

North Somerset Futures Local Development Framework

Core Strategy



Consultation Draft

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

What is the Core Strategy?

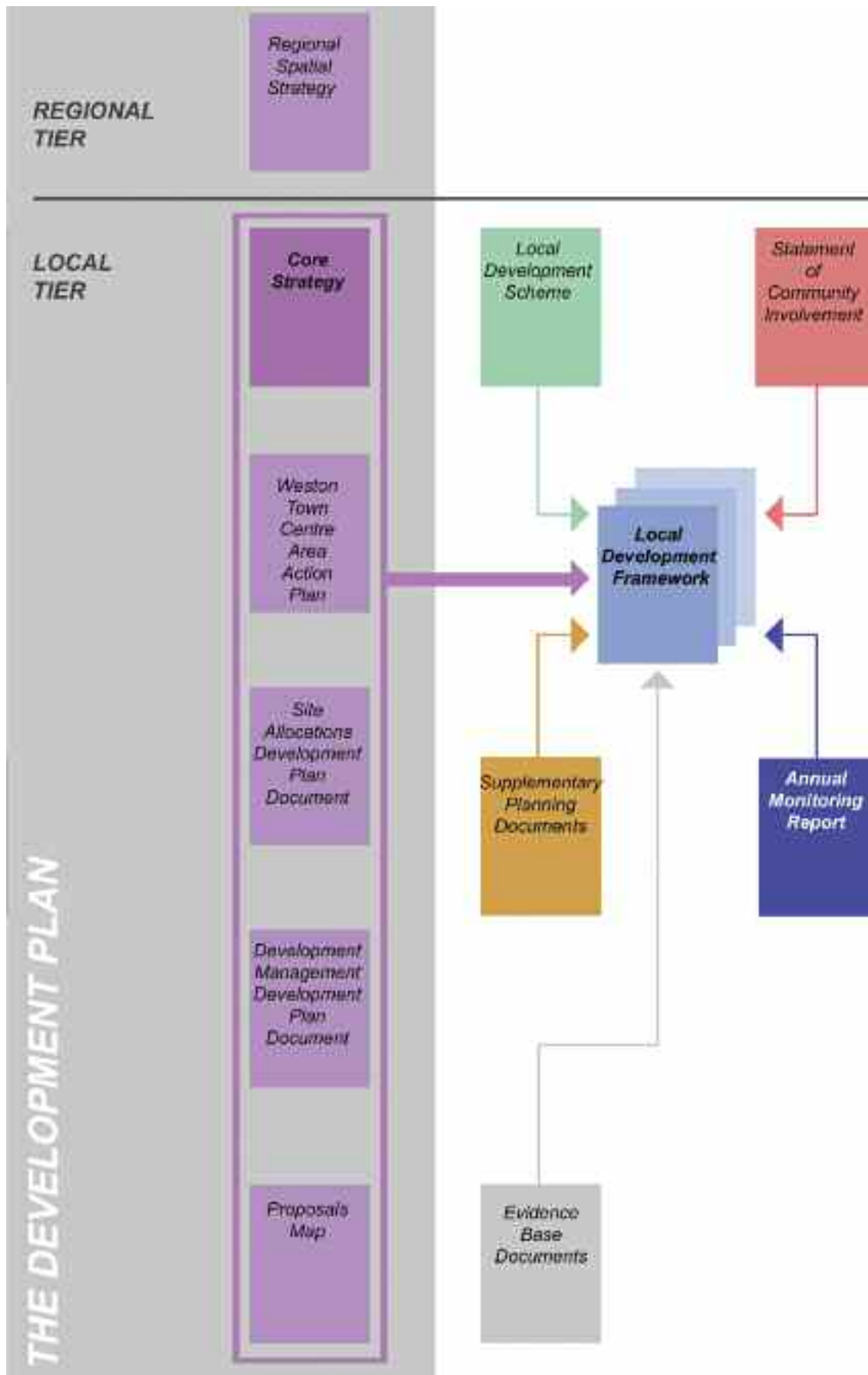
- 1.1 The Core Strategy will set out the broad long-term vision, objectives and strategic planning policies for North Somerset up to 2026. It is more than just a land use plan; its scope is wider, focusing on place shaping and the creation of sustainable communities, and demonstrating links to related issues such as health, education and wellbeing. This approach is summarised in the term 'spatial planning'.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy is not a detailed document. It will include a key diagram and can allocate strategic sites, but will not provide detailed guidance on new development sites; these will be undertaken through separate documents prepared as part of the Local Development Framework (such as the Development Management Development Plan Document or the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan).
- 1.3 The Core Strategy will eventually supersede part, but not all, of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2007). Details of which policies are proposed to be superseded, and also where future LDF documents will replace other policy areas are published separately.

