

Employment-led delivery at Weston-super-Mare

Supplementary Planning Document



Adopted
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1 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Core Strategy has an overarching objective of balancing jobs and homes across the entire district. Outside of Weston-super-Mare (WSM) this is to be achieved by directing jobs and homes through the plan making process to specific areas to help achieve a greater balance between these uses. At WSM there is a specific policy strategy to regulate the release of residential development alongside employment provision through the Employment-Led Strategy which is the focus of this document.
- 1.2 Over time the imbalance between a range of locally available employment opportunities and housing has led to significant car based out-commuting causing local congestion, a weak local economy and a lack of employment opportunities for residents. This has impacts on economic productivity and the overall functioning and sustainability of WSM. There has long been a recognition and acceptance of the need for such a strategy to address these issues to improve the economic performance of the town and support more sustainable growth. The employment-led strategy forms a part of a comprehensive strategy to encourage business growth and investment in order to improve the economic profile of the town and the availability of a range of local work opportunities.
- 1.3. Policy CS20: *Supporting a Successful Economy* of the adopted North Somerset Core Strategy provides the strategic policy context to the employment-led strategy and sets out the broad principles of the policy. The policy is seeking to improve the balance between jobs and homes in WSM, through controlling the release of new housing in tandem with the provision of employment to ensure the imbalance is not exacerbated. As a result, the level of self-containment has the potential to be improved, increasing the proportion of people who live and work in the town and in so doing reduce levels of unsustainable out-commuting. This is a long-term strategy that will be monitored over time.
- 1.4. Policy CS20 does not address detailed aspects of implementing the strategy, and so further more detailed policies are expected in addition to this guidance.

Quick Check

- 1) Does your development proposal include residential units and does it fall within the Qualifying Areas shown on page 6?
- 2) How many dwellings are proposed?
- 3) What sub-area is the proposal within? (See Figure 1, page 6)
- 4) With this information known, go the 'Summary of Requirements' box on pages 7 and 8 to identify the requirements associated with your proposal.

Purpose and scope of the SPD

- 1.5** The Employment-Led Delivery at Weston-super-Mare Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will assist by providing further guidance on the implementation of policy CS20. It will assist applicants who are preparing, and officers assessing employment-led planning applications. The SPD seeks to support the effective delivery of the strategy helping to focus economic growth in locations prioritised through policy including the Junction 21 Enterprise Area and town centre and gateway area, and indicates flexibility in the strategy to ensure the delivery of housing is balanced with the objectives of the employment-led strategy.
- 1.6** The NPPF defines SPDs as:
- “Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.”*
- 1.7** The principle of the employment-led strategy is not relevant to this SPD as this is already set out in an adopted policy. It also does not set out a policy position on any modification or application of the policy going forward. Its scope is solely to provide detailed and practical guidance on delivery matters.
- 1.8** The SPD is guidance and will be material to the determination of planning applications for qualifying residential proposals. It provides guidance on delivery matters but it is acknowledged that it cannot allow for all potential delivery opportunities or scenarios. Therefore, it will not necessarily restrict such alternative solutions to satisfying the employment-led policy where they meet the objectives of the Development Plan policy, and the council will apply discretion in considering such solutions.
- 1.9** The obligation to deliver employment development alongside new housing as set out in policy does not imply any acceptability of employment provision on any site. Normal statutory planning procedures will apply with any application assessed against the Development Plan and other material considerations.
- What is covered by the Employment-Led Strategy?**
- 1.10** The employment-led strategy applies to Weston-super-Mare as a whole and a distinction is made between the Weston Villages¹ and the wider town. The Junction 21 Enterprise Area which encompasses the Weston Villages is also covered by the employment-led strategy and includes further land focussed around a number of key business sites. Within these areas, residential development is to come forward in

¹ Weston Villages is the proposed development at Weston-super-Mare planned to include a range of new homes, employment, and community facilities. For further information see the Weston Villages SPD (2012).

step with employment development covering a wide range of potential employment uses.

- 1.11 The summary table (Figure 2) sets out development thresholds and preferred delivery mechanisms. The various methods of delivery are set out in the table related to the different scale and location of residential development.

2 Policy context

Core Strategy: CS20

- 2.1 Policy CS20: *Supporting a Successful Economy* of the adopted North Somerset Core Strategy provides the strategic policy context to the employment-led strategy and sets out the broad principles of the policy. The following extract provides the main policy requirements:

“Throughout Weston-super-Mare proposals should provide for 1.5 jobs per home over the plan period both at Weston Villages and elsewhere on sites of 10 or more dwellings. The type of employment should be acceptable in planning terms and not detrimental to the overall employment strategy in the town.

Outside of the Weston Villages and allocated sites, if on-site provision is not suitable, financial contributions will be sought towards economic development through the use of planning obligations. These contributions will be agreed through Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy and will be focussed on local initiatives and to support the delivery of employment elsewhere in the town.”

Geographical area where the policy applies

- 2.2 Figure 1 outlines the area where the employment-led strategy applies, the Qualifying Area. Within that overall area, the application of the strategy is tailored to the following two areas:

- **Junction 21 Enterprise Area including the Weston Villages** - this area encompasses the entire Weston Villages area and also a number of key proposed business sites.
- **Remainder of Weston-super-Mare** - this area covers the rest of the settlement of WSM and beyond including land bounded by the River Yeo to the north, the M5 to the east and the River Axe to the south.

