREVENTING ANY HARMFUL INTENSIFICATION.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy recognises the importance to the West Somerset economy of the substantial number of small home based businesses in the area. ○ It encourages such development subject to their adverse impact being contained at an acceptable level for a residential area, making clear that should environmental impact levels become unacceptable a business would have to either remedy the situation or relocate.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That many businesses would not start up at all without the possibility of beginning at home. ○ Many of these businesses can operate successfully and in an acceptable manner without expanding further, ○ they provide a helpful broadening of the West Somerset economy. ○ Some of them provide high incomes for their owners.

Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A healthy economy requires a varied range of business premises, including provision for those businesses based in residential properties. ○ Given the remote rural nature of West Somerset and the high quality of its environment small high value home based businesses are attracted to the area. ○ In the context of the low average income levels in the West Somerset economy, home based businesses can offer an element of higher income employment helping to broaden the economy. ○ Where subsequent intensification of the employment activity results in an unacceptable level of adverse impact on the residential amenity of the area, the business would be expected to reduce the impact of its increased activities. Alternatively, the relocation of the business to more appropriate premises would be supported. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 15, 37, 75, 108 and, 124.</p>
POLICY EC5: SAFEGUARDING EXISTING EMPLOYMENT USES	
	<p>SITES AND PREMISES WITH EXISTING COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES WILL BE SAFEGUARDED AGAINST CHANGE OF USE TO RESIDENTIAL OR OTHER NON-EMPLOYMENT GENERATING USES UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE ACTIVITY IS NO LONGER APPROPRIATE OR SUSTAINABLE IN THAT LOCATION, • THE BUSINESS IS NO LONGER VIABLE IN THAT LOCATION, • THE BUSINESS/SITE HAS BEEN MARKETED (AT A COMPETITIVE PRICE FOR COMPARABLE USES) FOR A MINIMUM OF TWELVE MONTHS AND HAS GENERATED NO INTEREST, AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, • IT MUST BE DEMONSTRATED THAT ANY NEW USE PROPOSED WOULD NOT PREJUDICE ADJACENT EXISTING OR PROPOSED USES, AND; • THE NEW USE WILL RESULT IN A REDUCTION IN UNDESIRABLE TRANSPORT MOVEMENTS TO THE LOCATION OVER MINOR ROADS LINKING IT TO THE NATIONAL PRIMARY AND COUNTY HIGHWAY PRINCIPAL ROUTE NETWORK. <p>CONSIDERATION WILL ALSO BE TAKEN ACCOUNT OF BUSINESSES RELOCATING FROM THE SITE/PREMISES TO MORE SUSTAINABLE LOCATIONS NEARBY.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To protect existing employment land from redevelopment for other, potentially higher value land uses.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That the provision of employment uses in particular locations has led to employees tending to live within a convenient distance of their place of employment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That if an employment use is lost, the former employees are likely to have to travel further to find alternative work, or to leave the area altogether or become unemployed.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The provision of jobs within West Somerset's communities is not sufficient in quantity or variety to encourage enough people of working age to stay and work within the area. ○ It is therefore essential to retain what employment uses there are, as well as encouraging new ones in order to maintain a balance of land uses which is essential to maximising self-containment within the local area. ○ The erosion of employment uses changing to other land uses will tend to harm the local economy, suitable alternative sites are more likely to be developed for other uses rather than becoming new employment land. ○ A change of use away from employment could prejudice uses of adjacent land, or adjacent land allocated in the Local Plan for other uses which conflict with the new use to the detriment of the Local Plan strategy. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 15, 37, 70, 108 and, 124.</p>
POLICY EC6: WORK/LIVE DEVELOPMENTS	
	<p>PROPOSALS FOR WORK/LIVE DEVELOPMENTS THROUGH NEW BUILD OR CONVERSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS WILL BE SUPPORTED WHERE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE EMPLOYMENT AND RESIDENTIAL ELEMENTS ARE INTEGRATED WITH ONE ANOTHER AND CANNOT BE SEPARATED OR SOLD OFF AS SEPARATE UNITS AND ACTIVITIES AT A SUBSEQUENT POINT IN TIME, • THERE WOULD BE NO ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT PROVISION WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT OR IN NEIGHBOURING SETTLEMENTS, AND; • THERE IS NO GENERATION OF SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS TO AND FROM THE PREMISES AS A RESULT OF THE NEW BUSINESS ACTIVITY. <p>NEW-BUILD WORK/LIVE UNITS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE NEED TO BE IN SUCH A LOCATION IS ESSENTIAL TO THE BUSINESS ACTIVITY AND IT CANNOT BE PROVIDED ELSEWHERE.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To encourage the development of viable work/live accommodation which will remain work/live in the long term.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That work/live accommodation is a legitimate type of employment premises which will help to encourage the formation of new businesses within the area, which; ○ Will help to broaden the West Somerset economy, and;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That work/live accommodation can provide the opportunity to work and live in the same location thereby reducing transport demand.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Properly designed work/live accommodation should ensure that the two types of use are integrated in such a way that they cannot be split up and used separately. ○ It is another legitimate form of employment accommodation which should attract small scale high value businesses to the area, which would work well in conjunction with super-fast broadband to become a valuable element of business premises in the District. ○ Work/live accommodation should, wherever possible, be sited within or adjacent to existing settlements in accordance with the policies of the Local Plan for residential development in order to maximise its sustainability impact. ○ Work/live development may also be created through the conversion of traditional buildings in the open countryside. ○ Work/live planning permissions would be conditioned to the effect that they remain as such. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 15, 37, 75, 108 and, 124.</p>
POLICY EC7: TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL PROVISION	
	<p>PROPOSALS WHICH STRENGTHEN THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED WITHIN THE AREA WILL BE SUPPORTED.</p> <p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT COMBINE EDUCATION, TRAINING AND, EMPLOYMENT FUNCTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ONE LOCATION WILL BE SUPPORTED PROVIDED THAT THEY DO NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF EXISTING CENTRES</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To take advantage of opportunities which arise to increase the range and / or skill level of the local workforce through training.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That increasing the skill levels amongst the local workforce should improve its attractiveness to potential employers and, provided that they remain resident in the area is likely to increase the amount of money circulating in the local economy.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increasing skill levels in the local community should help to increase earnings and the attractiveness of the area to potential employers. ○ Additionally, major projects including the Hinkley Point new nuclear proposals offer the opportunity for local people to acquire skills which will enable them to participate as part of the workforce.

	<p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 15, 36, 37, 53, 120 and, 124.</p>
POLICY EC8: TOURISM IN SETTLEMENTS	
	<p>TOURISM DEVELOPMENT WHICH INCREASES THE RANGE OF OPEN AIR AND WET WEATHER ATTRACTIONS/ACTIVITIES WITHIN EXISTING SETTLEMENTS WILL BE ENCOURAGED SUBJECT TO AN APPROPRIATE LOCATION FOR THE USE PROPOSED AND APPROPRIATE PROPOSALS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARKING, • AMENITY IMPACT, AND; • ACCESSIBILITY, <p>SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF CLAUSES A TO E OF POLICY SC1.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy seeks to encourage the provision of additional tourist attractions within existing settlements.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That providing additional tourist attractions and activities will encourage more tourists to visit the area, and will result in those who do come spending more money during their stay.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy for tourism will encourage both the consolidation of existing facilities together with a broadening of the range of activities and opportunities available to visitors ○ This will include the emphasised promotion of Minehead as a centre for visiting Exmoor and an increased profile for outdoor pursuits. ○ Some kinds of tourism development may constitute bad neighbour development with adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties, it should be demonstrated that the development proposed is not likely to have such adverse impact. <p>See also transport policy TR2</p> <p><u>Definition:</u> <u>Settlement:</u> In the context of this policy, 'settlement' means Minehead/Alcombe, Watchet, Williton and the Primary and Secondary Villages as identified in Policy SC1.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 5, 13, 14, 15, 21, 36, 37, 53, 120 and, 124.</p>

POLICY EC9: TOURISM OUTSIDE OF SETTLEMENTS	
	<p>TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS OUTSIDE SETTLEMENTS WILL ONLY BE SUPPORTED WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE PROPOSED LOCATION IS ESSENTIAL TO THE BUSINESS AND THAT IT COULD NOT BE LOCATED ELSEWHERE, AND; • IT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE NEIGHBOURING SETTLEMENTS, AND; • IT COMPLEMENTS EXISTING TOURISM SERVICE AND FACILITY PROVISION IN NEIGHBOURING SETTLEMENTS AND SURROUNDING AREA WITHOUT GENERATING NEW UNSUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PATTERNS.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy seeks to allow for the provision of additional tourist attractions outside existing settlements subject to environmental and viability safeguards.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That providing additional tourist attractions and activities will encourage more tourists to visit the area, and will result in those who do come spending more money during their stay.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy for tourism will encourage both the consolidation of existing facilities together with a broadening of the range of activities and opportunities available to visitors ○ This will include the emphasised promotion of Minehead as a centre for visiting Exmoor and an increased profile for outdoor pursuits. <p>See also transport policy TR2</p> <p><u>Definition:</u></p> <p><u>Settlement:</u></p> <p>In the context of this policy, 'settlement' means Minehead/Alcombe, Watchet, Williton and the Primary and Secondary Villages as identified in Policy SC1.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u></p> <p>See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 15, 36, 37, 119 and, 126.</p>
POLICY EC10: GATEWAY SETTLEMENTS	
	<p>TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH ENHANCE MINEHEAD'S ROLE AS A GATEWAY CENTRE FOR VISITING EXMOOR AND WATCHET AND WILLITON'S ROLE AS GATEWAY SETTLEMENTS FOR THE QUANTOCK HILLS AND THE BRENDON HILLS WILL BE SUPPORTED.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To enhance the role of West Somerset's main communities as gateways for visiting the hill and upland areas locally.

Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Many visitors to Exmoor, the Quantock Hills and the Brendon Hills arrive by road from the north or east via the A39 or A358. ○ Drawing attention of visitors to the scenic and recreational attractions of these upland areas will benefit the West Somerset economy by encouraging them to stay longer, spend more and have a better experience of visiting the area. ○ Seeing more of the attractive local landscape may encourage repeat visiting.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The tourism industry is one of West Somerset's most important business sectors. Competition with other tourist destinations (in the south west particularly) is strong. It is therefore important to raise the profile of the area as an enjoyable place to visit. The raising of the profile of Minehead, Watchet and Williton as gateways should help to make access to these areas clearer to tourists. ○ The policy for tourism will encourage both the consolidation of existing facilities together with a broadening of the range of activities and opportunities available to visitors ○ This will include the emphasised promotion of Minehead as a centre for visiting Exmoor and an increased profile for outdoor pursuits. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 15, 36 and, 37.</p>
POLICY EC11: AGRICULTURE	
	DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR FARM DIVERSIFICATION WHICH HELP TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY WILL BE SUPPORTED WHERE IT DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To encourage appropriate farm diversification supporting agricultural businesses e.g.; for wood fuel production, the local production of food and, where appropriate, for sustainable tourism.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That farm diversification is a positive means of supporting the agricultural sector which can also provide an increased range of services, including employment and tourism facilities. ○ Producing, marketing and consuming food locally is beneficial in terms of minimising carbon dioxide production.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Farm diversification has a track record of helping to sustain farm businesses by adding non-agricultural enterprises to their portfolios. It is desirable to maintain a healthy agricultural sector for employment, land management, nature conservation and food production reasons.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NPPF Paragraph 28 sets out national policy. ○ It is important that in developing farm diversification schemes, the objectives of sustainable development are addressed in order to minimise adverse impacts. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 4, 7, 8, 15, 36 and, 37.</p>
POLICY EC12: MINEHEAD PRIMARY RETAIL AREA AND CENTRAL AREAS FOR ALCOMBE, WATCHET AND WILLITON	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WITHIN THE MINEHEAD PRIMARY RETAIL AREA, AS DEFINED ON THE POLICIES MAP, BUSINESS ACTIVITIES WILL BE RESTRICTED TO RETAIL AND RETAIL-RELATED ACTIVITIES IN THE A-CLASS USES (EXCLUDING A2) AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL. OTHER RETAIL AND RETAIL RELATED ACTIVITIES WILL BE PERMITTED IN ADDITION TO THESE IN THE SECONDARY RETAIL AREA AS DEFINED ON THE POLICIES MAP. 2. WITHIN THE ALCOMBE, WATCHET AND WILLITON RETAIL AREAS, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, BUSINESS ACTIVITIES OF RETAIL AND RETAIL RELATED ACTIVITIES IN ALL THE A-CLASS USES WILL BE THE PREFERRED USE AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To identify the extent of the main commercial retail areas of the main settlements and the activities permitted within each.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minehead town centre is an important focus for shopping for the town and the surrounding villages on account of the relative remoteness and limited transport access to larger settlements outside of West Somerset. ○ The overall development strategy of the Local Plan requires identification and protection of existing economic and shopping services and facilities that can provide the opportunities for existing and future residents to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. ○ The absence of any significant proposed improvements to the transport networks within the West Somerset area will provide the opportunities for the existing centres to consolidate and enhance their economic vitality and viability.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minehead has a well-established town centre providing a wide range of retail and retail related businesses and services. ○ Minehead performs a dual role in terms of retail activities, being both an important local shopping centre and a tourist resort. ○ Alcombe acts as an important local centre with a range of shopping and related facilities meeting the essential day-to-day needs for the south-eastern part of the Minehead urban area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Within the Minehead Secondary Retail area A2 financial and professional services, D2 – leisure and a range of sui generis uses such as amusement centres, laundrettes and car showrooms may also be appropriate in addition to the main retail uses. ○ Watchet acts as an important local centre with a range of shopping and related facilities meeting the essential day-to-day needs for the residents of the town. ○ Williton acts as an important local centre with a range of shopping and related facilities meeting the essential day-to-day needs for the residents of the village. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17 and, 108.</p>
TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY & HEALTH	
POLICY TR1: ACCESS TO AND FROM WEST SOMERSET	
	<p>PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT MUST ENCOURAGE THE USE OF SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRANSPORT WITHIN AND BETWEEN WEST SOMERSET'S COMMUNITIES AND TRAVEL TO AND FROM COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE THE LOCAL PLAN AREA THROUGH THE PROVISION OF TRAVEL PLANS, TRAVEL PLAN STATEMENTS OR MEASURES-ONLY TRAVEL STATEMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CURRENT THRESHOLDS ADOPTED BY SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To maintain and where possible strengthen the existing public transport services linking West Somerset's settlements with larger centres to the west and south. In particular better bus services to Bridgwater are needed ○ To maximise the potential which exists for increasing the attractiveness of and facilities for walking and cycling as a means of transport, particularly in the main settlements. ○ To provide for road improvements where these are necessitated by and can be funded through development proposals. ○ To support the West Somerset Railway through development proposals which relate to it.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is helpful to provide as good a range of bus services as possible in order to provide non-private car based access to other settlements within West Somerset and larger service centres elsewhere such as Taunton and Bridgwater. ○ Major highway improvements are desirable, but are not usually achievable due to the high cost of improving roads such as the A39 and A358 and the lack of funding for such projects which is unlikely to improve during the plan period. ○ Whilst walking and cycling have limited potential in much of West Somerset, the larger settlements do have greater potential, particularly if improvements