Relationship to the Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.4 The Core Strategy responds to and is informed by 'Improving Our Communities Together', North Somerset Council's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008–2026. It addresses issues identified, provides their land use expression, and seeks to deliver actions across a range of spatial issues. This close relationship is demonstrated in the way the Core Strategy policies are grouped to reflect the Sustainable Community Strategy themes.

Relationship to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

- 1.5 Legislation requires that the Core Strategy must be consistent with national and regional policy. Within the South West the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (2006-2026) provides the regional context, with the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes published in July 2008. There is no date for the final approval of the RSS, this council has objected to key elements of the document (particularly the proposed Green Belt urban extension at SW Bristol), and it is anticipated that there may be changes to regional guidance introduced following the general election early next year.



Core Strategy within the Development Plan and Local Development Framework structure

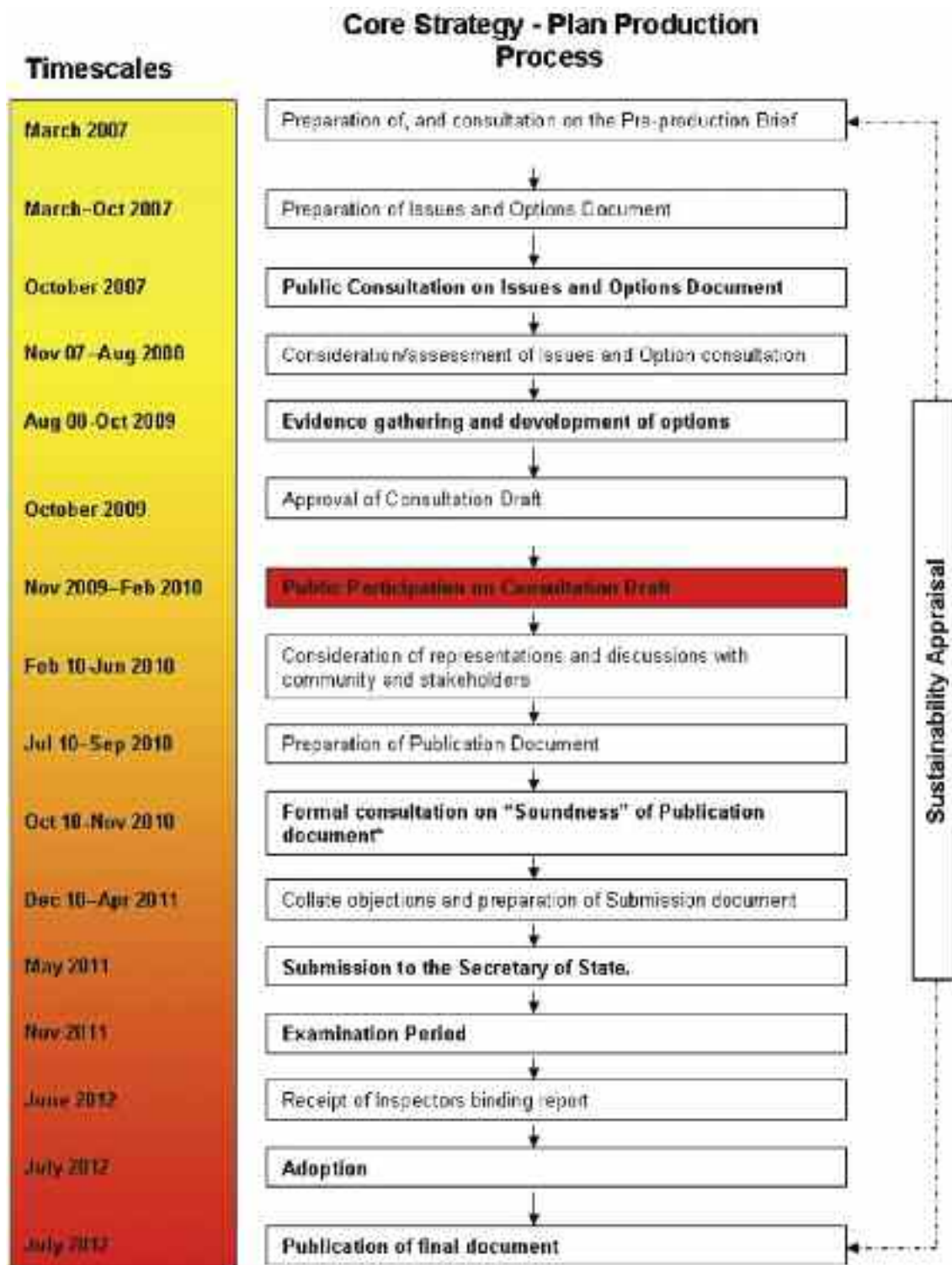
- 1.6 This Core Strategy is therefore being prepared at a time of considerable uncertainty in respect of the RSS context, and this is reflected in some of the options explored in this Consultation Draft document.
- 1.7 The principal area of difference with the emerging RSS is in relation to the South West Bristol urban extension, and the implications for addressing the overall RSS housing requirement. The way the Consultation Draft addresses this issue is summarised as follows:
- Both the urban extensions proposed in the RSS are strategic scale allocations specifically located adjacent to the 'strategically significant cities and towns' of Weston and Bristol;
 - In terms of housing numbers, the 9,000 dwellings proposed at each urban extension are 'ring fenced'. It would be contrary to RSS objectives to reallocate this growth elsewhere, and would lead to less sustainable development patterns;