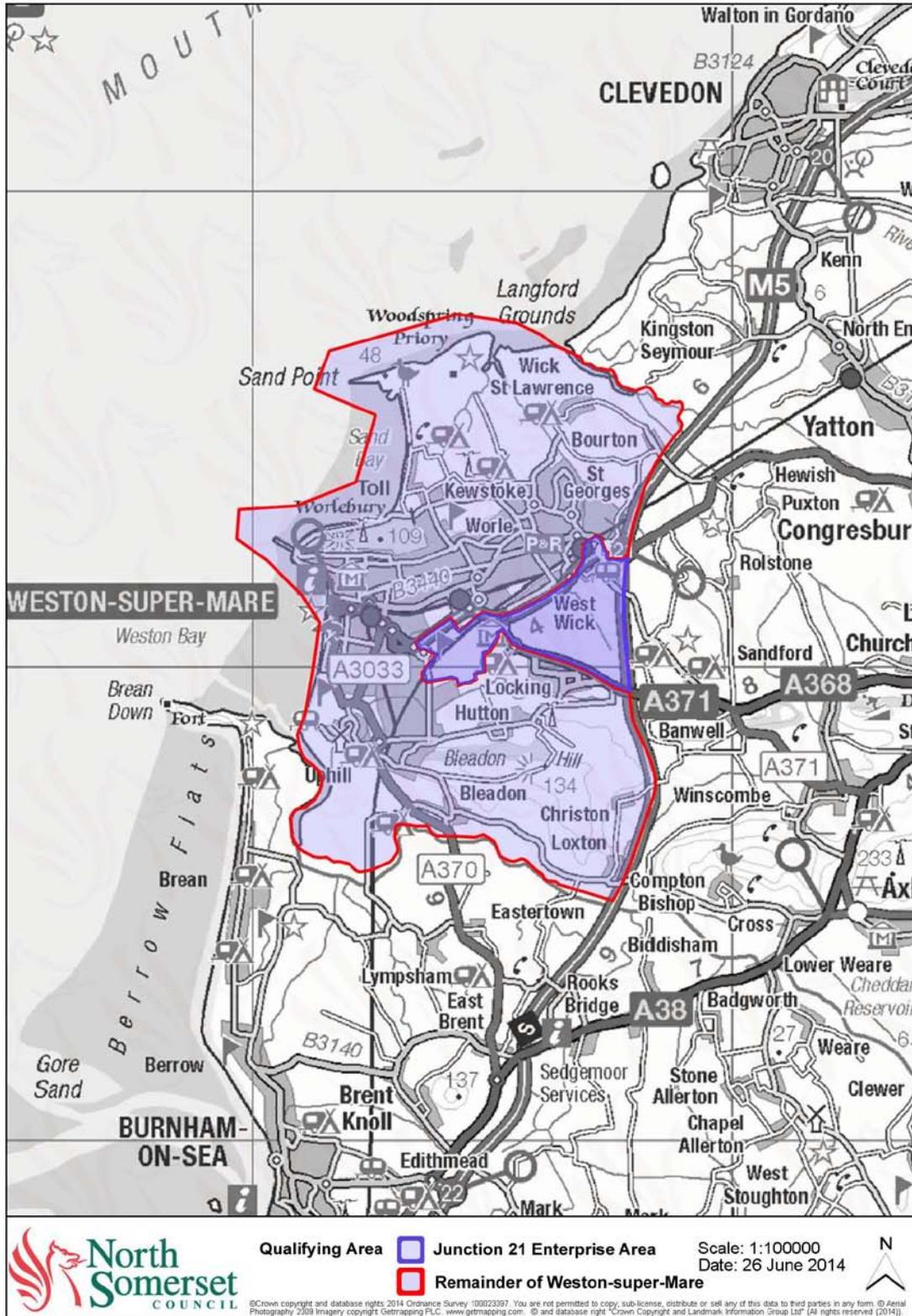


Figure 1: Qualifying Area

3 Summary of requirements by area

3.1 Figure 2 sets out guidance on the overarching requirements, including the preferred methods of delivery. This reflects policy requirements but includes some further options to take into account suitability constraints on smaller sites within the 'Remainder of Weston-super-Mare'. Delivery options are listed in sequential order of preference, and this table should form the starting point in understanding how the employment-led strategy relates to a development proposal. The Site Suitability Criteria detailed in paragraph 4.7 provides further guidance to facilitate a site by site consideration as to whether a particular site is suitable for employment provision. Applicants will be required to demonstrate to the satisfaction of North Somerset Council that higher-ranked options cannot be reasonably achieved prior to exploring options for lower-ranked requirements in line with policy. Any proposal to deviate from these should be justified in line with the guidance in this SPD. It is also important the SPD does not constrain the effective delivery of the employment-led strategy so any approach to the policy not detailed here will also be taken into consideration.

3.2 The council will weigh the merits of each form of delivery for each site on a case-by-case basis and will consider flexibility if there is a material case for doing so. In general, less flexibility will be applied to allowing options for financial contributions on sites where this is the least preferred delivery option. On sites of more than 250 dwellings financial contributions in lieu of on-site or off-site provision will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and if there are alternative means of delivery in place.

Scale of proposal	Location	Employment-led requirement?	Preferred delivery (in order of preference)
0-9 dwellings	Junction 21 Enterprise Area (including Weston Villages)	Yes	Financial contributions through CIL once introduced.
	Remainder of Weston-super-Mare	No	n/a
10-49 dwellings	Junction 21 Enterprise Area (including Weston Villages)	Yes	1. On-site provision. 2. Off-site elsewhere within J21 EA. 3. Off-site within remainder of Weston. 4. Financial contribution (S106).

