

North Somerset Council
Local Development Framework

Core Strategy

Topic paper
Culture, leisure and tourism

Culture, Leisure and Tourism and Topic Paper

This is part of a series of topic papers summarising the evidence base for the North Somerset Core Strategy document.

Other topic papers available in this series:

- Demography, health, social inclusion and deprivation
- Housing
- Economy
- Retail
- Settlement function and hierarchy
- Resources (including minerals, waste, recycling, energy consumption)
- Natural environment (including climate change, biodiversity, green infrastructure, countryside, natural environment and flooding)
- Transport and communications
- Sustainable construction / design quality including heritage
- Summing up / spatial portrait

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1. Introduction

1.1 The scope of this topic paper is wide ranging covering those aspects of society which enrich our lives. This is everything from the most fundamental of community services and facilities such as the provision of schools and health services to ways of spending our leisure time whether it be as residents of North Somerset or as tourists. With regards to tourism there are obvious overlaps between this and the economic topic paper and the work which is underway on the Area Action Plans for Weston-super-Mare Town Centre and the Regeneration Area. No attempt has been made to cover every aspect of Culture, Leisure and Tourism. The intention has been to highlight those areas which may have the clearest implications for spatial/land use planning and especially the Core Strategy. If, however as a result you think that there are important issues that have been omitted from this topic paper then please let us know.

Existing characteristics

1.2 The demography topic paper sets out the population characteristics for North Somerset. The demographic make-up of the district has implications for the leisure and cultural needs of the population.

1.3 North Somerset has an expanding population, predicted to rise by 6,184 or 3.0% to 2011 and to 2026 by 17%¹ (This does not take into account the additional 26,000 dwellings needed within the district which may increase the population further). This brings with it a need for additional facilities and services. Specifically the two urban extensions of 9,000 houses each proposed for South West Bristol and Weston-super-Mare will result in the need for more school places, greater demand on health services and many other facilities from open space to library facilities.

1.4 Whilst the proportion of people in North Somerset who are under 45 is lower than the national average, population growth is predicted to be strongest in the 20-34 age group who traditionally have the highest rates of participation in sport and physical activity (London Research Centre from 2001 census). Conversely North Somerset has a 4.2% higher percentage of older people (60+ female, 65+male) than the rest of England and Wales. This disparity increases with age with the percentage of the population over 75 years almost 30% higher than the national average, resulting in a relatively aged population. This has implications for the provision of health and related services as well as the sort of leisure provision which needs to be planned for.

1.5 Although North Somerset is a relatively prosperous district there are also significant pockets of deprivation, specifically within Weston's South and Central wards. North Somerset has the 11th highest range of inequality of

¹ London Research Centre based on Office of National Statistics 2005 mid-year estimates

the 408 local authorities in England. People from lower income groups tend to have lower participation levels in sport, physical and cultural activities and tend to have poorer health.

- 1.6 These factors are important when reviewing the issues for this topic paper particularly as future population growth in the South West Bristol and Weston-super-Mare urban extensions will generate a need for a whole range of leisure and cultural facilities.

2. Leisure/Recreation

- 2.1 This section covers open spaces, sports and recreational facilities within our communities. There is very strong support nationally for encouraging the provision of recreation facilities and promoting increased use.

Context

- 2.2 The spatial planning context is given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (ODPM 2003)** which supports the role that both green spaces and leisure facilities play in regenerating our urban environments; improving an individual's sense of wellbeing and at a community level providing a focus for community activities; and if well planned and located, in promoting sustainable development.

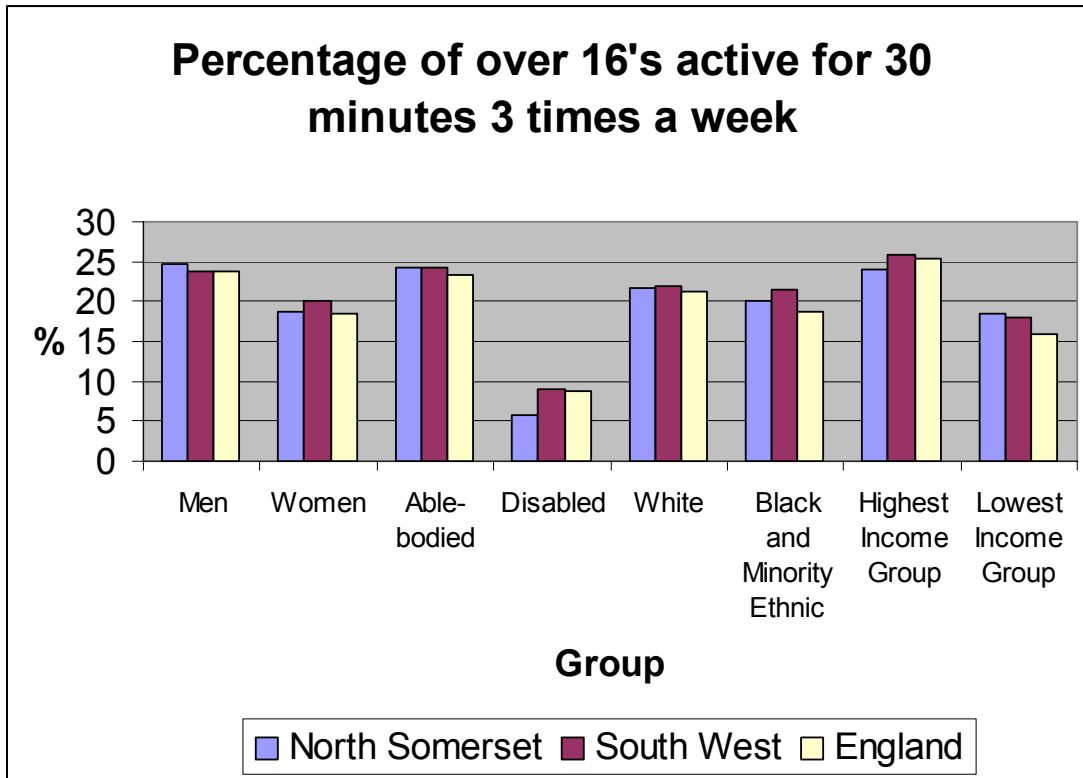
- 2.3 There is a strong steer for Local Authorities to produce well researched standards for the amount and type of open space and built leisure facilities which are needed within their area. These can then form the basis for local open space/leisure strategies which can identify how deficiencies can be remedied and how provision can best be made to meet the needs of new development (including the levels of contributions from housing developers to meet an appropriate amount of the cost of providing these facilities).