	<p>in existing networks are facilitated in the course of making provision for new development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Walking and cycling have considerable health benefits. ○ Encouraging the increasing use of non-private car modes of transport where possible is a good thing and helps to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposals for development in West Somerset's communities should provide for contributions towards public transport services linking the main communities of Watchet Williton and Minehead with particularly Taunton and Bridgwater in order to provide an alternative to the private car, or for those without access to a car. ○ West Somerset has a higher than average per-capita carbon dioxide emission level, any positive change in the proportion of journeys made by non-private car modes should help improve this situation. ○ Somerset County Council's current travel plan thresholds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full travel plans are required above the following floorspace/dwelling number thresholds (August 2014): 800m² - A1 (non-food 1500m²) 1500 m² - B1 2500 m² - B2 5000 m² - B8 50 dwellings - C3 Travel plan statements: 500 m² - A1 1000 m² - B1 1500 m² - B2 2000 m² - B8 30 dwellings - C3 Measures-only travel statements: 100 m² - A1 500 m² - B1 1000 m² - B2 1000 m² - B8 10 dwellings - C3 ○ Further explanations/caveats and other use types are covered in Somerset County Council's Travel Planning Guidance. Which can be downloaded at: http://www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk/new-developments/planning-guidance <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 15, 17, 36, 37 and, 98.</p>

POLICY TR2: REDUCING RELIANCE ON THE PRIVATE CAR.	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LOCATED AND DESIGNED TO MAXIMISE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF MODES OF TRANSPORT OTHER THAN THE PRIVATE CAR WHERE APPROPRIATE, PARTICULARLY WHERE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT COMPLEMENTS EXISTING SERVICE AND FACILITY PROVISION IN THE SETTLEMENT AND SURROUNDING AREA WITHOUT GENERATING NEW UNSUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PATTERNS (AS A CONSEQUENCE), AND; • DOES NOT GENERATE SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS OVER MINOR ROADS TO THE NATIONAL PRIMARY AND COUNTY HIGHWAY ROUTE NETWORK.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy is designed to minimise additional transport demand arising from new development and to maximise modal choice within the limitations of public transport provision within the area.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That it is beneficial to locate new development where there is a choice of modes of transport available to access a varied range of destinations and facilities which would be frequently visited by inhabitants of the new development.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New planned development should be located insofar as is possible to maximise the choice of modes of transport available to residents. It is recognised that in planning for the continuing health of the District's rural settlements opportunities for the use of modes other than the private car are very limited. ○ This effectively means that, if possible, they should have convenient access to the bus services between Minehead and Taunton, or Minehead and Bridgwater. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 2, 15, 17, 36, 37 and 98.</p>
POLICY CF1: MAXIMISING ACCESS TO HEALTH, SPORT, RECREATION AND, CULTURAL FACILITIES	
	<p>THE PROVISION OF NEW, AND IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING, HEALTH, SPORT, RECREATION AND CULTURAL FACILITIES WILL BE SUPPORTED, WHERE THIS HELPS TO STRENGTHEN AND OR ENHANCE A BALANCED RANGE OF PROVISION FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND VISITING TOURISTS.</p> <p>THE UNNECESSARY LOSS OF VALUED SERVICES AND FACILITIES SHOULD BE PREVENTED, PARTICULARLY WHERE THIS WOULD REDUCE THE COMMUNITY'S ABILITY TO MEET ITS DAY TO DAY NEEDS.</p>

	<p>WHERE A DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF SUCH FACILITIES, EQUIVALENT OR GREATER REPLACEMENT FACILITIES SERVING THE SAME AREA MUST BE PROVIDED AS PART OF THE PROPOSALS.</p> <p>THE APPROPRIATE PROVISION OF FORMAL SPORTS FACILITIES AND/OR INFORMAL PUBLIC AMENITY OPEN-SPACE/PLAY-SPACE WILL BE REQUIRED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF NEW DEVELOPMENT.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure that, where practical, opportunities for the shared use of existing sport and recreation facilities are maximised, particularly through the use of contributions from new development which may help to bring about improved capacity and or quality. ○ Unmet need for facilities for young people will be addressed to some extent as part of the policy for improved provision of sport and recreation facilities. ○ The flexibility of use of planning obligations monies is an important issue.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The provision of sufficient sport, recreation and cultural facilities accessible to the local community makes a positive contribution to the population's quality of life, and also to its physical and mental health.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is reasonable for new development to make appropriate provision for additional sport, recreation and cultural facilities proportionate to the additional population which they will give rise to. ○ Modern lifestyles are increasingly sedentary, both in work and home life, in order to counter the adverse health impacts of the lack of exercise experienced by many, it is essential to provide the facilities to enable team games and general informal recreation involving activities such as walking and or active play. ○ Similarly, the provision of cultural facilities is also beneficial to the community, both through participation in performance and as an audience, all of which is helpful in strengthening community identity and pride as well as giving people great enjoyment. ○ The West Somerset Sport and Recreation Facilities Study March 2012 provides evidence about the levels of provision of various types of recreational facility within the area. This will be used to evidence appropriate levels of provision in new development and also for the creation of development management policies. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 22, 25, 81, 85, 86 and, 116.</p>

POLICY CF2: PLANNING FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES	
	<p>IN ORDER TO HELP ADDRESS THE CAUSES OF ILL HEALTH AND MAXIMISE THE BENEFIT WHICH SPATIAL PLANNING CAN PROVIDE IN SHAPING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES, DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD BE DESIGNED IN ORDER TO MAXIMISE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF WALKING AND CYCLING AS MEANS OF MAKING JOURNEYS TO LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AND ALSO TO ENCOURAGE RECREATIONAL WALKING AND CYCLING. PROVISION FOR DISABILITY ACCESS IS ALSO TO BE ENCOURAGED.</p> <p>A HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ALL STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To help ensure that implementing the Local Plan's strategy and other major development contributes to improving public health within the area.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Well-designed development can encourage people using it to walk and cycle more both as a means of transport and for recreational purposes. ○ Walking and cycling more benefits peoples' general health.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Designing development so that walking and cycling become more attractive means of transport to local facilities, and also are more attractive as a recreational activity is likely to have a positive impact upon the health of the area's population. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 22, 81, 85 and, 115.</p>
CLIMATE CHANGE	
POLICY CC1: CARBON REDUCTION – NON-WIND ENERGY GENERATING SCHEMES	
	<p>ENERGY GENERATING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS (OTHER THAN THOSE FOR WIND TURBINES) WILL BE SUPPORTED WHERE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THEY RESPECT THE LOCAL NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY ARE LOCATED; • THEY RESPECT THE LOCAL HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ANY DESIGNATED AND IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN AND NEIGHBOURING IT; AND, • THEY RESPECT THE POSITIVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITIES AFFECTED ESPECIALLY THOSE NEIGHBOURING THEM; AND, • ADEQUATE MEASURES ARE TAKEN TO MITIGATE THE CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF ANY

	RELATED DEVELOPMENT ON THE COMMUNITIES AFFECTED, BOTH IN THE SHORT AND THE LONGER TERM.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy seeks to ensure that appropriate mitigation of adverse impacts and optimisation of beneficial impacts arising from energy generating proposals is provided. ○ This policy does not apply to development covered by the NSIP process and to which a DCO applies. ○ To encourage the development of low and/or zero carbon economy proposals in the area and to encourage low energy solutions in new development.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Energy generating proposals can give rise to a range of both positive and negative impacts depending on the nature of the energy generating technology involved and the scale, location and design of the scheme; ○ Some of these impacts may be on a very significant scale, ○ They will range in timescale between short and long term. ○ Where the impact is more than substantial and cannot be adequately mitigated then it will need to be demonstrated that the public benefit arising from the development clearly outweighs the consequential diminution of the asset. ○ That the development of a low and/or zero carbon energy supply chain and businesses which make use of its products would help to reduce the high per-capita carbon footprint for West Somerset. ○ It would be beneficial for residents and the environment to have low energy systems installed in their homes. ○ Climate change impact is likely to have serious implications for the low-lying coastal areas of West Somerset, and also the erosion vulnerable coastal cliffs.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The encouragement of local low/zero carbon energy systems will help to address climate change issues which are likely to impact adversely in West Somerset in the medium to long term. ○ The development of commercial wood fuel systems as well as the installation of CHP and wood-fuel systems in new and existing development will be a positive contribution to reducing carbon dioxide emissions ○ It will also help to broaden the economy ○ It will help to reduce fuel poverty due to the inaccessibility of much of the District to mains gas. ○ The search for new and more sustainable energy generating capacity has led to the development of novel technologies such as large scale photovoltaic arrays and windfarms. All energy generating facilities have locational requirements related to the nature of the energy source being captured.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The desire for more low carbon energy generation has led to more large scale generating development away from traditional sources of hydrocarbon energy such as the coalfields. Wind, hydro, biomass and solar energy schemes are frequently located in remote rural areas of high landscape and or ecological value, great care is necessary in order to balance the benefits of low or zero carbon energy generation with the appropriate level of protection for highly valued environments. These will also have to be considered in the context of the provisions of Policies NH2 and NH3 where appropriate. ○ A Renewable Energy Potential Study forms part of the evidence base. ○ Developments affecting the local historic environment and any designated (e.g. Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas, etc.) and identified potential (e.g. Areas of High Archaeological Potential – AHAP's) heritage assets within and surrounding the area will also have to be considered in the context of the provisions of Policies NH1, NH1a, NH1b and NH1x where appropriate. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17, 28, 29, 30, 31, 64, 107 and, 113.</p>
POLICY CC2: FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD BE LOCATED SO AS TO MITIGATE AGAINST, AND TO AVOID INCREASED FLOOD RISK ELSEWHERE, WHILST HELPING TO PROVIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT SEQUENTIAL TEST, AND WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE APPLICATION OF THE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT EXCEPTION TEST.</p> <p>DEVELOPMENT MUST BE DESIGNED TO MITIGATE ANY ADVERSE FLOODING IMPACT WHICH WOULD ARISE FROM ITS IMPLEMENTATION, AND WHERE POSSIBLE SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE RESOLUTION OF EXISTING FLOODING ISSUES.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To protect new development from flood risk and existing development from additional flood risk as the result of development.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That flood risk to new and existing development should be addressed through flood risk assessment and sustainable drainage systems design features in accordance with the provisions of NPPG.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flooding presents a serious risk to the social and economic health of communities, steps to minimise the risk of flooding of new, and, where possible, existing development have a very significant benefit. ○ Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Levels 1 and 2 give information on flood risk within the plan area, and particularly around the three major settlements. These provide a starting point for site specific flood risk assessment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The policy applies the flood risk management provisions set out in NPPF Paragraph 100. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17, 72, 92 and, 93.</p>
POLICY CC3: COASTAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT AREA	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE COASTAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT AREAS, AS DEFINED ON THE POLICIES MAP, WILL BE LIMITED TO TEMPORARY, TOURISM-RELATED DEVELOPMENT.</p> <p>NO DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WITHIN PARTS OF THE COASTAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT AREA WHICH ARE VULNERABLE TO RAPID COASTAL EROSION.</p> <p>EXCEPTIONALLY, WHERE THE USE OF SUCH DEVELOPMENT LOCATIONS ARE NECESSARY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES, OTHER TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT MAY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY WOULD BE PROTECTED BY NEW OR EXISTING SEA DEFENCES WHICH ARE TO BE MAINTAINED IN THE LONG TERM.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o To protect new and, where possible, existing development from flood risk arising from increasing sea levels and the effects of coastal erosion in accordance with the provisions of the NPPG.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o That the effects of climate change include rising sea levels and increased storm violence giving rise to a greater flood risk from the sea. o This changing situation poses an increasing threat to new and existing development close to the parts of the coast which are low-lying and / or which are unstable and vulnerable to rapid erosion.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Rising sea levels in the long term and more violent storms in the short to medium term mean that policy for the management of the coastal zone – including Coastal Change Management Areas are necessary in order to minimise the damage to new development from coastal erosion and flooding. The requirements of the tourism industry, which forms an important part of the local economy, include development to provide services to visitors to the area in locations by the sea. It is advantageous to be able to provide such development on the understanding that it may not be tenable in the long term. o A policy of managed realignment has been put forward as part of the proposals of the draft Shoreline Management Plan for parts of the coast within the plan area. o The requirements of achieving sustainable development may, exceptionally, justify the development of land within the Coastal Change Management Area provided that it will be protected from flooding by new or existing sea defences and appropriate site ground levels.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shoreline Management Plan 2 for the area identifies a favoured management approach for each part of the plan area coastline. Although not having received final signoff from the Environment Agency, the final draft includes proposals for the creation of secondary lines of coastal defence in two areas as part of a policy of managed realignment. These lines have been used to define the draft Coastal Change Management Areas to be shown on the Policies Map. ○ The first of these provisional secondary coastal defence lines lies between Minehead and Blue Anchor, running to the north of the West Somerset Railway from Blue Anchor as far as the boundary of Butlins holiday centre, which is also protected by the new line of defence, and then joining onto the seafront sea defence wall (see Fig 8). ○ The second area lies within Stogursey parish between Hinkley Point and Steart, approximating to the area proposed for compensatory salt marsh and intertidal mud flat creation by the Bristol Port Company (see Fig. 9). <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17, 44, 51 and, 52.</p>
POLICY CC4: COASTAL ZONE PROTECTION	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE COASTAL ZONE AND OUTSIDE OF SETTLEMENTS WHERE THE PLAN'S POLICIES PROVIDE FOR DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED FOR USES AND ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH A COASTAL LOCATION IS ESSENTIAL AND THEY CANNOT BE LOCATED ELSEWHERE. ACCOUNT WILL BE TAKEN OF;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IMPACT ON THE COASTAL ENVIRONMENT, • SCALE OF THE DEVELOPMENT, • CUMULATIVE IMPACT ON SURROUNDING LAND AND PROPERTY, AND, • MEASURES TAKEN TO MINIMISE AND MITIGATE THESE MATTERS.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To protect the undeveloped coastal landscape from inessential development which would be damaging to its character.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The natural beauty of the coast is vulnerable to damage from development ○ The natural beauty of the coast is an essential asset to the tourism industry in the area ○ The part of the tourism industry relating to seaside tourism activities needs to develop some tourism related facilities in that sensitive environment. ○ Careful planning, siting mitigation measures etc. can often allow such development to take place without inflicting unacceptable damage on the coastal environment. ○ Some types of development are not likely to be acceptable within the coastal zone due to their scale and / or impact on the environment.

Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The attractive landscape of the relatively undeveloped parts of the coastal zone within the Local Plan area is an essential factor in driving West Somerset's tourism industry. It is therefore important to ensure that this area retains its attractiveness. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17, 44, 51 and, 52.</p>
POLICY CC5: WATER EFFICIENCY	
	THE DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES WHICH INCLUDE MEASURES TO ECONOMISE ON THE USE OF WATER SUPPLIES WILL BE ENCOURAGED.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To encourage the efficient use of water, including measures such as rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling etc.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water is a precious resource, for which demand is increasing. ○ Climate change is likely to increase the incidence of drought in the future.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The situation of increasing demand, and increasing uncertainty of supply justifies the encouragement of the inclusion of measures to use water more efficiently in the design of development schemes. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17, 45 and, 64.</p>
POLICY CC6: WATER MANAGEMENT	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE AVAILABILITY AND USE OF EXISTING WATER RESOURCES; • THE EXISTING WATER TABLE LEVEL • ACCESSIBILITY TO EXISTING WATERCOURSES FOR MAINTENANCE AND, • AREAS AT RISK OF FLOODING BY TIDAL, FLUVIAL AND/OR SURFACE WATER RUN-OFF <p>WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF ADEQUATE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MEASURES ARE INCORPORATED THAT PROVIDE SUITABLE PROTECTION AND MITIGATION BOTH ON-SITE AND THROUGH DISPLACEMENT TO ADJOINING LAND.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure that appropriate protection is provided for water resources in the environment in the design and implementation of development.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To provide for maintenance of existing watercourses in development and appropriate mitigation of flood risk
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water is a precious resource which can be damaged through poorly designed development ○ Proper access to watercourses for the purposes of maintenance is important for the management of flood risk and biodiversity ○ The failure to properly manage surface water runoff from development can have an adverse impact on the flood risk of lower lying land.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water is an essential resource to allow life to continue, it is a valuable resource which the effects of climate change are threatening to disrupt. If badly managed, water or the lack of it can become a destructive force, either through flooding or drought for instance. Climate change impacts include the increased frequency of extreme weather events and more variable weather patterns, bringing either too much water in a short period, or not enough. ○ The effective safeguarding of groundwater. Watercourses, and the proper management of surface water runoff are key to maximising the benefits and minimising the dangers of water to the community. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17, 45, 64 and, 72.</p>
ENVIRONMENT	
POLICY NH1: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT	
	<p>PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD SUSTAIN AND/OR ENHANCE THE HISTORIC RURAL URBAN AND COASTAL HERITAGE OF THE DISTRICT WHILST CONTRIBUTING APPROPRIATELY TO THE REGENERATION OF THE DISTRICT'S COMMUNITIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE ELEMENTS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE AREAS DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER AND SENSE OF PLACE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PROPOSALS WILL BE SUPPORTED WHERE THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE ASSETS AND THEIR SETTINGS ARE SUSTAINED AND/OR ENHANCED IN LINE WITH THEIR INTEREST AND SIGNIFICANCE. PLANNING DECISIONS WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE CONTRIBUTION HERITAGE ASSETS CAN HAVE TO THE DELIVERY OF WIDER SOCIAL, CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES. 2. ELEMENTS OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT WHICH CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE UNIQUE IDENTITY OF AREAS AND HELP CREATE A SENSE OF PLACE WILL BE SUSTAINED AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, ENHANCED.

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To conserve and enhance the built and historic environment and the heritage assets within the area that comprise it, in such a way that they continue to contribute positively to the communities' sense of identity and their attractiveness for residents and visitors.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That the archaeology, historic buildings, historic settlements and historic landscape features are a finite and irreplaceable resource of immense value to the national and local cultural heritage. ○ These heritage assets that contribute to the local historic environment play an important role in giving the area its distinctive character and its cultural identity. ○ They have a significant economic value in terms of helping to attract tourists to the area.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The heritage assets that make up the local historic environment of the area are unique and irreplaceable. Their cultural importance forming an essential part of the area's identity and sense of place. ○ The historic environment is also of considerable economic importance within the area. This is of benefit in helping to attract tourists to the area, but also in making it a desirable area for the location of certain types of small business which do not rely upon ease of access to the national highway network as an important locational factor. ○ Well designed and sited development proposals can protect and enhance the historic environment and its heritage assets, conversely, poorly designed or located development can result in harm to, or loss of, heritage assets. It is therefore essential to ensure that heritage assets are properly considered when making development management decisions and in the consideration and design of development schemes. Development proposals affecting the historic environment and its heritage asset components would also need to take account of the relevant provisions in Policies NH2, NH3 and/or, NH4 as appropriate. ○ A definition of items qualifying as heritage assets is provided in the Glossary of the NPPF. Some of the heritage assets of particular note within the plan area are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The late Victorian seaside resort of Minehead, ▪ The historic port of Watchet, ▪ The designated conservation areas, ▪ The setting of Dunster Castle, ▪ The West Somerset Railway, and; ▪ The remains of the West Somerset Mineral Railway. ▪ Registered Parks and Gardens including; St. Audries/West Quantoxhead Landscape Park, Fairfield House Deer Park and, Crowcombe Park, ▪ Scheduled Ancient Monuments including; the impressive upstanding mediaeval remains of Cleeve Abbey, Stogursey Castle, the Bronze-Age barrow cemetery at Battlegore in Williton and, the iron-age hillfort of Trendle Ring. ▪ Plus undesignated heritage assets of high importance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Prior to submission of any development proposals, it is advised that the Somerset Historic Environment Record (Somerset HER) facility held by South West Heritage Trust is consulted in order to establish whether any important national, regional or local heritage assets and/or their setting could be affected by it. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15,b 17, 23, 38, 62, 63, 97, 101 and, 124.</p>
POLICY NH2: MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS	
	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. ARE LIKELY TO AFFECT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A HERITAGE ASSET, INCLUDING THE CONTRIBUTION MADE TO ITS SETTING SHOULD DEMONSTRATE AN APPROPRIATELY EVIDENCED UNDERSTANDING OF THE SIGNIFICANCE IN SUFFICIENT DETAIL TO ALLOW THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO BE ADEQUATELY ASSESSED. B. DEMONSTRATE A SYMPATHETIC AND CREATIVE RE-USE AND ADAPTATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS WILL BE ENCOURAGED. C. AFFECT A CONSERVATION AREA SHOULD PRESERVE OR ENHANCE ITS CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE, ESPECIALLY THOSE ELEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN ANY CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL. D. WILL HELP TO SECURE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR WEST SOMERSET'S HERITAGE ASSETS, ESPECIALLY THOSE IDENTIFIED AS BEING AT GREATEST RISK OF LOSS OR DECAY, WILL BE SUPPORTED. E. RESULT IN AN AGREED MATERIAL CHANGE TO A HERITAGE ASSET SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY RECORDING AND INTERPRETATION, UNDERTAKEN IN ORDER TO DOCUMENT AND UNDERSTAND THE ASSET'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, ARTISTIC AND/OR HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE WITH THE SCOPE OF THE RECORDING BEING PROPORTIONATE TO THE ASSET'S SIGNIFICANCE AND THE IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT UPON IT. THE INFORMATION SHOULD BE MADE PUBLICALLY AVAILABLE THROUGH THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o To conserve and enhance the built and historic environment and the heritage assets that comprise it, in such a way that they continue to contribute positively to the communities' sense of identity and their attractiveness for residents and visitors.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o That the heritage assets and the historic landscape features are a finite and irreplaceable resource of immense cultural value at both the national and local level. o These heritage assets contribute to the local historic environment and play an important role in giving the area its distinctive character and its cultural identity. o They have a significant economic value in terms of helping to attract tourists to the area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A definition of items qualifying as heritage assets is provided in the Glossary of the NPPF. Designated heritage assets can include Listed Buildings, buildings within Conservation Areas and, structures identified on a Historic Environment Record held by South West Heritage Trust.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The heritage assets that comprise the historic environment of West Somerset contribute, along with the local landscape in making the area an attractive place to live and visit. ○ The heritage assets that make up the local historic environment of the area are unique and irreplaceable. Their cultural importance forming an essential part of the area's identity and sense of place. ○ The historic environment and its heritage assets components are also of considerable economic importance within the area, because of the contribution they make to the area's attractiveness. ○ Well designed and sited development proposals can protect and enhance the historic environment and its heritage assets, conversely, poorly designed or located development can result in significant damage to, or loss of, heritage assets. It is therefore essential to ensure that heritage assets are properly considered when making development management decisions and in the consideration and design of development schemes. Development proposals affecting the historic environment and its heritage asset components would also need to take account of the relevant provisions in Policies NH1, NH3 and/or, NH4 as appropriate. ○ Where a development proposal is likely to affect the significance of a heritage asset and its setting, the understanding of the significance the proposed change and the justification for it. This should be informed by available evidence, desk-based evaluations and, where appropriate, further site investigation to establish the significance of both known and/or any potential heritage assets that might be affected. ○ Where a development proposal affects a heritage asset in such a way that it the existing format is likely to be changed, irretrievably lost or, hidden, it is necessary to ensure that a complete record and associated interpretation of it is made before such works commence. The information and understanding gained through this recording process should be made publicly available through an appropriate update of any existing Historical Environment Record (HER) or creation of a new record as a minimum. Also, where appropriate, at the asset itself through on-site interpretation. ○ A variety of approaches will be used to assist in the protection and enjoyment of the historic environment including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the use of appraisals and management plans of existing and potential conservation areas ▪ taking opportunities for removing assets from the at risk register, ▪ considering the use of article 4 directions, ▪ working with partners, owners and developers to identify ways to positively manage and make better use of historic assets, ▪ considering improvements to the public realm and the setting of heritage assets within it, ▪ ensuring that information about the significance of the historic environment is publicly available, ▪ where there is a loss in whole or in part to the significance of an identified historic asset then evidence should be recorded of its importance, and;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ considering the need for the preparation of local evidence or plans. <p>Particular attention will be given to heritage assets at risk of harm or loss of significance, or where a number of heritage assets have significance as a group or give context to a wider area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The local planning authority will monitor buildings or other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk through discussions with owners and a willingness to consider positively, development schemes that would ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset and, as a last resort, using its statutory powers. ○ Prior to submission of any development proposals, it is advised that the Somerset Historic Environment Record (Somerset HER) facility held by South West Heritage Trust is consulted in order to establish whether any important national, regional or local heritage assets and/or their setting could be affected by it. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17, 38, 39, 40, 41, 54, 55, 56, 62, 63, 97, 101, 115 and, 124.</p>
POLICY NH3: AREAS OF HIGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL	
	<p>PROPOSALS WITHIN AREAS OF HIGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL, AS SHOWN ON THE POLICIES MAP, (OR ELSEWHERE WITH THE POTENTIAL TO IMPACT ON HERITAGE ASSETS WITH ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST) SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED WITH A STATEMENT DESCRIBING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET AND THE LIKELY IMPACTS ON THE ASSET. THIS IS LIKELY TO REQUIRE A DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT INCORPORATING A SETTINGS ASSESSMENT WHERE DESIGNATED ASSETS ARE LIKELY TO BE IMPACTED AND WHERE APPROPRIATE A FIELD EVALUATION.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure that the opportunity to record/protect suspected archaeological and/or heritage assets of greater than local importance is provided.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AHAP identification accords with the latest information available from Somerset Heritage and Environmental Records.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This Policy ensures that before any decision is made that affects a heritage asset sufficient information is submitted to ensure the decision is reasoned and based on a complete understanding of the significance of the asset as required by the NPPF paragraph 128. ○ Requirement of NPPF para. 128 <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15,17, 38, 62, 63, 97, 101 and, 124.</p>

POLICY NH4: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	
	WHERE PROPOSALS IMPACT ON SITES WITH ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE DEVELOPERS WILL ENSURE THE INVESTIGATION, RECORDING AND THE ADVANCE OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASSET. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE MADE PUBLICALLY ACCESSIBLE.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o To ensure that the opportunity to record/protect suspected archaeological and/or heritage assets of local importance is provided.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identification accords with the latest information available from Somerset Heritage and Environmental Records or enhances local knowledge and understanding.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o This Policy ensures that where a heritage asset is impacted the harm is mitigated through a greater understanding of the asset by investigating through excavation and/or recording of an asset, archiving of the evidence and publication of results in line with NPPF paragraph 141. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17, 62, 63, 97, 101 and,124.</p>
POLICY NH5: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER PROTECTION	
	WITHIN THE IDENTIFIED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS, AS SHOWN IN FIGURE 2, DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LOCATED AND DESIGNED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MINIMISE ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE QUALITY AND INTEGRITY OF THAT LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The policy provides for the appropriate consideration of protected landscapes when considering the design of development schemes. o Conservation of non-statutory designated landscapes which are still high quality, i.e.: the Brendon Hills is an issue, landscape character approach can provide protection at an appropriate level through the application of the evidence in the West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The care with which development is designed and sited in high quality rural landscapes makes a considerable difference to the positive or negative impact which it has on its setting.