	Remainder of Weston-super-Mare	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial contribution (S106). 2. Off-site provision within J21 EA. 3. On-site provision or off-site provision within remainder of Weston.
50-249 dwellings	Junction 21 Enterprise Area (including Weston Villages)	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On-site provision. 2. Off-site elsewhere within J21 EA. 3. Off-site within remainder of Weston. 4. Financial contribution (S106).
	Remainder of Weston-super-Mare	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On-site provision. 2. Off-site elsewhere within J21 EA. 3. Off-site within remainder of Weston. 3. Financial contribution (S106).
250+ dwellings	Junction 21 Enterprise Area (including Weston Villages)	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On-site provision. 2. Off-site elsewhere within J21 EA. 3. Off-site within remainder of Weston. 4. Financial contribution (in exceptional circumstances only) (S106).
	Remainder of Weston-super-Mare	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On-site provision. 2. Off-site elsewhere within J21 EA. 3. Off-site within remainder of Weston. 4. Financial contribution (in exceptional circumstances only) (S106).

Figure 2: Summary of requirements

Town Centre regeneration

3.3

Delivery of the employment-led strategy also relates to the town centre and gateway area in Weston-super-Mare as set out in policy CS20. However, there are expected to be differing delivery implications due to the nature of uses coming forward, the

physical nature of sites likely to come forward and the wider planning objectives associated with the centre e.g. centre revitalisation and a focus on retail growth. Additional consideration will be applied to assessing suitability of sites in the centre to accommodate employment provision. Viability will also be considered in addition to the wider benefits of delivering town centre development which may provide some flexibility in the delivery of employment-led policy.

4 Delivery

Preferred delivery mechanisms

4.1 The following mechanisms are required by the strategy, with on-site provision being the preferred method subject to other guidance in this SPD e.g. the Site Suitability Criteria in Figure 3.

1. On-site delivery when suitable to do so: the site size and location are the overriding factors that influence whether on-site delivery can be achieved. It is generally the most effective approach as delivery is carried out by the developer within the same site and as part of the same development. Practical guidance on quantifying the amount of employment provision is provided in section 5.

4.2 Where it is agreed that on-site is not suitable (see paragraph 4.4), the following methods will be required:

2. Off-site delivery: this mechanism may be an option if on-site is unsuitable and seeks to focus provision at priority locations, for example, the Junction 21 EA. Whilst not specified in policy, off-site provision may be an effective means of both delivering the policy and focussing provision in priority areas
3. Financial contributions: these are required in lieu of employment provision and in some cases (set out in Figure 2) are the default mechanism of delivery.

4.3 The preferred delivery mechanisms set out the expectations in terms of how the policy can be complied with and provide the context for setting the actions in place necessary to deliver the employment component. Policy CS20 requires employment provision “both at Weston Villages and elsewhere on sites of 10 or more dwellings.” This requires provision on-site and at the Weston Villages the expectation is that there will always be on-site provision. However, it is recognised outside of the Weston Villages that due to the nature, scale and more piecemeal nature of developments coming forward, on-site provision may not be suitable and the policy then requires a contribution. This SPD reflects that policy but includes the scope for off-site provision in order to provide greater flexibility to deliver the policy. The sequential approach set out in Figure 2, provides greater detail as to how these expectations will apply to different scales of residential proposal but is only

guidance. The ability to deliver an alternative solution is permitted so long as justified.

On-site provision

What does on-site mean?

- 4.4** On-site employment provision means provision within the 'red line' of the application. The provision of employment immediately adjacent to the site can also be effectively deemed on-site provision subject to the necessary control of the land. In most cases this will mean providing employment within the same plot(s) of land. The only exception to this will be the Weston Villages where on-site will generally mean within the same overall development, subject to agreement with other landowners. Therefore, Winterstoke (the proposed development at the former airfield) will be considered one large site and likewise Parklands will be considered one site when requiring on-site provision. In addition masterplanning at the Weston Villages is well advanced with employment provision comprehensively planned into the development. The on-site link for this purpose will therefore be to these identified employment sites or any other within the development subject to planning consent.

How is site suitability assessed for on-site provision?

- 4.5** When designing a development and responding to the employment-led policy, the applicants planning and design team should consider whether on-site provision is appropriate taking into consideration the Site Suitability Criteria set out in Figure 3. The Site Suitability Criteria has been designed to help the assessment of whether a site is suitable or not linked to policy CS20. In relation to the employment-led strategy, on sites where on-site provision is listed as the first preferred delivery option in Figure 2, the expectation is that development proposals will have to meet this requirement or demonstrate that the site is unsuitable taking into consideration the guidance in this SPD.
- 4.6** In assessing an applicant's case that a site is unsuitable for on-site provision (and conversely assessing the appropriateness of any proposed on-site provision), the council will consider the Site Suitability Criteria set out in Figure 3 alongside any justification provided by the applicant, in addition to other planning issues relevant to the proposal. If a site is deemed to meet the Site Suitability Criteria and other conclusions drawn from the site consideration, then it will be expected that on-site provision should be made as the grounds for demonstrating a site is not suitable against policy CS20 would be not be present, unless there are other exceptional circumstances of material weight that are accepted by the council. It may be that a particular site meets some of the criteria but conflicts with others. If this is the case officers should take a balanced view of the merits in helping to determine whether a particular site is suitable.
- 4.7** Applicants are recommended to engage with the council at an early stage in relation to delivery options, particularly if an applicant considers on-site provision is likely to

be unsuitable for their development. Details of the council's planning pre-application process can be found on the North Somerset Council website.