- 2.4 The Framework for Sport in England (Sport England 2004, vision to 2020) envisages a 1% increase year on year in participants in sport, to a target of 70% of the population active by 2020). This has huge implications for the provision of the necessary facilities to enable this to happen. This is supported by The Regional Plan for Sport 2004-2008 (Sport England), with a reduced target of 50% active in sport by 2020.

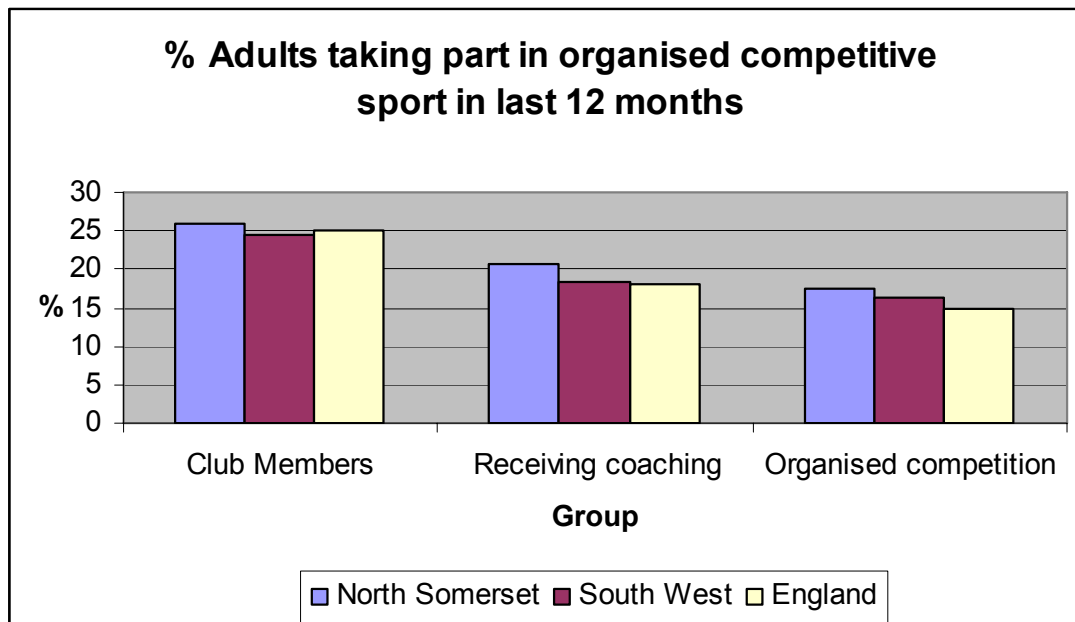
- 2.5 The first chart below shows the overall participation rates in North Somerset for over 16's in moderate intensity sport and active recreation for a minimum of 30 mins at least 3 times a week² (the government recommended target). The figures are slightly above the national % except for the disabled, but below the level for the South West as a whole for women the disabled and black and minority ethnic groups. The second graphs shows club membership and formal competitive sports activity being well above the national averages. These characteristics have

² Active People Survey (Sport England 2006)

implications for the types of facilities which may be needed in North Somerset.



*Source Sport England Active People survey 2006



*Source Sport England Active People survey 2006

2.6 North Somerset is currently producing local strategies for outdoor and indoor sports facilities (including pitches, courts, bowling greens, Multi-use

games areas, health and fitness facilities, village and community halls, skate parks, athletics tracks, golf courses and children's play areas) as well as an open space strategy which will cover less formal provision such as unequipped or unmarked areas of open space and green routes etc. Work is well advanced but the key issues/ outcomes have yet to be defined. The outcomes will identify areas of under/overprovision, priorities for action and revised levels of developer contributions needed to meet the recreational needs of existing and future populations. The issues and outcomes arising from these strategies will need to be addressed and as appropriate, incorporated into the Core Strategy as they emerge.

2.7 'Go for life-A Plan for Healthy and Active Living in North Somerset' is an initiative undertaken by the North Somerset Partnership and launched July 2007.



The aim is to increase peoples levels of physical activity under the themes of Sport and Cultural Activity, Healthy Eating, Everyday Activity and Community Activity. The plan links to the Sport England's Strategies, "North Somerset Health Inequalities Action Plan" (North Somerset PCT), "Choosing Activity : A Physical Activity Action Plan" (Department of Health 2004), North Somerset Community Strategy 2004-5). The Plan targets deprived wards or groups with poor health outcomes and those adults typically taking less than the recommended 3 x 30mins exercise a week. North Somerset's 'Go for Life' plan aims to become, not only the 'umbrella' under which all current activity will sit, but also be the mechanism by which these current activities (and the resources that support them) can be drawn together to create a 'whole greater than the sum of its parts'. Prime objectives are

- Raising awareness and understanding of the benefits of healthy and active lifestyles on physical and mental health.
- Increasing levels of physical activity
- Reducing the barriers to healthy and active living
- Promoting healthy eating

2.8 Both the Sport England targets and 'Go4Life' have significant implications for active leisure provision within the time period of the Core Strategy and are key factors in the Playing Pitch, Built facilities and Green Space Strategies which are currently in preparation by the Council.

Town Centre Leisure uses

2.9 The commercial leisure market has been growing rapidly over the last 10 years as disposable incomes have increased³. Within Weston-super-Mare

³ North Somerset Retail and Leisure Study (Donaldsons April 2006)

leisure facilities are equally important to visitors as well as residents. Various research reports (Donaldsons³, DTZ⁴, Blue Skies⁵) have reinforced the need for Weston to have a stronger town centre in order to compete with other centres such as Bristol and Cribbs Causeway and that this should include leisure uses as well as retail. PPS6⁶ encourages uses which would enhance the vitality and viability of town centres. The Donaldson North Somerset Retail and Leisure Study³ indicated, however that demand for new leisure space by commercial operators was negligible, although 6 food and drink establishments had indicated potential floor space requirements. (Anecdotal evidence since the completion of these studies seems to show that Weston has an emerging café culture particularly in areas around Grove Village and Meadow Street/Big Lamp Corner).

2.10 This lack of apparent demand may partially be related to proposals for redevelopment of the sea front Tropicana swimming pool for a range of facilities (indoor swimming pool, ten pin bowling, multi screen cinema, health and fitness centre, hotel and restaurants etc) which may already have 'soaked up' all market interest. This will provide an all year round leisure venue for tourists and residents alike. Alternative development sites within the town centre area are limited (largely to change of use of existing properties) and therefore any substantial change in town centre and sea front leisure activities will be dependent on the success of the Tropicana redevelopment. A planning application is expected to be submitted in Autumn 2007.