<p>Justification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Large parts of West Somerset are the subject of statutory landscape designations – the Exmoor National Park which lies outside the Local Plan area, and the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. ○ The remainder of the District, not subject to statutory protection also contains some very high quality rural landscape, most notably the Brendon Hills in the central part of the Local Plan area. ○ The policy is not intended to restrict the principle of development beyond that expressed in the Local Plan’s policies for any particular area, however it does require that the character of the area should be treated as an important factor when designing and deciding on development proposals. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 9, 15, 73, 77, 78, 90 and, 127.</p>
<p>POLICY NH6: NATURE CONSERVATION AND THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY</p>	
	<p>PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT WILL BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE APPLICATION DEMONSTRATING THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT GENERATE UNACCEPTABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS ON BIODIVERSITY; • MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO PROTECT OR MITIGATE TO ACCEPTABLE LEVELS (OR, AS A LAST RESORT, PROPORTIONATELY COMPENSATE FOR) ADVERSE IMPACTS ON BIODIVERSITY. MEASURES SHALL ENSURE A NET GAIN IN BIODIVERSITY WHERE POSSIBLE. THE SOMERSET ‘HABITAT EVALUATION PROCEDURE’ WILL BE USED IN CALCULATING THE VALUE OF A SITE TO SPECIES AFFECTED BY A PROPOSAL AS APPROPRIATE. WHERE HABITAT IS REPLACEABLE, MITIGATION TECHNIQUES NEED TO BE PROVEN; • THE LOCAL PLANNING PROCESS WILL BE USED TO PROTECT, ENHANCE AND RESTORE THE ECOLOGICAL NETWORK WITHIN WEST SOMERSET. THE WEIGHT OF PROTECTION AFFORDED TO A SITE THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE DISTRICT’S BIODIVERSITY WILL REFLECT ITS ROLE IN MAINTAINING CONNECTIVITY AND RESILIENCE OF THE LOCAL ECOLOGICAL NETWORK; AND • A ‘HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT’ WILL BE REQUIRED FOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECTS EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONALLY DESIGNATED SITES AND FOR AREAS THAT ECOLOGICALLY SUPPORT THE INTEGRITY OF THESE SITES.
<p>Purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To safeguard and enhance biodiversity. ○ The plan’s clear priority is to protect existing habitat and maintain the value of other habitats. Development should avoid irreplaceable habitats and land within designated sites and where offsetting is permitted, there needs to be evidence that mitigation would be successful. Where this is not possible development should be refused. ○ To protect and enhance ecological networks. Areas of high value natural habitat often exist in isolation, which makes them vulnerable to the erosion of their interest and value. Linking such areas together to facilitate the

	<p>movement of species within the wider area which helps to maintain genetic diversity and can encourage the enhancement of the natural value of other areas of linked habitat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure that the effects on European and international nature conservation sites outside of the designated boundaries are accounted for. All data necessary for carrying out assessment on these sites needs to be submitted with the application.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The safeguarding and enhancement of biodiversity are inherently good things for an area's community, wellbeing, economy and environment.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Section 40 of the Natural and Rural Communities Act 2006, places a duty on a public authority to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. A key purpose of this duty is to embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy decision-making, which should be seeking to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the commitments made by Government in its Biodiversity 2020 strategy. ○ The following extract from the government's biodiversity strategy: 'Biodiversity 2020' sets out the essential justification for protecting and enhancing biodiversity through the planning process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of ground-breaking studies such as the National Ecosystems Assessment (NEA) have shown this value also goes further. It is the building block of our 'ecosystems'. These provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives."</i> ○ There are many sites within the plan area designated at European, National and local level for their nature conservation or geological / geomorphological importance. The European and national designations enjoy statutory protection, and the local sites also form an important part of the overall sum of the natural environment which warrants protection through the planning system. Areas outside the designated sites also ecologically support cited features and need to be accounted for if integrity is to be maintained (Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services; DEFRA; 2011; Paragraph 1.1.) ○ The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) includes the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning policies should plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries; • identify and map local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and, locally designated sites, wildlife-corridors and, stepping-stones that connect them and the areas for habitat restoration or creation; and,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote the preservation, restoration and, re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and, the protection and recovery of priority species populations. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17, 26, 27, 43, 87, 88, 95, 96, 99, 100, 103, 104, 105, 106, 124 and, 128.</p>
POLICY NH7: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	
	<p>THE CREATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK WILL BE SUPPORTED. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD BE USED TO HELP PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE HERITAGE ASSETS OF THE AREA.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To help improve the existing provision and particularly networks of green infrastructure. ○ To help provide new green infrastructure as part of development. ○ To help maintain and enhance biodiversity in the area ○ To improve public health through increasing the attractiveness of walking.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Linking areas of high value habitat together can increase the quality and resilience of ecosystems in an area. ○ Making walking a more attractive activity is beneficial to the overall health of an area's population and in particular in respect of obesity and mental health.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Despite West Somerset being a mainly undeveloped area, public access to areas of greenspace for recreational purposes is not always available. The development of a network of green infrastructure can have significant health and environmental benefits by linking areas of greenspace, both of ecological and recreational value. Examples of linking features might be areas of landscaping in association with development, field margins managed for nature conservation value, cycle tracks, footpaths or, woodland planting. Stream and river corridors are a key example of green infrastructure. ○ Recreational green infrastructure networks delivered through development can make walking a more attractive means of getting about in new areas of development and accessing nearby services. A key aim here is to maximise the value of existing public access land and footpaths by completing missing links where possible. Significant benefit can sometimes be achieved by quite small interventions to mend a 'missing link' in the existing footpath and/or bridleway network. ○ The public health benefits of encouraging walking both as a means of transport and for recreational purposes, and the mental health benefits of enjoying the natural environment make this an important objective of the planning process.

	<p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17, 26, 27, 43, 87, 88, 95, 96, 99, 100, 103, 104, 105, 106 and, 128.</p>
POLICY NH8: PROTECTION OF BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND	
	<p>THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND (GRADES 1, 2 AND 3A) WILL BE PROTECTED FROM SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS. PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING SUCH LAND WILL ONLY BE GRANTED EXCEPTIONALLY IF THE PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OUTWEIGHS THE NEED TO PROTECT IT AND EITHER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SUFFICIENT LAND OF A LOWER GRADE (GRADES 3B, 4 AND 5) IS UNAVAILABLE IN AN APPROPRIATE LOCATION TO PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT; OR ○ AVAILABLE LOWER GRADE LAND HAS AN ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE RECOGNISED BY A STATUTORY OR NON-STATUTORY WILDLIFE, HISTORIC OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESIGNATION WHICH OUTWEIGHS THE AGRICULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS. <p>IF BEST AND MOST VERSATILE LAND NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED AND THERE IS A CHOICE BETWEEN SITES IN DIFFERENT GRADES, LAND OF THE LOWEST GRADE AVAILABLE SHOULD BE USED.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure that the most flexible and productive agricultural land is protected from development provided that alternative land of a lower quality is available in an appropriate location.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Land with a high quality capacity to produce particularly arable crops is a scarce and valuable commodity which should, wherever possible, be protected for use for food production.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food security is of increasing importance, the policy of protecting the best and most valuable agricultural land continues the approach adopted in the 1940's recognising that good quality agricultural land is a finite resource, and that it should be protected for agricultural use unless, exceptionally, sustainable development priorities strongly suggest that such land should be developed. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 17 and, 76.</p>

POLICY NH9: POLLUTION, CONTAMINATED LAND AND LAND INSTABILITY	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DEVELOPMENT THAT GENERATES ATMOSPHERIC EMISSIONS WHICH WOULD CAUSE HARM TO HUMAN HEALTH, SENSES OR PROPERTY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED AND WHERE SUCH USES EXIST THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY WILL NOT PERMIT SENSITIVE OTHER USES WITHIN A REASONABLE DISTANCE OF SUCH USES. ○ PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING POTENTIAL NOISE NUISANCE TO EXISTING OCCUPIERS OF LAND OR BUILDINGS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHEN MEASURES TO MINIMISE THE IMPACT OF NOISE LIKELY TO BE GENERATED ARE INCORPORATED AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT. ○ PROPOSALS FOR NOISE-SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS, TYPICALLY HOUSING, HOSPITALS AND SCHOOLS, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHERE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF NUISANCE ARISES FROM EXISTING SOURCES OF NOISE (E.G. FROM ROAD TRAFFIC, RAILWAYS, INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS, RECREATIONAL AND SPORTING ACTIVITIES) ▪ THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF NUISANCE BY THE INCREASE IN THE EXISTING LEVEL OF NOISE, UNLESS APPROPRIATE NOISE MITIGATION MEASURES ARE INCORPORATED IN THE DESIGN OF THE DEVELOPMENT. ○ ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ON OR IN PROXIMITY TO LAND KNOWN TO BE, OR WHICH MAY BE, CONTAMINATED WILL INCLUDE MEASURES DESIGNED TO PREVENT AN UNACCEPTABLE RISK TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT. ○ DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED ON OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO LAND KNOWN TO BE, OR WHICH MAY BE, UNSTABLE.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To avoid unmitigated pollution or nuisance from new development ○ To prevent noise sensitive new development from suffering from excessive noise, ○ To prevent new development being adversely affected by land contamination, and; ○ To prevent new development being adversely affected by unstable ground.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The users of new development should be protected from damaging levels of pollution, land contamination or land instability.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pollution at unacceptable levels is damaging to human health and the natural environment. Pollution can be air or water borne, and be in the form of noise or toxins. It can be created by emissions from development, natural processes or land contamination – e.g. from old landfills. A related issue is

	<p>development proposals which are affected by unstable ground. All of these are conditions which should be avoided in carrying out new development.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, and, 17.</p>						
POLICY NH10: DEVELOPMENT IN PROXIMITY TO HINKLEY POINT NUCLEAR POWER STATION							
	<p>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN THE CONSULTATION ZONES WILL BE CONSIDERED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION (ONR), HAVING REGARD TO THE SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED, ITS LOCATION, POPULATION DISTRIBUTION OF THE AREA AND THE IMPACT ON PUBLIC SAFETY, TO INCLUDE HOW THE PROPOSAL WOULD IMPACT ON LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS AND OTHER PLANNING CRITERIA.</p> <p>CONSULTATION ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN WITH ONR ON THE BASIS OF THE TABLE BELOW:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ZONE</th> <th>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>INNER</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN RESIDENTIAL OR NON-RESIDENTIAL POPULATIONS THUS IMPACTING ON THE EMERGENCY PLAN. • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD CAUSE AN EXTERNAL HAZARD TO THE SITE. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>OUTER</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION THAT WILL LEAD TO A MATERIAL INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT, WHICH IS OTHERWISE LIKELY TO IMPACT ON THE OFF-SITE EMERGENCY PLAN • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION THAT WILL LEAD TO A MATERIAL INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE EXTENDIBILITY OF COUNTERMEASURES BEYOND THE DEPZ. • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD POSE AN EXTERNAL HAZARD TO THE SITE. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ZONE	DEVELOPMENT TYPE	INNER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN RESIDENTIAL OR NON-RESIDENTIAL POPULATIONS THUS IMPACTING ON THE EMERGENCY PLAN. • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD CAUSE AN EXTERNAL HAZARD TO THE SITE. 	OUTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION THAT WILL LEAD TO A MATERIAL INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT, WHICH IS OTHERWISE LIKELY TO IMPACT ON THE OFF-SITE EMERGENCY PLAN • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION THAT WILL LEAD TO A MATERIAL INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE EXTENDIBILITY OF COUNTERMEASURES BEYOND THE DEPZ. • ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, RE-USE OR RE-CLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD POSE AN EXTERNAL HAZARD TO THE SITE.
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Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To consider the impact of any increase in population within the areas close to Hinkley Point Power Station. 						

Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As part of managing the (very small) risk of accident involving the release of radiological material it is prudent to consider increases in population living or having other business within close proximity of nuclear sites.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consultation zones are those identified by ONR and shown on the map in Appendix X (potential applicants are advised to contact ONR in respect of any changes to the extent of the zones shown on the map). ○ ONR provide guidance on Land Use Planning in close proximity to Nuclear Installations (www.onr.uk/land-use-planning.htm). This provides advice about the need for consultations about proposed developments in the vicinity of licensed nuclear installations. ○ Consultation with ONR supports the Government's long-standing policy objective requiring appropriate control of development around licensed nuclear sites to limit the radiological consequences to the public in the unlikely event of an accident. ○ The policy is a measure of prudence over and above the stringent regulatory requirements placed upon nuclear operators by ONR. ○ ONR when consulted will provide advice to the Council which should be considered when making decisions on planning applications within the consultation zones. ○ All new residential developments within consultation zones around Hinkley Point Power Station will be monitored and reported to ONR on an annual basis. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 16, 19 and, 32.</p>
POLICY NH11:-BAT CONSULTATION ZONE	
	<p>PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT ON SITES WITHIN THE WEST SOMERSET BAT CONSULTATION ZONE, AS SHOWN ON THE POLICIES MAP, MAY REQUIRE A 'TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE' UNDER THE HABITAT REGULATIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT. APPLICANTS MUST PROVIDE ALL NECESSARY INFORMATION TO ENABLE SUCH A TEST TO BE CONDUCTED, INCLUDING ANY NECESSARY SURVEY WORK, REPORTS AND AVOIDANCE/MITIGATION MEASURES WITH THE APPLICATION.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To secure the conservation objectives of the Barbastelle bat feature of the Exmoor and Quantocks Oak Woodlands SAC from effects outside of its designated boundaries
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Barbastelle bat populations are affected by changes to land use up to and beyond 9 kilometres from the designated site's boundaries. These effects will not necessarily be detected or be considered in the planning process.

Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As ‘competent authority’ under the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2010 [the ‘Habitats Regulations’] West Somerset District Council is required to carry out a ‘test of likely significant effect’ on planning applications that potentially affect the conservation objectives of the site. The District Council is also responsible for ensuring that populations and distribution of European Protected Species are maintained at a ‘Favourable Conservation Status’ as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive. ○ Outcome of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the draft Local Plan. December 2011 and Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Publication Draft Local Plan November 2014. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 17, 42, 43, 100 and, 102.</p>
POLICY NH12: WATERFOWL CONSULTATION ZONE	
	<p>PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT ON SITES WITHIN THE WEST SOMERSET WATERFOWL CONSULTATION ZONE, AS SHOWN ON THE POLICIES MAP, MAY REQUIRE A ‘TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE’ UNDER THE HABITATS REGULATIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT. APPLICANTS MUST PROVIDE ALL NECESSARY INFORMATION TO ENABLE SUCH A TEST TO BE CONDUCTED, INCLUDING ANY NECESSARY SURVEY WORK, REPORTS AND AVOIDANCE/MITIGATION MEASURES WITH THE APPLICATION.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To secure the conservation objectives for wintering and migratory bird populations and waterfowl assemblage of the Severn Estuary SPA/Ramsar from effects outside of its designated boundaries.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some species of commuting birds including swans, geese, ducks and waders are vulnerable to collision with wind turbines.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As ‘competent authority’ under the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2010 [the ‘Habitats Regulations’] West Somerset District Council is required to carry out a ‘test of likely significant effect’ on planning applications that potentially affect the conservation objectives of the site. ○ Outcome of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the draft Local Plan. December 2011. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 17, 42, 43, 100 and, 102.</p>

POLICY NH13: SECURING HIGH STANDARDS OF DESIGN	
	<p>NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL BE EXPECTED TO MEET THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF DESIGN. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS, ALL PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT (EXCLUDING SMALL DOMESTIC APPLICATIONS AND CHANGES OF USE) SHOULD DEMONSTRATE THAT WHERE APPROPRIATE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS HAVE INFORMED THE PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN AND HOW THE DETAILED DESIGN RESPONDS POSITIVELY TO ITS NEIGHBOURS AND THE LOCAL CONTEXT; • THE PROPOSAL MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND CREATES A PLACE WITH A DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER; • THE PUBLIC REALM HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT IT IS ATTRACTIVE, SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND WELL CONNECTED TO ITS SURROUNDINGS, INCLUDING WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES TO AND WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT, TO ENCOURAGE THEIR USE IN THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH; • THE LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED TO ENHANCE BOTH THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL TO IMPROVE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY; • MEASURES TO MINIMISE CARBON EMISSIONS AND PROMOTE RENEWABLE ENERGY AND REDUCE IMPACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE FORM AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DESIGN SOLUTIONS.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure that new development contributes to maintaining a high quality built environment within the area, and helps to deliver sustainable development.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The provision of well-designed development appropriate to its intended purpose and context will serve to protect and enhance the high quality of the environment within West Somerset. ○ This protects the quality of life of residents, and ○ Also has a positive economic impact through maintaining the attractiveness of the area to tourists and investors.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The NPPF places great importance on securing high standards of design in the built environment. It states that good design is inseparable from good planning. One of the government's prime objectives for the planning system is to promote good design that ensures attractive, usable, and durable places. This is seen as a key element in securing sustainable development. ○ The built environment within the District is diverse and of a generally high quality. It includes the historic seaside resort of Minehead, other historic market towns and villages, and other development within the countryside. The fundamental objective is therefore to ensure that new development,

wherever it is located within the District, should be of the highest quality, which respects its context and enhances local character.

- Good design is an inseparable aspect of creating sustainable communities, and is an important part of ensuring that the District makes the most effective and efficient use of developable land. It is a key indicator in assessing a community's quality of life.
- A number of major developments are planned during the next twenty years, at Minehead/Alcombe, Watchet and Williton. These offer the opportunity to ensure that the highest standards of sustainable design are achieved, and that high quality places are created.
- While an individual design response will be determined by the local context, it is essential that all new development should aspire to meet the highest standards of sustainable design. In order to achieve this a coherent and coordinated approach is required to ensure that the following objectives are achieved:
- New development should create a sense of place with a distinctive character, which clearly demonstrates how it has responded to its local context. Some communities have produced Village Design Statements which help to define the character of the locality and identify important local features. Establishing local design standards could form an integral part of future neighbourhood planning; new development (which includes hard and soft landscaping) should connect seamlessly to surrounding development in terms of layout, scale, form, enclosure, space and materials and, where appropriate, take the opportunity to enhance the public realm;
- the public realm should be designed to ensure that well connected, safe and attractive environments are created for the community, giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists and not motor vehicles where appropriate;
- the built and natural environment should be properly integrated. The design process should therefore be holistic to ensure a well-defined transition from built-up to natural areas, particularly on the edges of settlements;
- new development should complement but not seek to mimic existing development and should be of its time. The Council will encourage a contemporary approach to new designs which respect and respond positively to the context, local distinctiveness and sense of place in terms of layout, scale, form, space and materials;
- measures to minimise carbon emissions, promote renewable energy and manage water effectively should be an integral part of the design solutions;
- Developers and their agents should carry out contextual surveys and analyse their findings in accordance with the urban design principles set out in the 'By Design' documents and other relevant guidance. The analysis should inform the design concept and applicants should be able to demonstrate in their design and access statements how the urban design principles above have informed the detailed design in terms of its character, continuity and enclosure, quality of the public realm, ease of movement, adaptability and diversity.

Sources:

See Appendix 1 nos.; 15, 18 and, 33.

POLICY NH14: NATIONALLY DESIGNATED LANDSCAPE AREAS	
	<p>MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WITHIN THE QUANTOCK HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY WILL BE DETERMINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY.</p> <p>WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS LIKELY TO AFFECT THE QUANTOCK HILLS AONB OR EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK, REGARD WILL BE HAD TO THEIR STATUTORY PURPOSES.</p> <p>APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD HAVE REGARD TO LOCATION, SITING, ORIENTATION AND LANDSCAPING TO ACHIEVE HIGH QUALITY DESIGN AND TO ENSURE THAT THE PROPOSALS CONSERVE OR ENHANCE THE NATURAL BEAUTY, WILDLIFE, CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TRANQUILLITY OF THE AONB OR THE NATIONAL PARK AND THEIR SETTINGS. DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD CONFLICT WITH THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE STATUTORY PURPOSES OF THE AONB OR THE NATIONAL PARK, OR THEIR SETTINGS OR WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE UNDERSTANDING OR ENJOYMENT OF THE NATIONAL PARK'S SPECIAL QUALITIES, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To protect the high quality landscape characteristics of the Quantock Hills AONB within the West Somerset LPA area. ○ The policy provides for the appropriate consideration of protected landscapes when considering the design of development schemes. ○ The policy provides for the appropriate consideration of functional and design issues in locations outside but would impact on nationally designated areas and their associated landscape characteristics.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The care with which development is designed and sited in high quality designated rural landscapes makes a considerable difference to the positive or negative impact which it can have on the area and, on its setting. ○ Landscape impact can potentially be reduced through the careful design, location and, orientation of new development. ○ Small-scale development is not referred to directly in the context of protected landscapes. It follows that impact is generally likely to be lesser than that associated with major schemes but, nonetheless it is important to recognise that any impact should be minimised.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nationally designated landscapes account for almost 75% of the West Somerset local authority area in the form of, Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and, Exmoor National Park (ENP). West Somerset Council is the LPA for the AONB but the development within the National Park is determined by its own separate LPA, the Exmoor National Park Authority. ○ The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located across three separate LPA's and there is a need for a general consistency in the planning policy approach to development within it. ○ Development in the areas outside of but surrounding/adjoining nationally designated landscape areas, can have an impact on the latter. It is an important contextual issue when dealing with development proposals within

	<p>such areas and requires additional/ careful consideration as part of the development management process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where development proposals are made in locations surrounding/adjoining nationally designated landscape area, it will be assessed in the context of its impact on the designated area itself, not the setting. ○ The policy is not intended to prevent the principle of development within the AONB or, surrounding it or other nationally designated landscape areas. However, it does require that the character of such areas, should be treated as an important factor when designing and deciding on development proposals. ○ Where development is deemed to be necessary and acceptable, preference will be sought to ensure that the new-build can be successfully integrated with, either; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) adjoining existing structures whether as part of the built-form of a nearby settlement or, b) as part of a cluster of existing permanent buildings. <p>This is so as to minimise the impact of the new-build on the surrounding area and landscape and to avoid drawing attention to the structure as a feature in the landscape in its own right.</p> ○ Where development is considered to be necessary and acceptable, particular attention will be paid to the design taking account of; siting, scale, form, height, massing, detail and/or use of local materials as appropriate. <p><u>Definitions:</u></p> <p><u>Nationally designated landscapes</u> – those designated by the Secretary of State through relevant primary and secondary legislation e.g. Designation Order, Statutory Instrument (S.I.).</p> <p><u>Major development</u> – proposals for 10 or more dwellings and/or, large structures, whose intrusion on the local and surrounding landscape would be difficult to effectively mitigate through traditional screening and landscaping techniques without drawing attention to this, itself.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u></p> <p>See Appendix 1 nos.; 9, 15, 57, 73, 77, 78, 90 and, 127.</p>
POLICY GT1: GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE POLICY	
	<p>PROVISION WILL BE MADE IN A LOCAL PLAN TO MEET AN IDENTIFIED NEED FOR UP TO 10 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER PITCHES DURING THE PLAN PERIOD. APPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION WILL BE DETERMINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL POLICY.</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A policy to enable the provision of additional gypsy pitches identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An appropriate number of residential Gypsy pitches should be provided for the number of families who are demonstrated resort or reside in the area. ○ Consideration needs to be made for potential traveller accommodation requirements where they intend to remain active in this capacity.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ West Somerset is not identified as being on an identified route or as a regular destination for the Gypsy and Traveller communities. It does have a small community who have been accommodated for a number of years on a site near Stogursey. The site has a capacity of 10 pitches and the number in occupation varies. The 2010 survey of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs up to 2020 identified a possible requirement for three additional pitches arising from local demand. The Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment Update for Somerset published in October 2013 considered the period to the end of the plan period in 2032 for which a potential 10 additional pitches was found to be required. Given the relative uncertainty as to the exact quantum and timing of the additional requirement, the policy seeks to enable the provision of the pitches as and when the need actually arises. ○ The policy sets out a criteria-based approach to the consideration of gypsy and traveller pitch proposals. The approach outlined will be applied not just to the consideration of planning applications themselves but also through the plan-led system in assessing the suitability of potential sites for allocation in subsequent Development Plan Documents. ○ This policy has been drafted in the context of the Government's recently amended guidance on the consideration of gypsy and traveller sites and seeks to ensure that a sequential approach is taken to site selection which will enable need to be met in locations which are well-related to existing and proposed services and facilities and which minimise the need to travel. ○ The impact of development on existing communities and how well proposals can be integrated is an important consideration in the determination of applications for gypsy and traveller provision. Applicants will therefore be expected to demonstrate that proposals do not unacceptably impact upon the amenity of existing residents. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 11,12 and, 20.</p>

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING AND MONITORING THE DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY - IMPLEMENTATION	
POLICY ID1:	INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY
	THE PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF DEVELOPMENT SHOULD ENSURE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE USE OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SHOULD PROVIDE FOR THE DELIVERY OF AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF JUSTIFIED NEW OR IMPROVED TRANSPORT, EDUCATION, HEALTH, CULTURAL, SPORT, RECREATION AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN RELATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A policy to ensure that development within the Local Plan area is implemented in accordance with the sustainable development principles of the Local Plan. ○ An Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been prepared to accompany the policy and express how it will be implemented.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That implementation of development without the necessary infrastructure investment would have a range of consequent adverse impacts upon the local area. ○ Infrastructure needs arising directly from a proposed development should be provided by the developer as part of the costs of development.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Council will work in partnership with service providers, neighbouring local planning authorities and Somerset County Council to identify necessary local infrastructure requirements for the fulfilment of the strategy. ○ In order to achieve the successful implementation of the strategy, delivering the anticipated benefits to the community, it is essential that the increased infrastructure requirements arising from the proposed development are properly provided for through S106 planning agreements. Failure to address this would have the unwanted impact of overloading existing infrastructure provision, to the detriment of both existing residents and those moving into the new development. ○ It is however important that the infrastructure requirements which are specified for a scheme are proportionate, and keep in sight the fact that development proposals must be viable in order to result in their implementation. ○ Affordable housing is also an essential part of the social infrastructure to which new development should contribute; this is addressed through policy SC4. ○ The Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document will be revised to assist with the implementation of this policy. ○ Clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy. <p><u>Sources:</u> See Appendix 1 nos.; 15 and, 17.</p>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Source documents for policies

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Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) Hinkley Point C development proposal consultation zone

(not included)

APPENDIX 3

Schedule of which West Somerset District Local Plan (Adopted April 2006) policies will be replaced by which new West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 policies.

WEST SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN TO 2032 – ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2016

Schedule of which 2006 Saved, Adopted West Somerset District Local Plan (WSDLP) policies will be replaced by which new West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 policies.

Local Plan to 2032 policy.	Subject.	West Somerset District Local Plan policy replaced.
SD1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development.	none
EN1	Mitigation of impact of Hinkley Point new nuclear proposals	(EN/5)
SC1	Hierarchy of settlements	SP/1
SC2	Housing provision	H/1, SP/2, SP/3, SP/4.
SC3	Appropriate mix of housing types and tenures	none
SC4	Affordable housing	H/4
SC5	Self-containment of settlements	SP/1, SP/2, SP/3
SC6	Safeguarding of village facilities	E/7, SH/5
MD1	Minehead/Alcombe development	SP/2
MD2	Key Strategic development allocation at Minehead/Alcombe	SP/2
WA1	Watchet development	SP/2
WA2	Strategic development allocation at Parsonage Farm, Watchet	SP/2
WI1	Williton development	SP/2
WI2	Key Strategic development allocations at Williton	SP/2
LT1	Post 2026 key strategic development sites	SP/2
SV1	Development at Primary and Secondary Villages	SP/3, SP/4
OC1	Open countryside development	SP/5, E/5, SH/6, H/2, R/10
EC1	Widening and strengthening the local economy	E/2
EC2	Major employment site	E/1
EC3	Greenfield employment generating development	None
EC4	Home based business activities	E/8
EC5	Safeguarding existing employment uses	E/7
EC6	Work/Live developments	E/8
EC7	Training and educational provision	None
EC8	Tourism in settlements	TO/1
EC9	Tourism outside of settlements	TO/5, TO/6, TO/7
EC10	Gateway settlements	None
EC11	Agriculture	A/1
EC12	Minehead primary retail area and central areas for Alcombe, Watchet and Williton	SH/1, SH/2, SH/4
TR1	Access to and from West Somerset	None
TR2	Reducing reliance on the private car	None
CF1	Maximising access to health, sport, recreation and, cultural facilities	R/1, R/3 and R/4.
CF2	Planning for healthy communities	AD/1

CC1	Carbon reduction – non-wind energy generating schemes	<i>(EN/4)</i>
CC2	Flood risk management	W/6, CO/1, CO/3
CC3	Coastal Change Management Area	CO/2, CO/3
CC4	Coastal zone protection	CO/1
CC5	Water efficiency	None
CC6	Water management	W/1, W/2, W/3, W/5
NH1	Historic environment	BD/1, AH/1, LB/3
NH2	Management of heritage assets	LB/1, LB/2, CA/1, CA/2, CA/3
NH3	Areas of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP)	AH/3
NH4	Archaeological sites of local significance	AH/2
NH5	Landscape character protection	LC/1, LC/3
NH6	Nature conservation and the protection and enhancement of Biodiversity	NC/3, NC/4, NC/5
NH7	Green infrastructure	None
NH8	Protection of best and most versatile agricultural land	A/2
NH9	Pollution, contaminated land and land instability	PC/1, PC/2, PC/3, PC/4
NH10	Development in proximity to Hinkley Point nuclear power station	None
NH11	Bat consultation zone	None
NH12	Waterfowl consultation zone	None
NH13	Securing high standards of design	BD/2, BD/5
NH14	Nationally designated landscape areas	LC/1, <i>(LC/2), (EN/1), (EN/2)</i>
GT1	Gypsies and travellers	H/8
ID1	Infrastructure delivery	T/3, T/5, PO/1, TC/1

Note

WSDLP policy nos. in parenthesis and italics, e.g. *(EN/5)* are those which were not saved beyond 1st April 2009.