Site Suitability Criteria²
(a) There would be no unacceptable impact on the surrounding area or potential for conflicts with adjoining land uses, particularly in relation to the living conditions of neighbours and in relation to any impacts on the highway network. Unacceptable impacts could be linked to the type of land use proposed e.g. general industrial (B2), and including issues such as noise. However, such impacts could be mitigated through the use of planning conditions.
(b) the provision of employment and proposed use is compatible with the strategy to focus employment provision at the Junction 21 Enterprise Area, and the town centre and gateway area in line with policy CS20 of the Core Strategy. Outside of these areas new employment proposals may not be appropriate as they may lead to an unsustainable distribution of employment. This will to some degree depend on the employment use proposed.
(c) Where no end use occupier is secured for the employment development, it is likely that the site could be successfully marketed and would be attractive to commercial developers. This should take into account the likely presence of residential development e.g. in relation to noise sensitive uses. This criterion seeks to ensure the site offers a viable market opportunity as far as possible.
(d) The delivery of employment on the site would not conflict with national policy e.g. through the delivery of town centre uses in non town centre locations.
(e) a use falling within the scope of paragraph 5.8 would be suitable on the site taking into account policy issues and site-specific considerations.
(f) The size and context of the site is sufficient to accommodate an employment use in line with paragraph 5.8 (as well as the proposed dwellings where on the same site) and lead to an effective and well planned development proposal which complies with other policy requirements and is acceptable in other material respects.

Figure 3: Site Suitability Criteria

4.8 The above criteria will also be used in relation to the assessment of employment provision on any off-site location.

Off-site provision

Does the employment component have to be delivered on-site?

² The SSC are intended to act as guidance and be complimentary to the usual process of assessing a proposal for employment uses, providing a list of some of the key issues to consider.

4.9 In principle, if on-site provision is not suitable it may be acceptable to provide the employment on an alternative site (off-site) to the residential (particularly on sites of less than 50 dwellings) provided the applicant has control over the off-site land or has an arrangement with the landowner of the off-site land. The onus will be upon the developer to find and acquire (or enter into an arrangement with the owner of) a suitable off-site location, and secure the necessary consents if required. Figure 2 sets out the general circumstances upon which this will be acceptable. In most cases it will be preferable to focus employment provision in those locations where employment is being encouraged e.g. the identified employment areas within the Junction 21 Enterprise Area, so where a residential site is being brought forward in the remainder of Weston-super-Mare and off-site provision is acceptable, the first priority should be to locate the employment element within the J21 Enterprise Area as set out in Figure 1. A Section 106 Agreement should be drawn up linking the relevant land areas and the requirements therein, and all landowners should be party to the Agreement. It should be noted that off-site provision is not a policy requirement and this SPD only offers this option as guidance.

4.10 The following conditions will also apply:

- The alternative site should fall within the Qualifying Area shown in Figure 1.
- As a guide, the alternative site should on balance, conform to the Site Suitability Criteria outlined in Figure 3 and its suitability will be assessed at the planning application stage.
- Off-site provision will generally not be permissible in relation to residential development at the Weston Villages.
- Any necessary consents have been or will be obtained.

What are developers required to provide in relation to off-site provision?

4.11 In order to accept off-site provision, developers must provide North Somerset Council with evidence that:

- The off-site location is justified in line with the Site Suitability Criteria in Figure 3 and meets other policy requirements.
- The alternative site is in their ownership or that they have a formally binding agreement with the off-site landowner that the land can be delivered and attributed to the nominated residential site.
- The employment site/development has not, and is not expected to be linked to another residential development.

- Appropriate actions are and/or will be in place to secure those jobs in line with agreed phasing, for example the securing of planning consent, site preparation and infrastructure provision.

- 4.12** The acceptability or otherwise of the alternative site for employment purposes will be considered at the planning application stage upon which other material issues will be addressed. It is appreciated that this may create uncertainty to developers who may carry out extensive negotiations to explore an alternative site only for it to be refused at the planning application stage. Early engagement would help this situation to address any policy issues.

Seeking financial contributions from proposals

- 4.13** With reference to the Site Suitability Criteria (Figure 3), if it is agreed that it is not appropriate to deliver a qualifying employment use either on the site or through off-site provision (and the applicant would need to demonstrate that all reasonable use opportunities for both options have been explored), then a financial contribution will be sought. The scale of contribution will be linked to the impact of delivering a residential only scheme and be sought in line with the relevant legislation.
- 4.14** Contributions will be negotiated at the planning application stage following an assessment of the impacts of the development proposal. Further guidance on financial contributions towards economic development linked to the employment-led strategy will be set out in the Development Contributions SPD. This will include details relating to methodological approaches to collecting contributions. The council will also investigate the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as a means of funding in relation to the delivery of the ELS.

5 Other supporting guidance

Number of jobs to be provided

- 5.1** Policy CS20 requires provision to be made for 1.5 jobs per dwelling to be provided from all qualifying residential proposals. In exceptional circumstances and depending on the merits of the proposal, an incremental ratio may be applied meaning that in the early phases of a development a lower jobs to homes ratio may be permissible with the balance being met during later stages. This is likely to only be achievable on larger residential (250+) schemes that will feature distinct phases of development.
- 5.2** The number of jobs to be delivered will be fixed through the planning application process (using both evidence of job capacity and analysis of plans), and actions will be agreed to secure them through Section 106 negotiations. The agreed actions will seek to deliver the employment component, and the phasing of housing and employment will be agreed. The number of jobs counted for monitoring purposes is based on the amount of floor space delivered using standard employment densities, not on the end occupiers, as it is acknowledged that the end use occupiers of a building may change over time.