 - If housing trajectories for the urban extensions demonstrate that they cannot deliver within the plan period, any shortfall will not be reallocated elsewhere. If necessary, the urban extensions will continue post-2026;
 - Development in the Green Belt at SW Bristol is not supported by the council and to make allocations at this stage could prejudice possible future changes to regional policy;
 - This Core Strategy does not make provision for any development at SW Bristol, and is therefore based on a 17,750 dwelling requirement (RSS 26,750 – 9,000 proposed at SW Bristol). However, the current consultation will be used to explore options and choices in relation to this proposed development. If the RSS allocation is confirmed, then further consultation will be required in respect of this issue before proceeding to the next stage;
 - The RSS housing requirements for the rest of the district (3,000 at Weston urban area, 5,750 elsewhere) will, for housing land availability purposes, be aggregated together, with priority given to development at Weston (SSCT).
- 1.8 These principles and their implications are explored in more detail elsewhere in the document.

What stage has the Core Strategy reached?

- 1.9 The table on page 8 summarises the main stages of document production from initial conception through to anticipated adoption.
- 1.10 This Consultation Draft forms part of the public participation phase of the Core Strategy process and is therefore a key step towards final adoption. It takes account of the outcomes of the Issues and Options consultation undertaken in 2007, as well as more recent engagement, other evidence

and government guidance, and represents the council's preferred choices for delivering the Core Strategy.

- 1.11 The Consultation Draft will be subject to public consultation between **30 November 2009 and 19 February 2010**. During this period we would like to hear the views of all interested individuals, groups and organisations on the proposed policies or any options or alternatives.