2.11 A review of possible development sites is being carried out as part of the Issues and Options research for the Town Centre Area Action Plan. This is largely focussing on retail opportunities but may also identify mixed use sites which could include leisure uses.

Key facts Recreation /leisure

- Sport England has a target of 1% year on year increase in participation in sport to 2020. This means planning and providing for between 50%-70% of the population being active in sport by 2020.
- The percentage of over 16's in North Somerset taking the recommended amount of active recreation are below the level for the South West for women, the disabled and black and minority ethnic groups. Club membership and formal competitive sports activity is well above the national averages⁷.

⁴ Weston-super-Mare town Centre retail Development Strategy (DTZ January 2006)

⁵ Blue Skies- A Vision for tourism in North Somerset (North Somerset Council 2001 and 2005)

⁶ Planning Policy Statement 6 Planning for Town Centres (ODPM 2005)

⁷ "Active People" survey Sport England 2006

- 'Go for life-A Plan for Healthy and Active Living in North Somerset' also aims to increase participation especially those in deprived wards or groups with poor health outcomes. There will be a need to ensure that adequate facilities are available to meet resulting increase in participation.
- Enhancement of Town Centre area leisure opportunities in Weston-super-Mare is dependant on the Tropicana redevelopment, although this is largely a matter for the Town Centre Area Action Plan, rather than the Core Strategy

Gaps in evidence

- Absence of estimates of population numbers and characteristics of residents of the new urban extensions creates difficulties in planning for leisure provision, as different age groups have differing needs and preferences as to the types of activities they engage in.
- No recent research has been undertaken on town centre leisure activities other than Weston-super-mare, so no evidence is available to establish whether the town centres of Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead have potential to enhance their leisure role. Is this significant?

Issues for the Core Strategy

- Creating a framework to support and encourage appropriate leisure/recreation development in the district's town centres to re-enforce and complement their retail role.
- Continue to provide a planning policy framework which protects existing facilities and allows the development of appropriately located new facilities to meet existing and predicted needs. This should support the outcomes of the Sports Pitch, Built Facilities and green space strategies in terms of managing and providing for the most sustainable and appropriate mix and distribution of sport and leisure and green space facilities across the district.
- Provide the policy context for the production of a Supplementary Planning Document to co-ordinate developer contributions towards a range of essential community services.

3 Tourism

Policy Background

- 3.1 Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism (DCLG May 2006)**
emphasises the need for planners to understand the importance of tourism

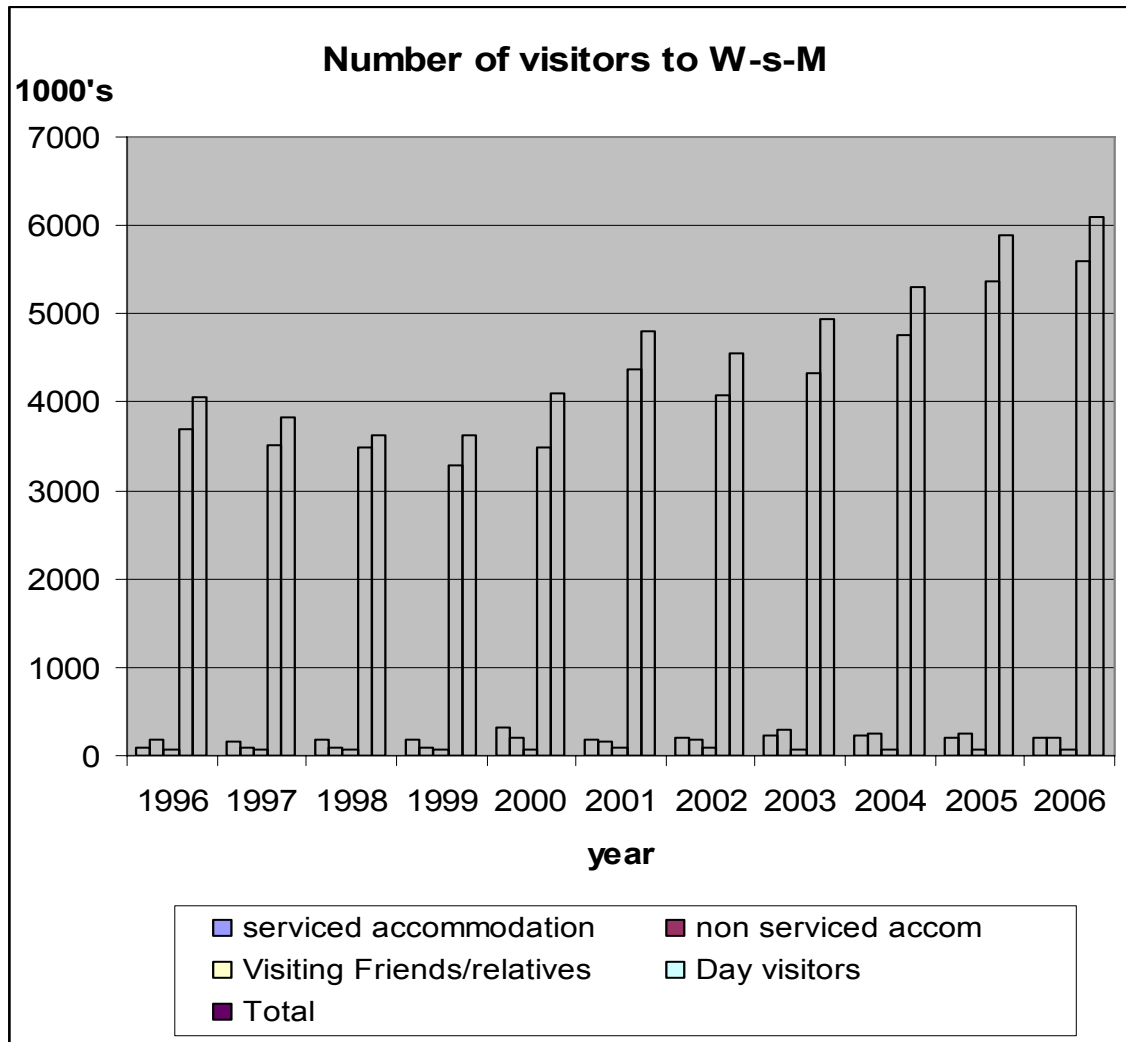
when preparing development plans and undertaking planning decisions and vice versa so that tourism is promoted and delivered in a sustainable way.