- 5.3** It is the developers responsibility to deliver the required number of jobs based on an approach to quantify the required jobs on the land available. The subsequent delivery of uses should not adversely affect the ability to deliver jobs agreed at the planning application stage as this may lead to a reduction in the number of dwellings released. Maintaining an effective and adequate employment land supply at the town-wide scale and in relation to individual schemes will therefore be crucial to the delivery of the employment-led strategy.

How will jobs be counted?

- 5.4** All employment provision counting towards a residential development will be measured in Full Time Equivalent units. When considering a planning application standard employment densities will be used based on Homes and Communities Agency *Employment Densities* (2010) to determine potential jobs capacity and these will inform the requirements built into any Section 106 Agreement. The subsequent build-out of the employment development will be monitored against the agreed actions with compliance with the employment-led strategy ascertained upon completion.

- 5.5** When it is proposed to accommodate a specific end use occupier either as part of an already consented employment-led scheme or an application for one, and job figures are known, if higher than standard employment densities, these may be assumed for the purposes of determining employment provision and delivery against the requirements set out in any Section 106 Agreement. The default position however will be to base employment yield on standard densities.

Can 'credits' be accrued if an oversupply of jobs has been achieved compared to the number of jobs that were required through policy?

- 5.6** A credit will be a single full time equivalent job which counts towards the 1.5 jobs per dwelling balance. Credits can only be accrued on large-mixed use schemes related to a development of linked and distinct phases such as the Weston Villages, and if the applicant can demonstrate an oversupply through actual employment numbers. In this way credits can be deducted from the jobs requirement associated with a subsequent residential phase, and will last for the duration of the build-out of the entire development. The number of credits will be based on the actual number of jobs delivered and evidenced by the developer. The Section 106 Agreement associated with the scheme should provide the ability to review the balance at the end of each phase in the context of the agreed actions to deliver employment, and claim the credits for each subsequent phase. As part of the review, clear evidence of the number of jobs delivered should be provided and verified in order to justify any request for credits from previous phases of development. The council will monitor job creation and conversely if job creation is less than agreed at the time of consent, then this may hinder the ability for the applicant to meet obligations associated with the legal agreement and may lead to a reduction in dwellings delivered, and a tightening of the requirements associated with the scheme.

- 5.7** This approach means credits will be acceptable at the Weston Villages and can also be applied to already consented applications within the qualifying area. Credits will be acceptable only on large sites of not less than 250 dwellings that have distinct delivery phases. Credits are primarily intended to release further phases of residential development on the same development site, and will sit with the land for the specified period. Under certain circumstances credits accrued upon completion of the overall development may be transferrable to another development e.g. another development at the Weston Villages or elsewhere in the Junction 21 Enterprise Area. The transfer of credits to release residential on another development site would have to be made in as short a timescale as possible.

What types of employment will be considered acceptable?

- 5.8** All forms of employment generating land use falling within the definition of Economic Development of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (with the exception of employment from construction) can potentially be counted towards the release of housing within the employment-led strategy. Core Strategy policies prioritise B Use Class employment because this is considered to cover the key driving sectors of the economy, because these uses tend to be relatively high density, and are generally easier to monitor. The emphasis on B Use Class employment will be taken into account in considering planning applications and in the actions of North Somerset Council and its partners to help deliver employment. However, the priority given to B Use Class uses should not be interpreted as a barrier to alternative classes of employment development coming forward, where these are sustainable in other regards. Consideration should also be given to ensure the proposed employment is in the right location to be commercially viable, and suitable in other planning regards.
- 5.9** At the planning application stage, employment uses should not be selected solely based on the need to deliver a minimum jobs requirement (nor to maximise job yield from a site) but rather the appropriateness of the use for the site. Therefore, whilst the creation of jobs is a key objective, this does not override the need to ensure these are delivered in the right locations in order to contribute to sustainable development. The exclusion of specific sectors / businesses because they do not deliver sufficient job quantities is not acceptable. Equally applications claiming to deliver unrealistic levels of employment as a means of maximising residential development may be rejected following assessment.
- 5.10** The policy may have the unintended consequence of reducing the opportunities for low density employment businesses e.g. industrial uses, because developers will be seeking to maximise the number of jobs achieved per hectare and may hold out for higher density uses. In such cases a reduced jobs/home ratio may be agreed to support these uses as part of the negotiation of any accompanying Section 106 Agreement.
- 5.11** The delivery of employment associated with community facilities is also encouraged particularly where this supports the early delivery of services and facilities on large developments.

Maximising beneficial growth and improving the range of high quality jobs

5.12 As well as achieving employment growth generally, it is important to attract the right types of employment; employment that maximises Gross Value Added (GVA), meets the requirements and aspirations of the local workforce and enhances the economic profile of the town. The provision of jobs in businesses that build on existing strong sectors will be particularly encouraged and where such end-use occupiers are in place added incentives may be considered e.g. supportive phasing, reduced ratio requirements (due to the synergistic/multiplier effect and enhanced Gross Value Added (GVA)³ these jobs would bring). Whilst a wide range of business' and sectors are supported within the employment-led strategy, knowledge intensive, high-tech businesses, for example, Advanced Manufacturing, Professional Services, Creative and Digital sectors are particularly encouraged. These and other employment uses that reflect the council's Enterprise Area aspirations are encouraged including business activity within the food technology sector.

Incentivising small businesses

5.13 Applicants proposing large developments are encouraged to support the delivery of small businesses through the provision of a range of premises and land supply opportunities. Generally, these types of business lack support because they do not deliver large numbers of jobs initially when compared to other end use occupiers and types of employment. In these circumstances flexible phasing may be agreed if such land supply opportunities are provided as it is recognised that there may be additional risk factors and cost associated with facilitating land deals with these types of business. This will be considered when negotiating the Section 106 package of measures to secure the employment provision.