APPENDIX C

Council Response to Additional Modifications

The text below (and the accompanying table of changes) is an abridged version of the Report that was considered by the Local Development Panel at its meeting on 3rd October 2016 as Agenda Item 7. The recommendations in paragraph 1.7 were endorsed by the Panel, unchanged from that presented. Minor changes have been made to the text to refer to relevant documents that this Appendix now forms a part.

1 Background and Full details of the Report

- 1.1 The content of this report deals with the representations made in response to one of two sets of proposed modifications to the Publication Draft of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 (January 2015). It only covers the proposed changes to those parts of the supporting text to the policies that were not subject to substantive alteration in the way that the policies should be interpreted. These were referred to as Additional Modifications during the consultation. Changes to policy wording, new policies, policy deletion and their respective supporting text interpretation were treated as Main Modifications and were dealt with by the Inspector through his Report and accompanying Appendix (see Appendix A to Full Council Report).
- 1.2 Work on the West Somerset Local Plan commenced in 2009 with a consultation to identify the significant spatial planning issues that could be affecting development in the West Somerset Local Planning Authority area. Since then, the emerging local plan has been through a further three informal consultation periods. During this time the strategy and policies evolved to a point in late 2014, when it was considered to be in a state where it could be subject to examination by an external and independent Planning Inspector. The Publication version of the Local Plan was endorsed by Full Council at its meeting on 21st January 2015 to go out for formal consultation which took place between 10th February and 23rd March of that year. Following consideration of the responses to Publication version, it was found that there were no substantive issues arising from it, that could prevent the local Plan from being submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. The Local Plan to 2032 was submitted on 31st July 2015. Following 'submission', an Inspector, Brian Cook BA (Hons.) DipTP MRTPI, was appointed to take the Local Plan to 2032 through the Examination stage. This would culminate in a Report that would determine the suitability and 'soundness' of the document as the basis for decision-taking on development proposals utilising the relevant policies contained within it (see Appendix A to Full Council Report).
- 1.3 The Examination process included a scrutiny element that took place through a number of round-table discussion sessions. These were used to provide the Inspector with greater clarification and/or understanding about specific issues he had identified in his reading of the local plan document and supporting evidence. These 'hearing-sessions' were held in public and participants in the discussions included individuals and representatives of interested organisations who had made representations about the content of the Local

Plan to 2032 at the Publication stage. The ‘hearing-sessions’ took place at West Somerset House between 14th and 22nd March 2016. At the final ‘hearing-session’ Officers representing West Somerset Council presented a set of proposed changes to the original Publication Draft, to the Inspector. These changes arose from a combination of; the representations made to the Publication Draft of the Local Plan to 2032 prior to its submission, exchange of correspondence between the Inspector and the Local Planning Authority (LPA), post submission and, the discussions during earlier ‘hearing-sessions’. Following a further exchange of correspondence between the Inspector and the LPA after the ‘hearing-sessions’ had been completed, two sets of changes were proposed by the LPA in order to make the plan ‘sound’. These comprised the Main Modifications, the representations to which would be dealt with by the Inspector via his Report and, Additional Modifications, the responses to which would be dealt with by the LPA.

1.4 The public consultation on both types of ‘modifications’ took place over a six-week period between 3rd June and 15th July. The consultation comprised 29 Main Modifications and 19 Additional Modifications. This generated 70 comments on specific modifications from 29 organisations and individuals. Of the representations on individual aspects, over 75% were about the Main Modifications which have been dealt with by the Inspector through his Report and are, therefore, not considered in this report. Of the remainder, five were specifically about the proposed Additional Modifications. These comprised;

1.4.1 **Policy OC1: Open Countryside Development (AM8)** – The representation was linked with one about the proposed changes to the policy-wording itself (MM12) to which the objector suggested an alternative wording to the policy. The suggested change to the policy related to the objectors requirement that it should acknowledge the role of tourism accommodation as a form of development in the open countryside. The Additional Modifications changes in the supporting text dealt with two issues;

- The locational criteria for employment new-build, and,
- The revised economic and functional tests that should be applied to proposals for rural worker accommodation

However, whilst an explanation was provided for the change to the policy itself, no indication was provided as to how the proposed supporting text changes should be amended to reflect the preferred revised policy wording. The Inspector, in his Report, has not proposed to amend the wording of the policy from that put forward as part of the Main Modifications consultation. Therefore, in the absence of any changed wording to the policy itself and lack of alternative wording for the supporting text, it is not intended to amend the latter from the version that was consulted on as part of the Additional Modifications.

1.4.2 **Policy EC6: Work/Live Developments (AM10)** – The representation received in relation to the proposed changes to the supporting text of this policy was supportive of the amendments. These sought to clarify the issue of the integrated relationship of the two functions without indicating that one use should be apportioned greater amount of the floor-space than the other.

- 1.4.3 **Policy CC1: Carbon Reduction Energy Generating Schemes (AM11)** – The representation received on the proposed changes to the supporting text were linked with those the objector had submitted in relation to changes to the wording of the policy (MM17). The policy and text had been subject to significant re-wording from that which had been included in the Publication Draft as it sought to incorporate elements of the Policy EN2: Mitigation of Impact of Major Energy Generating Proposals. This latter policy was proposed for deletion through the Main Modifications (MM1). The objector sought to include an additional criteria in the revised wording of the policy to address issues of noise and vibration from new energy generating proposals on existing nearby tourism accommodation. These particular issues are covered by Policy NH6: Pollution, Contaminated Land and Land Instability. No new and/or alternative wording to the supporting text to justify the objectors' additional policy-wording criteria was provided. The Inspector, in his Report, has not proposed to amend the wording of the policy from that put forward as part of the Main Modifications consultation. Therefore, in the absence of any changed wording to the policy itself and lack of alternative wording for the supporting text, it is not intended to amend the latter from the version that was consulted on as part of the Additional Modifications.
- 1.4.4 **Policy NH1: Historic Environment (AM15)** – The representation received on the proposed changes to the supporting text were linked with those the objector had submitted in relation to changes to the wording of the policy (MM20). The policy and text had been subject to significant re-wording throughout the Examination stage as a consequence of representations made by the Government's advisor on heritage matters, Historic England. The outcome of the exchange of correspondence with this source, from the consultation on the Publication Draft through to the Examination 'hearing-sessions' has resulted in the replacement of a single over-arching policy covering heritage issues in general, to, extensive re-wording of the policy and its supporting text and, the drafting of a new policy, Policy NH1x: Management of Heritage Assets (MM21). Between them the two policies are expected to cover all historic and heritage development policy issues in both general and specific terms. The objector sought to amend the policy wording to the revised version of Policy NH1 from that presented for consultation, to provide a different approach to the application of the phrase 'appropriate' in relation to potentially affected heritage assets. No new and/or alternative wording to the supporting text to justify the objectors' additional policy-wording criteria was provided. The Inspector, in his Report, has not proposed to amend the wording of the policy from that put forward as part of the Main Modifications consultation. Therefore, in the absence of any changed wording to the policy itself and lack of alternative wording for the supporting text, it is not intended to amend the latter from the version that was consulted on as part of the Additional Modifications.
- 1.4.5 **Policy NH4: Green Infrastructure (AM16)** – The representation received from Somerset Wildlife Trust, in relation to the proposed changes to the supporting text of this policy was supportive of the amendment. This sought to include reference to rivers as streams as contribution towards the overall provision of green infrastructure as part of the first bullet-point in the 'Justification' text.

- 1.5 In addition to the representations mentioned above and those specifically in relation the Main Modifications, twelve further comments were made of a more generic nature or, addressed specific parts of the Local Plan to 2032 that did not form part of the latest consultation. As a consequence of this the comments have been noted for future reference but cannot be considered as a part of this report.
- 1.6 Since the Publication Draft version of the Local Plan to 2032 was approved by Full Council in January 2015, it has been the subject of one formal consultation on the whole of the content of the emerging development plan document. It has also been subject to additional consultation on proposed amendments only, to the original document arising from the Examination stage (6th August 2015 – 14th September 2016) of the process, including the Examination ‘hearing-sessions’ in March of this year. During the process since Publication Draft a number of typographical and grammatical errors have been identified in the various iterations of document by individuals through representations made during the consultation stages and, by officers. Where these affect the supporting text only, they have been addressed and are included as part of the recommended changes in Table 1 of Annex A that accompanies this report. Where such errors have been identified, by officers and others, that affect the wording of the policies, these have been highlighted for the attention of the Inspector for him to address through his Report.

Conclusion

- 1.7 As a result of the Examination process of the Local Plan to 2032, from the Submission at the end of July 2015 to the resolution of Full Council to consult on the Proposed Modifications in May of this year, there have been a number of amendments suggested to elements of the content of the local plan document. This culminated in the identification of 48 proposed changes to the Publication Draft of the Local Plan to 2032. These were approved for consultation during the early summer. 29 of the proposed changes affected the wording of policy and have been considered by the Planning Inspector in the production of his Report. The remaining 19 Additional Modifications consulted on attracted a number of representations as covered in Section 1.4 of this report. As a consequence of the changes that were proposed as Additional Modifications and the responses received to them during the consultation process it is recommended that;
- i. **The Additional Modifications be incorporated into the Publication Draft version of the Local Plan to 2032 as set out in Table 1 of Appendix A,**
 - ii. **the changes to correct typographical and grammatical errors to the supporting text be made to the Publication Draft version of the Local Plan to 2032 as set out in Table 1 of Appendix A, and,**
 - iii. **that the Local Plan to 2032, as amended by these changes, be recommended to Full Council as part of the adoption process alongside those recommendations relating to the Inspectors’ Report.**

Proposed changes to the supporting text arising from Additional Modifications consultation

The table below identifies all the proposed changes affecting the supporting text in the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 that were subject to consultation as Additional Modifications. Alterations to the supporting text of the local Plan directly associated with proposed changes to the respective policy wording were covered through the parallel consultation on Main Modifications are not included in this table. These are dealt with through the Inspectors' Report. The consultation period for both the Main Modifications and Additional Modifications took place between 3rd June and 15th July 2016. The proposed changes that were the subject of the Additional Modifications consultation arose from a variety of sources including;

- representations received from the Publication stage consultation prior to submission,
- exchange of correspondence with the appointed Inspector following Submission of the Local Plan, and,
- through the Examination hearing sessions that took place in March 2016.

The changes referred to in this table are based on the Publication version of the Local Plan (January 2015) which formed the basis of the documents that were submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination on 31st July 2015. The page numbers identified in the first column of the table refer to this version of the Local Plan to 2032.

The text that was the subject of the Additional Modifications consultation is shown in the second column of the table, as it was presented in the consultation documents. Where the text has been subject to further change in response to representations received during the consultation process and the identification of typographical and/or grammatical errors these are identified via underlining. A comment is included in *italics* and parenthesis at the end of each section of text identifying the source of the change.

TABLE1: West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 changes to text only

Policy ref. and page number	Amendment
Policy EN1 Purpose, p.16	Insert new text; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This policy does not apply to development covered by the NSIP process and to which the DCO applies. <i>(Additional Modification AM1 – accepted)</i>
Policy SC2 Justification, p.22	Amend first sentence to read; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ c.80% of completions are consistently provided at Minehead/Alcombe Watchet and Williton; This level of provision (at approximately the annual rate now proposed on the basis of the SHMA’s evidence) has proved remarkably successful in maintaining Minehead/Alcombe as the main service centre with a good range of service provision for a town of its scale, and Watchet and Williton as two successful secondary service centres. <i>(our error – grammar)</i>
Policy MD1 Justification inc. any references, p.35	Insert new reference; Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited; <u>Minehead Surface Water Management Plan: Detailed Assessment and Options Appraisal Report – Final Report , August 2012</u>; Somerset County Council; 2012. <i>(Additional Modifications AM2 – accepted)</i>
Policy MD2 Justification inc. any references, p.37	Insert new reference; Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited; <u>Minehead Surface Water Management Plan: Detailed Assessment and Options Appraisal Report – Final Report , August 2012</u>; Somerset County Council; 2012. <i>(Additional Modifications AM3 – accepted)</i>
Policy WA2 Assumptions, p.40	Insert new text; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The master-plan will also take account of the significance of the ‘Listed’ historic assets at Parsonage Farm and their settings as described in the, Parsonage Farm Heritage Assessment. <i>(Additional Modifications AM4 – accepted)</i>
Policy WA2 Justification, p.40	Insert new text; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impact upon the natural and historic heritage is managed in an appropriate way taking account of the significance of the ‘Listed’ historic assets at Parsonage Farm and their settings as described in the, Parsonage Farm Heritage Assessment. <i>(Additional Modifications AM4 – accepted)</i>
Policy WA2 Justification inc. any references, p.40	Insert new reference; Wessex Archaeology Ltd.; Parsonage Farmhouse, Parsonage Farm, Watchet, Somerset: Heritage Assessment – August 2015 (Report No. 110190.01); West Somerset Council; 2015. <i>(Additional Modifications AM5 – accepted)</i>

<p>Policy LT1 Justification, p.46</p>	<p>Insert new text;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Options for rescue archaeology excavations in advance of further coastal erosion of Daws Castle will be sought through Section 106 Agreements with developers. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM6 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy LT1 Justification inc. any references, p.46</p>	<p>Insert new reference;</p> <p>Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited; <u>Minehead Surface Water Management Plan: Detailed Assessment and Options Appraisal Report – Final Report, August 2012</u>; Somerset County Council; 2012.</p> <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM7 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy OC1 Justification, pp.50 - 51</p>	<p>Amend and insert new text;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “The open countryside” includes all land outside of existing settlements, where development is not generally appropriate. It is however desirable in certain circumstances to allow development exceptionally, where this is beneficial for the community and local economy. ○ New-build development for employment generating activities already established in the local area will be considered where the type of activity in its existing location is incompatible with existing neighbouring uses. The re-location of any relevant employment generating activity would also need to take account of any relevant parts of Policy EC5 and Policy EC9. ○ Essential dwellings for agricultural, forestry, equine, horticulture or hunting purposes rural workers may be permitted subject to a rigorous assessment of the necessity for the development in the location proposed, and in particular, why an existing dwelling in the local area cannot suffice. The justification for such dwellings must include setting out the functional need for a dwelling in that location and financial economic evidence to demonstrate the potential viability of the scheme. These will include the following criteria; <p>Functional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there is an existing and established need for the activity in the area, ▪ the need requires the presence of a full-time worker employed in the activity on-site to provide availability to meet local emergencies associated with it, on a 24/7 basis, ▪ the need could not be met effectively through use of existing off-site accommodation nearby, and, ▪ other planning requirements, such as siting and access, can be satisfied. <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the activity can demonstrate that it has been generating an regular on-going need for at least three years, and, ▪ the proposed accommodation should be commensurate with the established functional need for accommodation in that location.