- 3.2 **South West Regional Economic Strategy: 2005** The strategy points to a fairly positive economic outlook with tourism singled out as one of eight priority sectors.
- 3.3 **SWRDA Corporate Plan:** For Somerset it identifies tourism as one of just three priority sectors (the others being food/drink and aerospace/advanced engineering).
- 3.4 **South West Tourism Strategy - Towards 2015:**The vision is of a quality tourism region with an emphasis on value not volume, quality of life for local people, reducing seasonality and protecting the environment. Three strategic aims are: driving up quality; delivering truly sustainable tourism; and creating superior destination management arrangements. The strategy sees resort/ destination “branding” as very important as well as use of the internet for research into and booking visits etc. A strong emphasis is placed on co-ordination of information and services across the region.
- 3.5 **Blue Skies tourism – A Vision for tourism in North Somerset 2001 and 2005** covers detailed separate action plans for the local areas in the district. Issues addressed include image, promoting all year round visitors and attractions, improving quality, efficient information delivery and e-tourism, supporting small enterprises, sustainability, widening tourism base, countryside access, local distinctiveness, transport and managing the public domain. This has provided the steer for the promotion of tourism within North Somerset since 2001.
- 3.6 **The North Somerset Community Strategy (2004)** seeks to improve the quality of life and wellbeing for all. As such it recognises that tourism is vital to the North Somerset economy but that it is important that visitor facilities and attractions are as accessible to residents as well as visitors.

Context

- 3.7 North Somerset’s tourism industry has been traditionally focussed on Weston-super-Mare. There have been significant and well documented changes in the tourism industry taking place over the last 10 years nationally as well as locally, with research concluding that Weston’s role for tourism needs to be redefined (Blue Skies Strategy 2001, 2005). In common with other traditional seaside resorts across the UK, the advent of cheap air travel and more long haul flights has led to the decline of the 2 week family break. Visitors expect a wider range of attractions with more activities such as sport, good shopping, restaurants and evening entertainment. Short breaks have become more popular and people’s expectations of accommodation standards is much higher. North

Somerset's largest market is day visitors and this market is growing as shown on the following chart. For longer stays bed and breakfast /hotel remain the most popular type of accommodation⁸. In 1996 there were 4,049 visitors compared to 6,096 in 2006 indicating an encouraging general upward trend in visitor numbers.



*Source North Somerset Council visitor economic Impact figures 1996-2006.

3.8 Over 6 million visitors came to North Somerset in 2006 and spent over £274,000,000 in the district, supporting over 500 full time equivalent jobs. South West Tourism estimates that the Gross Value Added of tourism to the North Somerset economy in 2006 was £164,160,000 (this includes money spent on accommodation, food and drink, recreation, shopping, transport and indirect expenditure). It therefore forms a significant part of the economy and it continues to be important for the development plan to support and promote this.

3.9 Current and emerging policy has primarily two areas of focus based on the Blues Skies recommendations. Firstly, to increase the quality of the accommodation stock and secondly to increase the range of activities and attractions available.

⁸ North Somerset Council visitor Economic Impact figures 1996-2006.

Accommodation

- 3.10 **Hotel and bed and breakfast.** The reduction in long stay visitors has led to overprovision of accommodation in Weston-super-Mare, lowering of prices (and quality) and resulting pressure to redevelop visitor accommodation for market housing. Planning Policy for tourism in North Somerset has traditionally sought to retain the stock of tourist accommodation around the sea front area, but never the less there has been the loss of some prestige hotel accommodation on the sea front which has reduced the appeal of Weston to conference organisers. There has also been a rapid increase in the conversion of unprofitable accommodation to residential bed and breakfast and then to unregulated single room lets and HMO's (Houses in Multiple Occupation) which has contributed to the lowering of the perception of the town as an attractive place and holiday destination. In response to the changing tourism market/characteristics and the need to drive up the quality of accommodation on offer, the emphasis has now shifted to retaining the better quality accommodation which enhances Weston as a tourism destination and managing decline elsewhere.
- 3.11 The provision of at least one 'branded' 4 Star hotel in a town centre/sea front location is seen as crucial to increasing the attractiveness of Weston as a conference venue (based on an understanding of the needs of the conference market). The Replacement North Somerset Local Plan includes a Hotel site allocation close to Junction 21 at Weston-super-Mare. The allocation was originally made to service the perceived need from the business market and a planning application is under consideration for a hotel as part of a mixture of uses on the site.
- 3.12 **Caravan and camping sites.** Based on 2001 survey of pitches there were 1,200 touring pitches in North Somerset, most within 5 miles of Weston-super-Mare, with a larger proportion of these being caravans than tents. Average occupancy rates over the 4 peak summer months was 60%. The 2001 survey of Static pitches showed that there were a little over 1,000 licensed pitches, the majority in the Kewstoke/Sand Bay area (approximately 840) and between Portishead and Clevedon (approximately 100) with the rural areas and Mendips (approximately 75).
- 3.13 The demand for Caravan sites has similarly declined in the last 10 years with currently four sites in and around Weston having permission or an allocation for change of use to housing (approximately 370 pitches, although some had not been in use for some time). The councils concern is to raise the standard of accommodation and reduce/minimise the impact on the environment and this has been reflected in recent planning policy. There are however no up to date surveys of pitch numbers, occupancy levels or site conditions in order to make comparisons, or gauge relative adequacy of provision.

Visitor attractions and events

- 3.14 Research done as part of the Blue Skies tourism strategy and action plan showed that there was a need to improve the range of facilities and attractions on offer (particularly in Weston-super Mare), primarily focussing on all-weather, all season attractions. As the preceding paragraphs (under leisure/recreation heading) have highlighted this has evolved into proposals to redevelop the Tropicana site.
- 3.15 Weston is developing a calendar of beach focussed events such as Enduro, T4 and Helidays which research has shown⁹ to have real benefits to the local economy, in some cases doubling the expenditure which otherwise may have been expected to have been made.
- 3.16 Weston airfield currently acts as a park and ride location for main events within the town. If additional events are successfully encouraged then alternative sites will need to be addressed in the Weston Regeneration Area Action plan?

Other considerations

- 3.17 Regeneration initiatives such as Civic Pride (including improved street paving , furniture and signage, such as at Grove Village and Big Lamp Corner/Meadow Street), redevelopment of Knightstone Island and the sea defences all impact on the image of Weston and have created opportunities to increase the attractiveness of Weston to visitors and residents alike.
- 3.18 Improving the shopping facilities within the Town Centre particularly by an additional named department store is seen as crucial to improving the vitality of Weston and it's appeal to visitors. (DTZ, Donaldsons, Blue Skies). As also detailed in preceding paragraphs re leisure, work is continuing to develop this through the development of a Town Centre Area Action Plan. Although this will be the vehicle for promoting detailed proposals for opportunities and strategy to revitalise the Town Centre, it is important that the Core Strategy provides the framework.
- 3.19 The 5 district authorities in Somerset, Somerset County Council and North Somerset Council are now working together to promote the whole county of Somerset as a visitor destination. To ensure that Weston retains and enhances its own identity as a popular seaside resort a branding and design agency has been commissioned to create a new brand design for Weston which will communicate an image of what the town is all about in the 21st Century.