What counts as provision of employment development where on-site or off-site provision is pursued ('qualifying provision')?

5.14 Consents for residential development where on-site and/or off-site employment provision is to be delivered, will include planning conditions or Section 106 Agreements to require the phased delivery of the items in Figure 4 guided by any actions agreed to secure delivery. Applicants will be required to take all reasonable actions to deliver employment and may include infrastructure provision to unlock employment sites, marketing and promotion and other measures as agreed, in addition to the direct delivery of employment development. Smaller sites coming forward in the remainder of the Weston-super-Mare area will be more limited in the actions necessary to deliver the required employment.

Type of provision	Description
Serviced land	Land is prepared and ready for development and all services connected to the site where possible including superfast broadband
Floorspace (built) including speculative	Buildings are built to 'shell and core' stage or built to end users specification

³ GVA is a measure of the value of goods and services to the economy.

Employment (jobs)	A functioning building(s) and/or development providing employment.
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Figure 4: Types of physical employment provision

Speculative provision

- 5.15** The provision of speculative building delivered in the right location is welcomed and can be beneficial in successfully attracting market interest. In many cases the prospect of an undeveloped site carries too many risks for potential investors and businesses looking to relocate. Some variation on speculative provision can also be considered where a more tailored employment facility may be required. This may require a specific specification to be applied and will be agreed at the planning application stage. Permitted development rights for future changes of use of such buildings to residential may be removed by Article 4 Direction or conditions attached to a planning consent.
- 5.16** The provision of serviced employment land and/or speculative employment buildings alone will not be sufficient to meet employment-led requirements and a more sustained strategy will be required to secure employment growth. In recognition of the investment needed by developers to bring development sites to market and subject to the details of the agreed phasing plan and actions for the individual site, early release of residential development linked to the provision of serviced employment land may be permitted but note that this simply loads the jobs provision requirement and actions to deliver it to the later stages of the development.
- 5.17** Where a phased approach to the delivery of the employment component is present (see below for further details on phasing), by the completion of the overall development, developers must provide and secure the occupation of sufficient employment premises to meet the agreed job targets in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement.

Phasing of residential and employment provision

- 5.18** Small sites with short build-out periods will be more limited in terms of the phasing of employment-led requirements and will be more restricted in terms of flexibility in the phased delivery of the items in Figure 4. The employment component will be required over a relatively short timescale, however greater flexibility can be considered on larger proposals of distinct phases.
- 5.19** It is recognised that the specific requirements relating to the delivery of the employment component may be critical to the delivery of the overall proposal and can impact on the level of risk and cost associated with a project so when considering phasing a case by case, flexible approach is considered appropriate with specific requirements tailored to the proposal. This will take into consideration wider planning merits of the proposal e.g. the provision of affordable housing or redevelopment of a run-down site.
- 5.20** To ensure that requirements can be properly monitored and enforced, minimum obligations in terms of phasing will normally include a review process on completion

of around 30% of dwellings and the expected full delivery of employment-led obligations prior to occupation of 75% of dwellings. Alternatives may be considered where there are sound reasons for doing so. If distinct phases are proposed a review provision should be allowed following each phase in order for credits to be counted (see paragraphs 5.6 to 5.7 for further details).

- 5.21** Where a large application is made up of several phases of delivery (for example an Outline application with several Reserved Matters phases), each phase may in itself be subject to review and delivery milestones. This approach will be expected on sites of more than 250 dwellings.

Quantifying the amount of employment buildings and land required

- 5.22** When a residential scheme is required to provide employment provision, calculating the number of jobs required is the starting point in line with policy CS20. This then needs to be translated into an amount of employment floorspace and land. The calculation can be done the other way to estimate the number of jobs from a given proposed employment development e.g. through the testing of a concept plan for a development proposal. The amount of floor space required will depend on the type of employment being proposed. The Homes and Communities Agency's [Employment Densities Guide](#) (2010) or other appropriate guidance agreed with North Somerset Council should be consulted which gives further details on this topic.

Step-by-step process to calculating floor space and land required

- 5.23** The following steps outline the process to derive the amount of floorspace and land required to be provided:
- The number of jobs required are calculated by multiplying the number of proposed dwellings by 1.5.
 - The amount of floorspace required to support these jobs is then calculated by multiplying the number of jobs by an average employment density relevant to the type of employment being proposed (e.g. office may be 12 square meters per full time equivalent (FTE)- net internal area). In most cases the area per FTE is measured in net internal area. Guidance on the most appropriate measure is provided in *Employment Densities Guide* 2010.
 - If net internal area has been calculated, this will need to be converted to gross internal area in order to identify the required building size. As a general guide, the gross is normally 15% greater than net but reference to the aforementioned guidance on the use of alternative conversions may be justified.
 - If appropriate, the total floorspace is then divided by an average **number of floors** e.g. 2.5 for office to identify the building footprint required.
 - If identifying the requirement for serviced land or to understand how much land would be required to accommodate the identified floor space requirement, a plot coverage needs to be identified e.g. the **building footprint** might account for 30% of the overall plot with the 70% allowing for parking, servicing and landscaping. This will provide an **overall site area**

required to accommodate the employment component of the development. Figure 5 provides an illustration of this process identifying the main stages.