	<p>Because it will not be clear whether an enterprise will prove to be viable in advance, initial permissions under this policy may be granted on a temporary basis.</p> <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM8 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy EC2 Justification, p.54</p>	<p>Amend text to read;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Priority will be given to those sites and land identified as being available and suitable for employment uses identified through the Employment Land Review and, they are consistent with other policies within the Local Plan and, they meet the relevant requirements of PPS4 the NPPF. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM9 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy EC6 Justification, p.59</p>	<p>Amend text to read;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Properly designed work/live accommodation should have a majority of floorspace for employment use, ensure that the two types of use being are integrated in such a way that they cannot be split up and used separately. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM10 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy CC1 Purpose, p.71</p>	<p>Insert new text;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy seeks to ensure that appropriate mitigation of adverse impacts and optimisation of beneficial impacts arising from energy generating proposals is provided. ○ This policy does not apply to development covered by the NSIP process and to which a DCO applies. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM11 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy CC1 Assumptions, pp.71 - 72</p>	<p>Insert new text;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Energy generating proposals can give rise to a range of both positive and negative impacts depending on the nature of the energy generating technology involved and the scale, location and design of the scheme; ○ Some of these impacts may be on a very significant scale, ○ They will range in timescale between short and long term. ○ Where the impact is more than substantial and cannot be adequately mitigated then it will need to be demonstrated that the public benefit arising from the development clearly outweighs the consequential diminution of the asset. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM11 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy CC1 Justification, p.72</p>	<p>Amend and insert new text;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The scope of this policy does not include large scale development such as extensive photovoltaic arrays which will be considered in the context of policy EN2. ○ The search for new and more sustainable energy generating capacity has led to the development of novel technologies such as large scale photovoltaic arrays and windfarms. All energy generating facilities have locational requirements related to the nature of the energy source being captured.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The desire for more low carbon energy generation has led to more large scale generating development away from traditional sources of hydrocarbon energy such as the coalfields. Wind, hydro, biomass and solar energy schemes are frequently located in remote rural areas of high landscape and or ecological value, great care is necessary in order to balance the benefits of low or zero carbon energy generation with the appropriate level of protection for highly valued environments. These will also have to be considered in the context of the provisions of Policies NH2 and NH3 where appropriate. ○ A Renewable Energy Potential Study forms part of the evidence base. ○ Developments affecting the local historic environment and any designated (e.g. Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas, etc.) and identified potential (e.g. Areas of High Archaeological Potential – AHAP’s) heritage assets within and surrounding the area will also have to be considered in the context of the provisions of Policies NH1, NH1a, NH1b and NH1x where appropriate. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM11 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy CC1 Justification inc. any references, p.73</p>	<p>Amend and insert new references;</p> <p>Department of the Environment; Planning Policy Guidance: Coastal Planning Note (PPG 20) – September 1992; H.M.S.O.; 1992; ISBN 0 11 752744 4</p> <p>Department of Energy and Climate Change; <u>Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy – June 2011 (EN-1)</u>; DECC; 2011.</p> <p>Department of Energy and Climate Change; <u>National policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure – June 2011 (EN-3)</u>; DECC; 2011.</p> <p>Department of Energy and Climate Change; <u>National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure – June 2011 (EN-5)</u>; DECC; 2011.</p> <p>Department of Energy and Climate Change; <u>National Policy Statement Nuclear Power Generation Vols. 1 & 2 – June 2011 (EN-6)</u>; DECC; 2011.</p> <p>Department for Communities and Local Government; <u>National Planning Policy Framework – March 2012</u>; Department for Communities and Local Government; 2012; ISBN 978 1 4098 3413 7</p> <p>Department of Communities and Local Government; <u>National Planning Policy Framework – National Planning Practice Guidance (as amended)</u>; Department for Communities and Local Government Planning Portal (web-site http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/); 2014.</p> <p>Turner, Cllr. K.H.; <u>West Somerset Council Full Council 23rd March 2011 Agenda Item 8: West Somerset Council Position Statement on Proposed Major Energy Generation and Associated Infrastructure Projects (Full Council Report No. WSC 42/11)</u>; West Somerset Council; 2011.</p>

	<p>Stuart Todd Associates; <u>West Somerset Local Planning Authority Area Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Potential Study – September 2011</u>; West Somerset Council; 2012.</p> <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM12 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy CC2 Justification inc. any references, p.74</p>	<p>Insert new reference;</p> <p>Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited; <u>Minehead Surface Water Management Plan: Detailed Assessment and Options Appraisal Report – Final Report , August 2012</u>; Somerset County Council; 2012.</p> <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM13 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy CC6 Justification inc. any references, p.78</p>	<p>Insert new reference;</p> <p>Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited; <u>Minehead Surface Water Management Plan: Detailed Assessment and Options Appraisal Report – Final Report , August 2012</u>; Somerset County Council; 2012.</p> <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM14 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy NH1 Purpose, p.79</p>	<p>Amend and insert new text;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To conserve and enhance the built and historic heritage assets within the area in such a way that they continue to contribute positively to the communities’ sense of identity and their attractiveness for residents and visitors. ○ To conserve and enhance the built and historic environment and the heritage assets within the area that comprise it, in such a way that they continue to contribute positively to the communities’ sense of identity and their attractiveness for residents and visitors. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM15 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy NH1 Assumptions, p.79</p>	<p>Amend and insert new text;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That the archaeology, historic buildings, historic settlements and historic landscape features are a resource of immense value to the national and local cultural heritage. ○ That the archaeology, historic buildings, historic settlements and historic landscape features are a finite and irreplaceable resource of immense value to the national and local cultural heritage. ○ These heritage assets play an important role in giving the area its distinctive character and its cultural identity. ○ These heritage assets that contribute to the local historic environment play an important role in giving the area its distinctive character and its cultural identity. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM15 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy NH1 Justification, pp.79 - 81</p>	<p>Amend and insert new text;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The heritage assets of the area are unique and irreplaceable. Their cultural value is very significant, forming an essential part of the area’s identity and sense of place. ○ The heritage assets that make up the local historic environment of the area are unique and irreplaceable. Their

	<p>cultural importance forming an essential part of the area's identity and sense of place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heritage assets are also of considerable economic importance within the area, because of the contribution they make to the area's attractiveness. This is of benefit in helping to attract tourists to the area, but also in making it an attractive area for the location of certain types of small business which do not rely upon ease of access to the national highway network as an important locational factor. ○ The historic environment is also of considerable economic importance within the area. This is of benefit in helping to attract tourists to the area, but also in making it an attractive a desirable area for the location of certain types of small business which do not rely upon ease of access to the national highway network as an important locational factor. ○ Well designed and sited development proposals can protect and enhance heritage assets, conversely, poorly designed or located development can result in significant damage to, or loss of, heritage assets. It is therefore essential to ensure that heritage assets are properly considered when making development management decisions and in the consideration and design of development schemes. ○ Well designed and sited development proposals can protect and enhance the historic environment and its heritage assets, conversely, poorly designed or located development can result in harm to, or loss of, heritage assets. It is therefore essential to ensure that heritage assets are properly considered when making development management decisions and in the consideration and design of development schemes. Development proposals affecting the historic environment and its heritage asset components would also need to take account of the relevant provisions in Policies NH1x, NH1A and/or, NH1B as appropriate. ○ Some of the heritage assets of particular note within the plan area are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The late Victorian seaside resort of Minehead, ▪ The historic port of Watchet, ▪ The designated conservation areas, ▪ The setting of Dunster Castle, ▪ The West Somerset Railway, and; ▪ The remains of the West Somerset Mineral Railway. ▪ The Registered Parks and Gardens ▪ Scheduled Ancient Monuments ▪ Plus undesignated heritage assets of high importance ○ A definition of items qualifying as heritage assets is provided in the Glossary of the NPPF. Some of the heritage assets of particular note within the plan area are:
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The late Victorian seaside resort of Minehead, ▪ The historic port of Watchet, ▪ The designated conservation areas, ▪ The setting of Dunster Castle, ▪ The West Somerset Railway, and; ▪ The remains of the West Somerset Mineral Railway. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM15 – accepted)</i></p> <p>New text subject to amendment (<u>underlined</u>) arising from consultation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Registered Parks and Gardens including; St. Audries/West Quantoxhead Landscape Park, Fairfield House Deer Park and, Crowcombe Court Park, ▪ Scheduled Ancient Monuments including; the impressive upstanding mediaeval remains <u>including of</u> Cleeve Abbey, Stogursey Castle, the Bronze-Age barrow cemetery at Battlegore in Williton and, the iron-age hillfort of Trendle Ring. ▪ Plus undesignated heritage assets of high importance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prior to submission of any development proposals, it is advised that the Somerset Historic Environment Record (Somerset HER) facility held by South West Heritage Trust is consulted in order to establish whether any important national, regional or local heritage assets and/or their setting could be affected by it. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM15 – accepted subject to the indicated amendments)</i></p>
<p>Policy NH4 Justification, p.90</p>	<p>Insert new text;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Despite West Somerset being a mainly undeveloped area, public access to areas of greenspace for recreational purposes is not always available. The development of a network of green infrastructure can have significant health and environmental benefits by linking areas of greenspace, both of ecological and recreational value. Examples of linking features might be areas of landscaping in association with development, field margins managed for nature conservation value, cycle tracks, footpaths or, woodland planting. Stream and river corridors are a key example of green infrastructure. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM16 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy NH5 Justification, p.92</p>	<p>Delete text;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This policy is not intended to protect small areas of high quality land of less than ten hectares. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM17 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy GT1 Purpose, p.103</p>	<p>Amend text to read;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A policy to provide for enable the provision of additional gypsy pitches identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM18 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy GT1 Assumptions, p.103</p>	<p>Insert new text;</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consideration needs to be made for potential traveller accommodation requirements where they intend to remain active in this capacity. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM18 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy GT1 Justification, pp.103 - 104</p>	<p>Insert new text;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The policy sets out a criteria-based approach to the consideration of gypsy and traveller pitch proposals. The approach outlined will be applied not just to the consideration of planning applications themselves but also through the plan-led system in assessing the suitability of potential sites for allocation in subsequent Development Plan Documents. ○ This policy has been drafted in the context of the Government’s recently amended guidance on the consideration of gypsy and traveller sites and seeks to ensure that a sequential approach is taken to site selection which will enable need to be met in locations which are well-related to existing and proposed services and facilities and which minimise the need to travel. ○ The impact of development on existing communities and how well proposals can be integrated is an important consideration in the determination of applications for gypsy and traveller provision. Applicants will therefore be expected to demonstrate that proposals do not unacceptably impact upon the amenity of existing residents. <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM18 – accepted)</i></p>
<p>Policy GT1 Justification inc. any references, p.104</p>	<p>Amend and insert new references;</p> <p>Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites (ODPM Circular 01/2006); The Stationary Office; 2006; ISBN 978 0 11 753960 0.</p> <p>Department for Communities and Local Government; Planning for Travelling Showpeople (Communities and Local Government Circular 04/2007); The Stationary Office 2007; ISBN 978 0 11 753983 9.</p> <p>Department for Communities and Local Government; Planning Policy for Traveller Sites – August 2015; Department for Communities and Local Government; 2015; ISBN 978 1 4098 4670 3.</p> <p>De Montfort University Leicester; <u>Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment – January 2011</u>; Somerset County Council; 2011.</p> <p>De Montfort University; <u>Somerset Local Planning Authorities Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment Update: Final Report – October 2013</u>; Somerset Strategic Housing Market Partnership; 2013.</p> <p><i>(Additional Modifications AM19 – accepted)</i></p>

APPENDIX D

West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted, April 2006: Policy status

With the adoption of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 (WSLP to 2032) a number of the policies in the previous West Somerset District Local Plan (WSDLP) will be replaced. However, as the WSLP to 2032 was originally intended to be a Core Strategy in the portfolio of Development Plan Documents (DPD's) that were to form the Local Development Framework (LDF) for the West Somerset Local Planning Authority (LPA) area, it does not contain the full suite of policies of an area-wide local plan. Appendix 3 of the adopted version of the WSLP to 2032 contains a list of the WSDLP policies that have been superseded by the new plan's policies. In order to provide a more comprehensive planning policy framework for the LPA area, a number of the policies from the original WSDLP that have no direct replacements in the WSLP to 2032, have been retained. As these policies pre-date the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the issue of the status and weight that can be attributed to them arises. Where a retained WSDLP policy is inconsistent with the provisions of the NPPF, the weight that can be attributed to it when determining planning applications is significantly reduced as the NPPF (where relevant) post-dates the local plan policy concerned. Where there is no conflict between the national position, as expressed through the NPPF, and the relevant WSDLP policy, then some weight can continue to be attributed to the latter in the determination of planning applications through the Development Management process. The same can be applied to those retained WSDLP policies where there is no direct national policy position.

The Table below identifies all the policies in the WSDLP at the time of its initial adoption in April 2006.

- Column 1 provides the WSDLP Policy reference and title.
- Column 2 provides the replacement Policy reference(s) in the WSLP to 2032 (in **bold**), as appropriate.
- Column 3 provides the NPPF paragraph numbers to which the WSDLP policy is most closely related if it is not identified for replacement by a policy in the WSLP to 2032. Where there is deemed to be no national policy context in the NPPF then this is indicated with a 'none' entry and a comment is provided in Column 4.
- Column 4 provides comments for all those WSDLP policies that have a 'none' entry in Columns 2 and/or 3 plus those that were not saved beyond 1st April 2009.