⁹ Unpublished, undertaken by South West Tourism 2006 using STEAM Model and South West Business Information Model (1999)

Outside Weston

- 3.20 Blue Skies also provides the basis for boosting visitor interest in other areas of North Somerset with action plans developed for Clevedon, Portishead and the rural areas.
- 3.21 Within the rural areas tourism is supported through promoting countryside activities ie walking and cycling (eg Strawberry Line footpath /cycleway), produce (Taste of North Somerset) and attractions, such as Tyntesfield National Trust property, Clevedon Craft Centre, Kingston Seymour fishing lakes. As niche markets develop there may be implications for planning policy through farm diversification both for accommodation and visitor attractions. Currently planning policy favours the conversion of rural buildings for employment rather than residential use.

Key Facts

- The tourism market in North Somerset is dominated by Weston-super-Mare.
- There is a general upwards trend in visitor numbers to Weston-super-Mare with day visitors accounting for the majority of the increase.
- Improved shopping facilities are seen as vital to encourage visitors to Weston-super-Mare.
- Enhancement of Town Centre and Sea front area visitor attractions in Weston-super-Mare is dependant on the Tropicana redevelopment, although this is largely a matter for the Town Centre Area Action Plan, rather than the Core Strategy.
- A four star sea front area hotel is seen as essential to be able to service the market for conference facilities within Weston-super-Mare.

Gaps

- Accurate and up to date bed stock surveys are needed. Although SW tourism produce a West of England Occupancy Survey this only looks at the proportion inspected by Visit Britain which inevitably excludes those which are not part of this grading system.
- Up to date visitor perception study needed and is planned to be undertaken in the next 2 years.

- A five year Destination Management Plan for North Somerset is currently in the early stages of preparation. Key issues and actions will be incorporated into the development of the Core Strategy and Town Centre Area Action Plan as they emerge.
- The last survey of caravan pitches was undertaken in 2001. A new survey is needed in order to assess the balance of demand and supply.
- Does the need for a hotel site close to Junction 21 of the M5 need to be re-assessed? (although a planning application for mixed uses including an hotel has now been submitted, the site has been allocated since 1994)
- Has any research indicated a revised approach to rural diversification is necessary?

Issues for Core Strategy

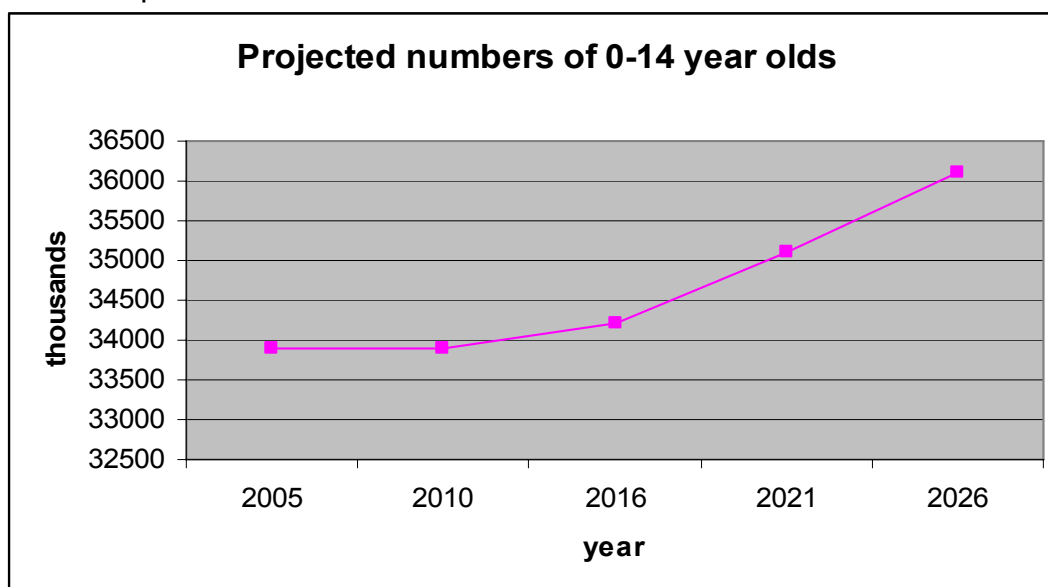
- Farm/rural diversification. Is there any research to indicate an alternative to the current planning policy approach to diversification?
- Does the Core Strategy need to give a specific steer regarding tourism development in the rural areas?
- Creating a framework to support and encourage appropriate tourism, including leisure/recreation development in the town centre sea front area of Weston Super Mare.
- Creating a framework to support the retail role of Weston-super-Mare town centre to re-enforce and complement the tourist role.
- Continue the policy of allowing change of use of visitor accommodation outside the Town centre/sea front area to manage the decline of less suitable accommodation?
- How do we address caravan and camping sites?
- Do we identify sites for new hotels to meet conference market needs? Although recent studies have concluded there is a need it is not clear whether this has been quantified in any way (although a notional figure of 80 bed spaces has been suggested by North Somerset Councils Destination Management Team). Is additional market research needed to establish scale and land requirements? This is a matter for TC area action plan, but is it appropriate for an enabling policy be included in the Core Strategy?

4. Key Services

Education

Context

4.1 There is predicted to be only a slow natural growth in school age (0-14 year old) across North Somerset up to 2026¹⁰ with an increase of less than 3,000 as shown by the chart below. This does not take into account potential increases related to the need for an additional 26,000 homes in that period. Significant and specific challenges arise in relation to school provision for the two urban extensions at South West Bristol and Weston-super-Mare. The resulting school age population is likely to generate the need for 4/5 primary schools. This will depend on dwelling numbers and make-up i.e. the proportion of family homes and distribution of development.



4.2 The solution for secondary school provision is less straightforward. For South West Bristol options may vary from combinations of expansion of existing secondary schools to construction of a new school for the extension area. The proximity to Bristol and whether there continue to be cross boundary movements (Bristol residents being educated in North Somerset Schools) will be amongst the factors to be considered. In Weston-super-Mare, there would also be the need to reconsider secondary provision as it is unlikely that the existing four schools could accommodate the likely numbers of additional pupils generated by future development.