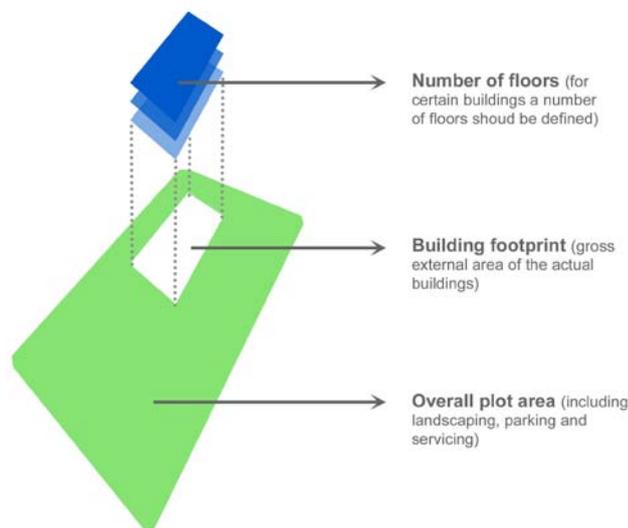


Figure 5: Calculating required employment land and buildings

- 5.24** The stages above are described at a conceptual level and only serve to quantify the amount of land required. In practice the provision of employment on a given site may have to contend with a number of additional complexities and each site will be different. For example, a brownfield site on a tightly defined plot in an existing urban area would require a specific design solution to incorporate an employment component whereas a greenfield site which offers more of a 'blank canvas' offers many more opportunities. This should be considered at the scheme design stage when responding to the employment-led policy and will be taken into consideration by council officers when determining whether on-site is appropriate or not (note section F of the Site Suitability Criteria, Figure 3).

Delivering effective solutions through collaboration

- 5.25** Many sites within the employment-led Qualifying Area are owned by developers looking to promote development. Collaboration between landowners and North Somerset Council is strongly encouraged to bring forward high quality, effective and deliverable development proposals including an efficient and sustainable distribution of employment development. Innovative solutions to meeting the policy will be considered. In particular strategies which improve the deliverability of employment provision will be encouraged. This should draw together wider interventions such as infrastructure funding and provision, promotion and other mechanisms to facilitate employment growth.

What happens if the proposal is not viable either because of the employment-led requirement or more generally?

- 5.26** In instances where scheme viability is in question, a wider assessment of the overall balance of viability is required in addition to the wider merits of the proposal. A full

financial appraisal in the form of a residual valuation appraisal should be submitted on an 'open book' basis. In the event that a lack of viability is accepted, developers will be required to carry out at their own cost reasonable scenario testing to assess whether changes to the scheme may improve viability. In relation to the employment-led strategy these could include:

- Alternative phasing of employment provision;
- Off-site provision (paragraphs 4.9 to 4.10);
- Structuring of actions to secure employment provision.

5.27 Developers will be required to implement any reasonable and practical adjustments demonstrated through this process to render their scheme viable.

5.28 In the event that the scheme remains unviable, North Somerset Council will consider the relative costs and benefits of the employment-led strategy requirements alongside other policy requirements and planning obligations. This may lead to a prioritisation of requirements with adjustments either to the employment-led strategy or to other obligations. The applicant will be required to make any reasonable adjustments to any element of their application or Section 106 Agreement as a result of this process, including supporting efforts by North Somerset Council to find alternative funding for schemes and planning obligations (for example affordable housing grant).

5.29 It should be borne in mind that the inability to make provision for the required employment (whether physical provision or a financial contribution) and associated actions is fundamentally in conflict with the policy approach to new residential development at Weston-Super-Mare and significant weight should be attached to that.

Rejection of proposed employment on suitability grounds

5.30 There may be instances where an application proposes employment development on-site or off-site but the council considers that the employment is unacceptable even though the provision may be in line with the summary of requirements set out in Figure 2. The Site Suitability Criteria in Figure 3 will inform this assessment. The application would be assessed on its merits and potentially refused on the grounds that the employment is inappropriate. In these instances the applicant could be encouraged to explore alternative qualifying economic development uses or if no reasonable alternatives are suitable, off-site provision would be encouraged or a financial contribution would be required in lieu of the employment provision. Pre-application discussions are encouraged to bring forward suitable schemes and ensure any issues are addressed early.

5.31 This emphasises that there is no implied acceptance of employment on any particular site (aside from allocated employment sites) simply by virtue of the requirement from policy CS20. This differs to other similar policies that require something e.g. affordable housing or open space, as the suitability of employment brings many potential implications which have to be worked through. Normal

decision making procedures will apply in terms of the council's statutory decision making process on planning applications.

Programme to support employment

5.32 All sites of more than 250 dwellings will be expected to agree a Programme to Support Employment in conjunction with their development. A package of measures will be agreed on a case-by-case basis, but will normally include the following in addition to any other actions to secure the employment provision and will be written into the Section 106 Agreement:

- Targets for use of local labour and suppliers.
- Targets for use of local apprentices.
- Connections to local training and employment schemes.

Submitting a planning application and pre-application process

5.33 The applicant is required to provide an Employment-Led Statement (form can be downloaded from the North Somerset Council [website](#)) with a planning application which should set out details related to the employment component proposed, the number of jobs, and the proposed phased delivery of these in addition to any other interventions to secure delivery. The Statement should demonstrate how the applicant proposes to conform to the employment-led policy. In line with paragraphs 4.5 to 4.7 above, when submitting an application for a qualifying residential proposal in the remainder of Weston-super-Mare without on-site employment provision, the applicant will be expected to provide a justification for any absence of employment (by way of reference to the Site Suitability Criteria) along with the proposed alternative being either a financial contribution or delivery on an off-site location in line with the summary of requirements box in Figure 2.