Notes:

- Where a policy has been superseded by a more up to date policy through the WSLP to 2032 it is the latter that should be used for any decision-making through the Development Management process as the former no longer have any development plan status.

- Where a policy in the WSDLP has not been superseded, a review of the contents of the NPPF has been undertaken to identify the relevant national policy position on the matter. The relevant paragraph references of the NPPF are given in the third column followed by a comment, in the fourth column indicating whether the original WSDLP policy is deemed to be consistent with national policy.
- In some instances, usually due to the level of detail contained within the local plan policy, there is no national policy position with which it can be compared for consistency.
- In some instances, where there is no direct NPPF linkage and the policy and/or legal context of the subject matter affected by the WSDLP policy may have changed since adoption of the plan, this has been indicated through the comments column.
- Those WSDLP policies that were not saved beyond the initial three-year period post-adoption (up to 1st April 2009) are included for completeness but have not been assessed for consistency against the NPPF. The affected policies are shown in *italics*.

WSDLP Policy	WSP to 2032 Policy No./Status	NPPF (para.)	Comment
SP/1 – Settlement Hierarchy	SC1, SC5,		
SP/2 – Development in Minehead and Rural Centres	SC2, SC5, MD1, MD2, WA1, WA2, WI1, WI2, LT1		
SP/3 – Development in Villages	SC2, SC5, SV1		
SP/4 – Development in Small Villages	SC2, SV1		
SP/5 – Development Outside Defined Settlements	OC1		
LC/1 – Exmoor National Park Periphery	NH14		
<i>LC/2 – Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</i>	NH14		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i>
LC/3 – Landscape Character	NH5		
TW/1 – Trees and Woodland Protection	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct national policy equivalent
TW/2 - Hedgerows	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct national policy equivalent
NC/1 – Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's)	none	118	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSSI's designated via provisions in primary legislation (Section 28 of the <u>Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981</u> [as amended]) • Policy provision consistent with NPPF and, <u>ODPM Circular 06/2005/DEFRA Circular 01/2005</u>
<i>NC/2 – Sites of International Importance</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i>Policy not required as duplicated provisions contained in international and national legislation</i>

WSDLP Policy	WSLP to 2032 Policy No./Status	NPPF (para.)	Comment
NC/3 – Sites of Local Nature Conservation and Geological Interest	NH6		
NC/4 – Species Protection	NH6		
NC/5 – Wildlife Habitats	NH6		
W/1 – Waste Water, Sewage Management &, Infrastructure	CC6		
W/2 – Surface Water Protection	CC6		
W/3 – Groundwater Source Protection	CC6		
W/4 – Water Resources	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent
W/5 – Surface Water Run-Off	CC6		
W/6 – Flood Plains	CC2		
W/7 – River Corridor Protection	none	109, 110, 113, 114, 117	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is consistent with the natural environment conservation and enhancement provisions of the NPPF.
CO/1 – The Coastal Zone	CC2, CC4		
CO/2 – Coastal Defences	CC3		
CO/3 – Impact of Development on Coastal Defences	CC2, CC3		
AH/1 – Nationally Important Archaeological Remains	NH1, NH2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09
AH/2 – Locally Important Archaeological Remains	NH4		
AH/3 – Areas of High Archaeological Importance	NH3		

WSDLP Policy	WSP to 2032 Policy No./Status	NPPF (para.)	Comment
LB/1 – Listed Buildings Alterations and Extensions	NH2		
LB/2 – Listed Building Demolition	NH2		
LB/3 – Historic Parks and Gardens	NH1		
CA/1 – New Development in Conservation Areas	NH2		
CA/2 – Demolition in Conservation Areas	NH2		
CA/3 – Re-development in Conservation Areas	NH2		
CA/4 – Advertisements in Conservation Areas	none	67, 68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is consistent with the provisions regarding good design in the NPPF. • Advertisements are also regulated through secondary legislation - <u>The Town and Country Planning (Control of advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007</u>
CA/5 – Shop-Fronts in Conservation Areas	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct national policy equivalent • Development may also be regulated via primary legislation - <u>Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990</u> (as amended) and associated Regulations.
BD/1 – Local Distinctiveness	NH1		
BD/2 – Design of New Development	NH13		

WSDLP Policy	WSP to 2032 Policy No./Status	NPPF (para.)	Comment
BD/3 – Conversions, Alterations and, Extensions	none	58 - 62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is consistent with the provisions regarding good design in the NPPF. Changes to secondary legislation post-NPPF inc. <u>The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England Order 2015</u> and, <u>The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015</u>
<i>BD/4 – Shop Frontages</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i>
BD/5 – New Industrial and Commercial Buildings	NH13		
BD/6 – Agricultural Buildings	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent Policy is indirectly consistent with the provisions regarding good design in the NPPF (paras. 58 – 62)
BD/7 – Advertisements	none	67, 68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is consistent with the provisions regarding good design in the NPPF. Advertisements are also regulated through secondary legislation - <u>The Town and Country Planning (Control of advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007</u>
BD/8 – Re-Use of Existing Building Materials	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent Policy is indirectly consistent with the provisions regarding good design in the NPPF (paras. 58 – 62)
BD/9 – Energy and Waste Conservation	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent
E/1 – Employment Land Allocations	EC2		
E/2 – Employment Development Within Settlements	EC/1		
E/3 – Employment Conversions Within Settlements	none	19, 160, 161	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is consistent with the provisions regarding building a strong, competitive economy and, meeting business needs.

WSDLP Policy	WSLP to 2032 Policy No./Status	NPPF (para.)	Comment
E/4 – Small-Scale Employment Conversions Outside Settlements	none	28, 58 - 62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is consistent with the provisions regarding supporting a prosperous rural economy and, good design
E/5 – New Business Developments Outside Settlements	OC1		
E/6 – Expansion of Existing Businesses	none	19, 160, 161	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is consistent with the provisions regarding building a strong, competitive economy and, meeting business needs.
E/7 – Retention of Employment Use	EC5, SC6		
E/8 – Employment Use Within Residential Property	EC4, EC6		
A/1 – Farm Diversification	EC11		
A/2 – Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land	NH8		
TO/1 – Sustainable Tourism Development Within Settlements	EC8		
TO/2 – Tourism Development in Minehead	none	23 – 25, 160, 161	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is consistent with the provisions regarding protecting the vitality and viability of town centres and, meeting business needs
TO/3 – Tourism Development in Watchet	none	23 – 25, 160, 161	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is consistent with the provisions regarding protecting the vitality and viability of town centres and, meeting business needs
TO/4 – New Tourism Accommodation in Watchet	none	23 – 25, 160, 161	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is consistent with the provisions regarding protecting the vitality and viability of town centres and, meeting business needs

WSDLP Policy	WSLP to 2032 Policy No./Status	NPPF (para.)	Comment
TO/5 – Caravan and Camping Sites in the Countryside	EC9		
TO/6 – Cafes, Tea-Rooms and, Restaurants	EC/9		
TO/7 – Extension to Existing Holiday Parks	EC/9		
SH/1 – Retail Development in Minehead Town Centre	EC12		
SH/2 – Type of Retail Use in Minehead Prime Shopping Area	EC12		
SH/3 – Retail Development Outside of Minehead Town Centre	none	23, 26, 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is consistent with the provisions of the sequential test for protecting the vitality and viability of existing centres and associated provisions.
SH/4 – Retail Development in Watchet and Williton	EC12		
SH/5 – Retail Development in Villages	SC6		
SH/6 – Retail Development Outside Settlements	OC1		
<i>T/1 – Safeguarded Road Proposals</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>none</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i>Schemes not included in subsequent Local and Future Transport Plans</i>
<i>T/2 – Traffic Management and Calming</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>none</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i>No direct national policy equivalent</i>
T/3 – Transport Requirements of New Development	ID1		

WSDLP Policy	WSP to 2032 Policy No./Status	NPPF (para.)	Comment
<i>T/4 – Private Signs and Directional Advertisements</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i>Advertisements are also regulated through secondary legislation - <u>The Town and Country Planning (Control of advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007</u> plus other related traffic and transport legislation</i>
T/5 – Loss of Public Car Parking Provision	none	40, 41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is consistent with national requirements regarding safeguarding car-parking provision.
T/6 – Public and Communal Car Parking in Villages	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct national policy equivalent
T/7 – Non-Residential Development Car Parking	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct national policy equivalent
T/8 – Residential Car Parking	none	32, 34 - 39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is consistent with national requirements regarding parking provision and promoting sustainable transport
T/9 – Existing Footpaths	none	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is consistent with national requirements regarding promoting sustainable transport alternatives
<i>T/10 – Non-Car Accessibility</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i>
<i>T/11 - Cycling</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i>
<i>T/12 – West Somerset Railway</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i>No direct national policy equivalent</i>
T/13 – Bus Facilities and Infrastructure	none	34 - 41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is consistent with national requirements regarding promoting sustainable transport alternatives
T/14 – Harbour Facilities at Minehead and Watchet	none	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is consistent with national policy on small ports not covered by the National Policy Statement
T/15 – Transport Infrastructure and Developer Contributions	ID1		
H/1 – Housing Land Allocations	SC/2		
H/2 – Agricultural and Forestry Workers Accommodation	OC1		

WSDLP Policy	WSP to 2032 Policy No./Status	NPPF (para.)	Comment
H/3 – Removal of Agricultural and Forestry Occupancy Conditions	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent
H/4 – Affordable Housing	SC/4		
H/5 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites	none	54, 55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is consistent with national policy in respect of exception site development in rural areas
H/6 – Conversion to Residential of Holiday Accommodation Outside Settlements	none	28, 54, 55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is consistent with national provisions regarding supporting a prosperous rural economy and, in respect of exception site development in rural areas
<i>H/7 – New Protected Buildings</i>	none		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> <i>No direct national policy equivalent</i>
<i>H/8 – Gypsy and Travellers Non-Permanent accommodation</i>	GT1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> <i>Policy revised post-Submission as a result of revised national policy – <u>Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, August 2015</u></i>
R/1 – Formal Sports Facilities	CF1		
<i>R/2 – Dual-Use Facilities</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i>
R/3 – Outdoor Play-Space	CF1		
R/4 – Playing Pitch Improvements	CF1		
R/5 – Public Open Space and Large Developments	none	69, 73, 74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy consistent with national provisions regarding promoting healthy communities
R/6 – Public Open Space and Small Developments	none	69, 73, 74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy consistent with national provisions regarding promoting healthy communities
R/7 – Amenity Open Space	none	73, 74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy consistent with national provisions regarding promoting healthy communities
R/8 - Allotments	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent
R/9 – Water Sports	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent

WSDLP Policy	WSLP to 2032 Policy No./Status	NPPF (para.)	Comment
R/10 – Equestrian Establishments	OC1		
R/11 – Golf Courses and Driving Ranges	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct national policy equivalent
R/12 – Informal Recreation Facilities	none	69, 73, 74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy consistent with national provisions regarding promoting healthy communities
<i>R/13 – Provision of Art in New Development</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i>No direct national policy equivalent</i>
AD/1 – Access for Disabled People	CF2		
PC/1 – Air Pollution	NH9		
PC/2 – Noise Pollution	NH9		
PC/3 – Noise Sensitive Developments	NH9		
PC/4 – Contaminated Land	NH9		
TC/1 – Telecommunications Development	ID1		
TC/2 – Impact of Telecomms. Apparatus on Amenity	none	43, 44, 156, 157, 171	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy consistent with national provisions regarding the provision of communications infrastructure • Changes to secondary legislation post-NPPF inc. <u>The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England Order 2015</u> and, <u>The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015</u>

WSDLP Policy	WSP to 2032 Policy No./Status	NPPF (para.)	Comment
<i>UN/1 – New Overhead Service Lines</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i>Other secondary legislation and <u>National Policy Statement for Energy Infrastructure EN5</u> apply</i>
<i>UN/2 – Undergrounding of Service Lines and New Development</i>	<i>none</i>	162, 171, 176	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Policy consistent with national provisions regarding plan-making</i> • <i>Other secondary legislation and <u>National Policy Statement for Energy Infrastructure EN5</u> may apply depending on the scale of development</i>
<i>PO/1 – Planning Obligations</i>	ID1		
<i>EN/1 – Wind Turbines in the Quantock Hills AONB</i>	NH14		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i>Ministerial Statement of 18th June 2015 provides latest policy position re. developments involving more than one turbine.</i>
<i>EN/2 – Wind Turbines Outside the Quantock Hills AONB</i>	NH14		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i>Ministerial Statement of 18th June 2015 provides latest policy position re. developments involving more than one turbine.</i>
<i>EN/3 – Small-Scale Wind Turbine Development</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i>Ministerial Statement of 18th June 2015 provides latest policy position re. developments involving more than one turbine.</i>
<i>EN/4 – Other Renewable Energy Developments</i>	CC1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i><u>National Policy Statement on renewable energy generation EN3</u></i>
<i>EN/5 – Nuclear Energy Developments</i>	EN1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> • <i><u>National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation EN6</u></i>

WSDLP Policy	WSLP to 2032 Policy No./Status	NPPF (para.)	Comment
BRU/1 – Important Amenity Area, Brushford	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent
CAR/1 – Important Amenity Areas, Carhampton	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent
CRO/1 – Extension to Cemetary Crowcombe	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent
DM/1 – Mixed-Use Development Dunster Marsh	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No longer required. S.106 negotiated with Higher Marsh Farm development currently being constructed (NOV16)
MINE/1 – Minehead Enterprise Park Enhancement, Minehead	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No longer required. Scheme implemented 2008.
MINE/2 – Leisure Activities on The Esplanade and Warren Road, Minehead	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent
<i>OC/1 – Development in Cleeve Park, Old Cleeve</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> <i>Policy duplicated the provisions of an Article 4 Direction – 15th July 1967</i>
<i>SY/1 – Residential Development Land East of St. Audries Close, Stogursey</i>	<i>none</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Original policy not saved beyond 01APR09</i> <i>Development approved and first phase completed</i>
SY/2 – Community Facilities, Stogursey	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent
SY/3 – Primary School Playing Field, Stogursey	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent
WAT/1 – East Wharf Mixed-Use Development, Watchet	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent
WIT/1 – Playground, Withycombe	none	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct national policy equivalent