4.3 The Schools Organisational Plan will be published in October 2007 and will explore the various options available. The single plan for Children and Young people 2006-2009 will also be re-launched in Autumn 2007.

¹⁰ Office of National Statistics sub regional population projections 2004

- 4.4 An issue which has been raised in the process of preparing this topic paper is the need to attract good calibre teachers for all of the additional schools which will be needed. Factors such as affordable homes, good quality environment, and in turn good quality schools for teachers own children. There may be the need for approximately 100 primary school teachers and 100 secondary teachers (excluding support and office staff) for each of the extension areas.
- 4.5 The location and distribution of schools are likely to be key factors in considering the design, layout and distribution of development within the urban extension areas. Schools will provide a strong community focus and particularly for secondary schools, subject to access arrangements can contain community standard facilities, such as a performance space/hall, a place for worship, youth service, council contact centre, library space and locality services and incorporate care and education from 0-18 years.
- 4.6 The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy indicates that between 30% and 60% (in areas of greatest need) of housing on new developments should be affordable housing (see also Housing topic paper para 6.9-6.11). This has serious implications for developer contributions towards education provision, since presently these are not required from affordable housing in order to off-set the additional cost to the developer of providing affordable housing.
- 4.7 In Weston super-Mare post 16 education is currently provided through Weston College, whether this be vocational or academic courses and funded by the Learning And Skills Council. Elsewhere in North Somerset A level education is typically provided in secondary schools. This may change if government funding sources change and allow vocational courses to be provided in schools, which may in turn have land use requirements for some schools.
- 4.8 Weston College provides Degree course affiliated to Bath Spa University, Bath University and as from September 2007, University of the West of England, concentrating on creative arts with a new University Campus near to Weston General Hospital. Government targets for those in higher education are 50% by 2010. The figure in North Somerset is 38%. It is anticipated that the numbers in Higher Education at the College is likely to rise to approximately 600-700 students and then level off for the foreseeable future. Taking into account the potential to expand at the main Weston Campus to accommodate a demand for electrical installation/carpentry and joinery and brickwork, and the fact that there are currently no aspirations to provide student accommodation, there are not any major land use requirements which need to be addressed in the LDF.
- 4.9 Weston College operate a post 16 facility in Nailsea and there are aspirations to develop this further in association with the redevelopment of the western end of Somerset Square and the library. The realisation of this will be dependent on detailed negotiations over land ownership/lease and is too detailed a matter for the Core Strategy.

Key facts education

- Aside from the additional potential growth as a result of proposed new dwellings there is only a very small predicted increase in 0-14 age population.
- Each of the urban extension areas may generate the need for 4 or 5 primary schools and possibly one new secondary school.
- This may generate the need for approximately 200 teaching staff (not including support and office staff).
- Planning for schools in the north of the district is complicated by the proximity to Bristol, Bristol City councils education policy and resulting cross boundary pupil movements.
- Schools especially secondary schools have the potential to be the focus for many community activities and will be an important consideration in the layout and design of the areas.
- Weston College will increase the number of degree places, although there should be no land use implications.

Gaps in evidence

- As identified in the preceding section on recreation/leisure the absence of predictions for demographic makeup of the new extensions areas makes it difficult to plan provision accurately.

Key Issues

- Should the development of the new communities in the urban extensions maximise the benefits of community focus that a school and other associated facilities can bring by using this as their focus?
- How can the Core Strategy provide a planning policy framework which protects existing education facilities and allows the development of appropriately located new facilities to meet existing and predicted needs?
- How can it provide the policy basis for the production of a Supplementary Planning Document to co-ordinate developer contributions towards education and other facilities. This may need to prioritise between a range of needs from the development and reconcile the potentially high percentage of affordable housing and

ensuing traditionally reduced levels of contributions towards community facilities.

Health

Context

4.10 North Somerset has a diverse population ranging from some of the wealthiest areas in the South West of England to areas of extremely high social and health needs. Forty percent of the population of North Somerset lives in Weston-super-Mare, and parts of Weston have the highest health needs as assessed by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The index includes factors such as early death, poor mental health and incapacity. Weston-super-Mare South, Central and West wards are significantly more needy than the rest of North Somerset, which can be demonstrated by the fact that:

- a baby born today in parts of Weston can expect to live 10 years less than a baby born in parts of Portishead; and
- people living in central Weston are three times more likely to be receiving Incapacity Benefit than the North Somerset average.

4.11 The provision of health care services for North Somerset residents is the responsibility of the North Somerset Primary Care Trust (NSPCT). Weston Hospital however is run by Weston Area Health Trust and mental health services are the responsibility of Avon Wiltshire Partnership Trust. North Somerset has relatively few people in mental health treatment compared to other areas of similar socio-economic profiles.

4.12 The Government plans to reform and modernise the NHS including reorganising the local Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), increasing the role of alternative health-care providers, increasing the role of GP's and increasing the financial accountability of PCT's. The North Somerset PCT has seen financial difficulties and increased funding to bolster provision will be diminishing in the near future.

4.13 The Public Health report 2006 produced by NS PCT has the following aims

- Reduce substantially the mortality rates from the major killer diseases i.e. heart disease and cancer.
- Improve life chances for children, including by reducing the under-18 conception rate.
- Reduce inequalities in health outcomes as measured by infant mortality and life expectancy at birth.
- Reduce the rate of smoking, contributing to the national target of: reducing the rate in manual groups from 32% in 1998 to 26% by 2010;

800,000 smokers from all groups successfully quitting at the four week stage by 2006.’

- Reduce the proportion of women smoking throughout pregnancy by one per cent per year, focussing especially on smokers from disadvantaged groups.
- Deliver an increase in the breast feeding initiation rate focussing especially on women from disadvantaged groups.

4.14 “Shaping our future in North Somerset” North Somerset NHS Primary Care Trust has resulted in the following strategy (for the next 10-20 years) which takes into account the needs arising from the additional 26,000 dwellings up to 2026:

- To improve the range of services that can be provided for people living in our rural areas, which will include developing more mobile services.
- To provide additional services in Portishead and the surrounding area, as part of the planned development of new GP practice premises at the Harbourside.
- To develop Clevedon Community Hospital to support a new model of health care for all residents of North Somerset, particularly the northern half of the county.
- To provide additional services in the Weston-super-Mare town centre as part of the planned development of new GP practice premises.
- To recognise the expected population growth in the Worle area of North Somerset and the need to plan for the development of additional primary and community care services for this population in the future.
- In longer term to develop a Primary Care Resource Centre (PCRC) within the urban extension area of W-s-M pending finalisation of the RSS and Weston regeneration Area, Area Action Plan

4.15 A major consideration is the transfer of many previously hospital based services into community settings closer to peoples homes, chiefly GP practices (and an expanded Clevedon Community Hospital Facility).