Pre-application

5.34 Prospective applicants are encouraged to engage in pre-application discussions particularly on larger or complex sites and where off-site provision or its variants are proposed⁴. In relation to the employment-led policy, this will provide an opportunity to explore the policy and opportunities for addressing it satisfactorily. If the applicant is likely to propose a complex arrangement including any of the scenarios highlighted in this SPD, the process should ascertain the acceptability of this in principle. Other matters such as phasing can be explored depending on the detail of the submission. Given that a S106 Agreement is likely to be required applicants are strongly encouraged to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement with the council to ensure that a satisfactory timescale for decision can be agreed by all parties.

Outline applications

5.35 For Outline applications an Outline Employment-Led Statement is required as it is generally expected that the proposals are likely to be at an earlier stage and details related to the employment component are unlikely to be firmed up. At this stage,

⁴ The council does not charge pre-application fees for B1, B2 or B8 use proposals.

caution is advised in overestimating the provision of jobs by choosing high density employment as a means of demonstrating compliance with the strategy. The obligation to deliver that employment development will be on the applicant so a robust and credible assessment of jobs potential is advised.

Full applications

5.36 For Full or Reserved Matters applications a Detailed Employment-Led Statement is required providing a fuller explanation of the proposals and the policy compliance.

5.37 It is proposed that the Statement will form the basis for negotiation of the Section 106 Agreement and matters related to the phasing, quantum and thresholds of employment provision with residential.

The use of Section 106 Agreements

5.38 Section 106 Agreements, often referred to as planning obligations, will be used to set in place the requirements to deliver the employment component alongside the residential. The requirements set out will be formulated on a case by case basis. In particular they will:

- Restrict the development of the site in a specified way, setting out the required actions, quantum, thresholds and phasing related to the delivery of jobs and housing.
- Provide for review stages and mechanisms.
- Set out requirements for off-site provision.

5.39 Review mechanisms will be incorporated into S106 Agreements and will include safeguards and penalties to ensure that employment requirements are met. These may include restricting further development of housing if developers have failed to comply with the employment-led strategy, and the agreed requirements related to each proposal.

5.40 The council may consider the use of bonds to help secure employment growth. This would only likely be an option on larger residential schemes but may offer an example of how employment delivery can be safeguarded.

Biodiversity and habitat protection

5.41 Development should in the first instance seek to avoid impacts on biodiversity. The ecological network including international, national and locally designated sites are important considerations for any development and should be protected in addition to irreplaceable and priority habitats and species. Reference should be made to wider relevant guidance on these issues including North Somerset Council literature e.g. the Biodiversity and Trees SPD and also wider publications.

6 Monitoring and review

6.1 The employment-led strategy will be monitored as a whole and individual applications will be monitored including monitoring of the triggers and actions set out

in Section 106 Agreements. A separate framework is being prepared and will allow the council to monitor overall progress of the strategy. Outputs from this reporting will be published in Annual Monitoring Reports or similar.

Compliance with the Employment-led Strategy

- 6.2 A Section 106 obligation to deliver requirements associated with the employment-led strategy will be binding on the land, and therefore also binding on successive landowners. If the requirements are not secured in line with the Section 106 Agreement the development may become unlawful with significant implications including inability to commence further residential units. Planning obligations are enforceable by the council and compliance will be monitored and if a breach occurs, the relevant party will be given an opportunity to remedy it, prior to enforcement action being taken.
- 6.3 Monitoring of the employment-led strategy will feed into any review of the strategy that would be part of a wider Development Plan policy process.

Glossary

Alternative site	A separate site proposed off-site that will accommodate the employment component.
Claiming phase	The claiming phase refers to a phase of a larger phased development where the applicant is seeking to claim jobs credits following a review of previous phase.
Credits	Job credits can be accrued on phased developments when an overprovision of jobs have been provided compared to residential following review at the end of each phase. Credits no longer apply upon completion of the overall development although an 'oversupply' may be present.
Economic Development	Development uses as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF.
Employment density	A measure of the quantity of jobs in a given employment use. Higher employment densities have a higher job yield per area e.g. office uses compared to uses which have a low density such as warehousing which tend to take a lot of land and relatively fewer jobs.
Employment-led scheme	An employment-led scheme is one where the policy requirement is triggered and a proposal is brought forward accordingly.
Financial contributions	Funds collected in line with S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the relevant CIL Regulations. In some cases contributions will be the preferred requirements and in others, collected in lieu of on-site or off-site provision.
Full Time Equivalent	A unit of measure indicating how many employees an organisation has assuming all employees work full time. 1 FTE equals 1 job in the employment-led strategy.
Gross Value Added	A measure of the value of goods and services to the economy
Oversupply	An evidenced overprovision of jobs against the agreed provision measured

	upon completion of the development.
Qualifying Area	<p>The area within which the employment-led policies will apply and where the relevant residential development proposals will have to be employment-led. There are two distinct areas within this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. J21 Enterprise Area, including Weston Villages 2. Remainder of Weston-super-Mare
Qualifying Employment	An employment use that will be acceptable to release residential development.
Site Suitability Criteria	The criteria used to guide applicants and case officers when assessing the suitability of a site for an economic development use.
Supplementary Planning Document	A Supplementary Planning Document provides additional information on policies set out in the Development Plan.
Weston Villages	The proposed Weston Villages development at Weston-super-Mare as defined through the Weston Villages SPD.

References

Homes and Communities Agency (2010) '**Employment Densities Guide**', 2nd Edition

Council documents can be made available in large print, audio, easy read and other formats. Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