4.16 The plan acknowledges the likely population growth up to 2026 with particular regard to the urban extensions at Weston-super-Mare and South West Bristol.

Key Facts

- A reorganization in the way primary health care services are provided will take place, with potential land use implications for the expansion of some existing GP practices; a new or expanded Clevedon Community Hospital; new expanded GP services in Weston town Centre and additional provision within the urban extension area of Weston-super-Mare.

Gaps

- Although “Shaping our Future” acknowledges and makes notional provision for services to meet the needs of the Weston Urban extension area, no such consideration is given to the potential needs of the residents of the South West Bristol urban extension area. There is no mention of the need for a PCRC or where patients may go (Clevedon Community Hospital or South Bristol Hospital for hospital based facilities).
- Will Weston General Hospital need to expand to meet the needs of the additional population up to 2026?

Issues for Core Strategy

- There is an assumption that developer contributions will fund in full the provision of health services, is this valid?
- How can the necessary framework be put in place to ensure the best possible phasing of new residents and provision?
- How can the Core Strategy provide a planning policy framework which allows the development of appropriately located new facilities to meet existing and predicted needs?
- How can it provide the policy basis for the production of a Supplementary Planning Document to co-ordinate developer contributions towards health and other facilities? It may be necessary to prioritise between a range of needs from the development and reconcile the potentially high percentage of affordable housing and ensuing traditionally reduced levels of contributions towards community facilities.

5. Culture

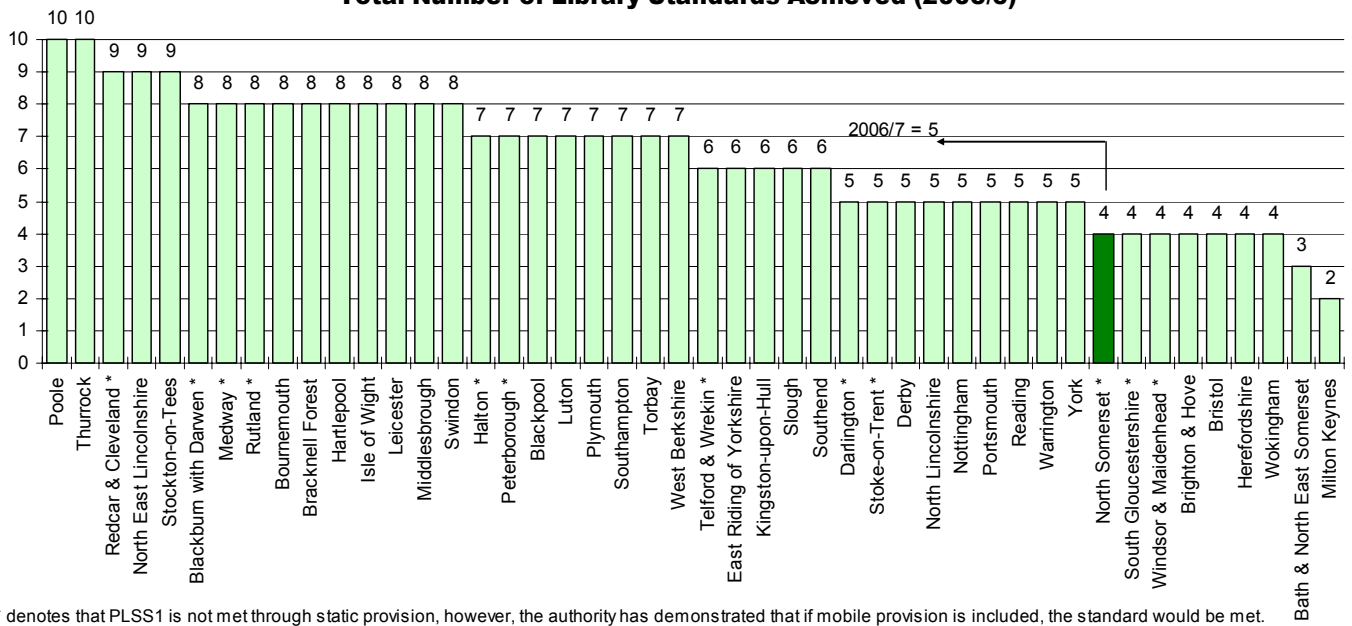
5.1 Many aspects of cultural provision whether it be museum, libraries, cinema, theatre or other performing arts, provide interest for visitors as well as residents and so equally form part of ‘tourist attractions’, however since it is not their primary purpose they are dealt with separately in this section.

5.2 A draft Cultural Infrastructure Strategy for the South West has been prepared “People, Places and Spaces (April 2007)” by Culture South West in partnership with other culture, tourism and leisure bodies for the South West, including SWRDA (South West Regional Development Agency) and SWRA South West Regional Assembly). It concentrates on regional and sub-regional infrastructure needed to meet the needs of the

larger catchments within the South West. The South West falls short of major events and venues compared to other countries and regions. Weston-super-Mare falls within PAC 3 (Planning Area for Culture 3) along with Bath and Bristol. The focus for activity within this area is Bristol, however with rebuilding of the Colston Hall and the development of the Bristol Arena.

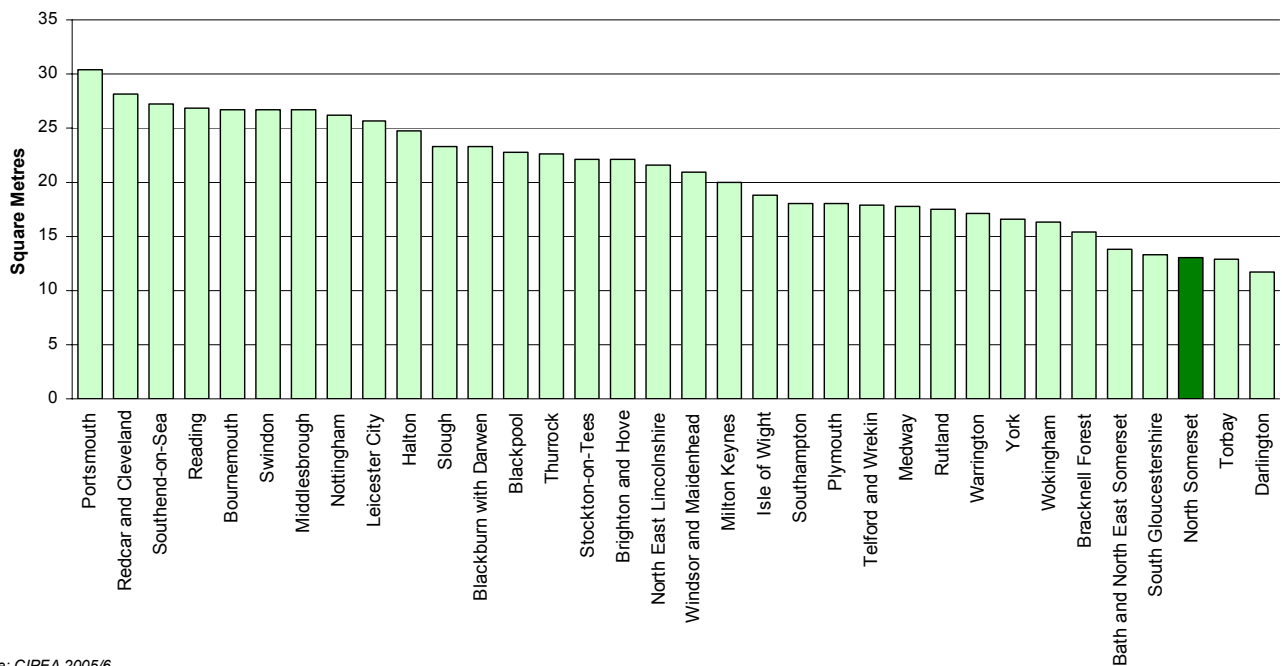
- 5.3 North Somerset has 16 libraries, the North Somerset Museum Service, and two significant venues in the playhouse and Winter Gardens. Local theatre and music groups exist around the district, using local community meeting spaces. The Council also supports a wide range of arts and wider cultural development services, although does not directly fund group activities. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a lack of gallery space, concert hall and performing arts space in North Somerset as well as opportunities for small creative industries to cluster within the same area. The Regional Development Agency and Arts Council are currently undertaking research into the creative industries in the former Avon Area.
- 5.4 The Council is currently developing a cultural strategy for North Somerset to be based on the emerging Arts Strategy and Performing Arts Strategies and forthcoming Library Vision document. There is currently no umbrella partnership or forum for cultural development in North Somerset.
- 5.5 The provision of cultural facilities is largely non-statutory, with the exception of the library service. This has led to variable levels of provision and support in the past. There is no regular funding stream for the creative arts, although developer contributions have been successfully targeted at public art in new developments, especially at Portishead. North Somerset is still living with the legacy of low levels of funding from the previous Avon County Council.
- 5.6 This has resulted in fewer libraries with insufficient internal space and often poor condition. North Somerset only achieved 4 out of the 10 library standards. Space standards are low compared to almost all other Local Authorities in the south west giving difficulties in providing a modern service able to also offer cultural event space such as gallery space, book promotions, meeting rooms etc. Only 78% of the population live within 1 mile of a built library (compared to the standard of 88%), with 95% living within 2 miles (compared to a standard of 100%). The following graphs show how North Somerset compares with other Unitary authorities in terms of standards achieved and net floorspace per 1000 population.

Total Number of Library Standards Achieved (2005/6)



*Source CIPFA 2005-2006

Floor Space - Net Floor Space per 1,000 Population (Unitary Authorities 2005/6)



Source: CIPFA 2005/6

5.7 A library vision document will be produced in Autumn 2007 setting out the priorities for 2, 5 and 10 years. Libraries in three of the main towns of Portishead, Nailsea and central Weston-super-Mare all need to be

replaced. A site and funding is in place for the Portishead library, although Nailsea and Central Weston have still to be resolved.

- 5.8 There are opportunities to combine new modern library/information services with other cultural and community services in the style of the Campus in Weston-super-Mare. Provision of library and information services for the SW Bristol extension area will also have implications for cross boundary provision with Bristol City Council.
- 5.9 Opportunities exist in the design and layout of the urban extensions to evolve a culturally satisfying environment. Public art can be seen as more than a sculpture in a square but the design of the whole development from green walkways and spaces through to individual works of art (see topic paper on sustainable construction). This approach is promoted by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). In this way art has the potential to be used as a community development tool in SW Bristol. The principles of this can be addressed by the Core Strategy.

Key Facts

- The draft Cultural Infrastructure Strategy for the South West has been "People, Places and Spaces (April 2007) is only involved with strategic projects in the South West-there are no direct implications for Weston-super-Mare.
- The provision of cultural activities (with the exception of the library service) is not a statutory function.
- A history of poor funding has resulted in poor levels of provision across North Somerset even with the statutory library service

Gaps

- There is currently no overarching cultural strategy for North Somerset which pulls together and prioritises provision and the means of funding across the district. This is expected to be in preparation by the end of 2007 and any outcomes of relevance to the LDF can be incorporated as appropriate.

Issues for Core Strategy

- How can the Core Strategy provide a planning policy framework which allows the development of appropriately located new cultural facilities to meet existing and predicted needs when known?
- This includes the policy basis for the production of a Supplementary Planning Document to co-ordinate developer contributions towards cultural

facilities. This may need to prioritise between a range of needs from the development and reconcile the potentially high percentage of affordable housing and ensuing traditionally reduced levels of contributions towards other community uses.

- The proximity to Bristol of the SW Bristol extension area will give rise to issues of whether the sharing of provision between Bristol and North Somerset is a possibility. This is particularly relevant with respect to library and information services, education and health services. In all cases discussions are already underway between the relevant bodies to explore these possibilities and the Core Strategy will need to acknowledge this.

6. Overarching issues for Culture, Leisure and Tourism

In addition to the gaps in the evidence base and issues raised in relation to the individual topic areas above, there are also a number of overarching or common points to emphasise, namely:

- The lack of population forecast information for the new urban extension areas of South West Bristol and the Weston Regeneration Area presents a real difficulty and prevents accurate assessments of service provision being made. Without estimates of numbers and demographic breakdown of future populations planning for schools, sports and leisure and health facilities is particularly difficult. This will need to be addressed as part of further work needed on the Core Strategy.
- The role of the Core strategy will be to provide the framework to address issues of the sustainable location of services and developer contributions. There would seem to be a clear need for an SPD however which can set out in detail levels of developer contributions for a range of services and facilities and a means of prioritising between these services, as appropriate.
- How can the urban extensions at SW Bristol and Weston-super Mare be shaped to best meet needs in terms of providing whole range of facilities?
- How can (or can?) the needs of the increased population for services and facilities be met by the developments themselves?
- Are there other issues specifically relating to non urban extension areas which have not been addressed?

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