- 1.12 If you would like to comment on the consultation draft Core Strategy **you can respond on-line at www.consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk. The closing date is 19 February 2010.**
- 1.13 There will then follow two further formal stages of preparation: Publication when the draft Core Strategy is finalised and consulted upon in terms of whether it is a 'sound' document (is it justified, effective and consistent with national policy), and Submission to the Secretary of State. The Core Strategy will then be considered at an Examination by an independent inspector who will prepare a report indicating, where necessary, how the Core Strategy must be amended. The Core Strategy can then be adopted.

Evidence base

- 1.14 The Core Strategy must be underpinned by a robust evidence base that is constantly reviewed to inform decision and plan making. The policies and proposals must therefore be both informed by and assessed against relevant available evidence. The list of documents and sources making up this evidence base is set out in the North Somerset Core Strategy Evidence Base published separately.

Sustainability appraisal

- 1.15 Sustainability appraisal (SA) is a statutory requirement for Development Plan Documents. The process assesses the impact of the Core Strategy on the environment, people and economy. It incorporates the requirements of the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 1.16 Following consultation with key local regional and national stakeholders such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage sustainability criteria have been agreed covering issues such as air quality, water, landscape, health and economic performance. The Consultation Draft will be assessed against these sustainability criteria to find the 'best fit' and the results made available in the SA report.
- 1.17 The Consultation Draft has been developed with sustainability in mind and so it is considered that the preferred options are those that perform most satisfactorily when evaluated against reasonable alternatives. The SA will formally test this view. National advice is to appraise broad strategic choices rather than detailed policy wording but the process may suggest further improvements to the Core Strategy that can be incorporated into subsequent drafts.

Monitoring and review

- 1.18 Monitoring and review are key aspects of the 'plan, monitor, manage' approach to the preparation of Local Development Frameworks. Continuous monitoring enables an assessment of the effectiveness of the

Core Strategy and the policies contained within it in terms of both delivering and controlling various types of development across the district.

- 1.19 As part of the Local Development Framework, the council is required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) submitted to the Secretary of State each December. One of the key functions of the AMR is to monitor policies contained within local development documents and to report on their performance.
- 1.20 To assess the performance of the Core Strategy, a separate monitoring framework has been prepared which sets out the key indicators. Where policies are not performing as intended, the AMR will suggest the actions that need to be taken to address the issues. This can, if necessary, include a formal review and subsequent amendment to the policy.

Characteristics of North Somerset

- 1.21 North Somerset covers an area of around 37,500 hectares (145 square miles) with a population of 206,800¹. It lies south west of Bristol, abutting the city boundary to the north and east, the Severn estuary coast to the west and the Mendip Hills in the south. There is a varied landscape with coastal and rural, international and national designations i.e. Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.22 North Somerset's primary town is Weston-super-Mare accounting for just under 40% of North Somerset's population, which along with Clevedon (12%) and Portishead (9%) are located on the coast. The other main population centre of Nailsea (9%) is located within the rural levels and moors landscape approximately seven miles from Bristol.
- 1.23 North Somerset's economy, travel patterns and leisure and retail patterns are heavily influenced by its close proximity to Bristol and easy access to the M5 motorway. Each of the four main towns has a high level of out-commuting to Bristol and its north fringe by private car with low public transport use (less than half the national average). The majority of villages are also within commuting distance of Bristol and therefore to varying degrees have a significant dormitory role. Those residents who commute out of North Somerset for employment have some of the highest incomes in the South West; however those working within North Somerset have incomes lower than the national average. North Somerset has a high percentage of older people (24% as opposed to 19% nationally ¹), is a generally prosperous area but has pockets of deprivation and crime particularly in central areas of Weston-super-Mare. There are serious housing affordability issues with affordable housing completions falling well below the required amount.



- 1.24 Weston-super-Mare is recognised in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy as being an SSCT (Strategically Significant City or Town). It has amongst the lowest self-containment level of other SSCTs in the South West. Traditionally seen as a seaside town, the economic base of Weston has weakened considerably over the last 20 years with the structural changes in tourism compounded by the loss of key manufacturers. Recent focus has been on the need to strengthen the retail, tourism and employment base of Weston.
- 1.25 North Somerset contains two regionally important facilities: Bristol International Airport located on the A38 some 4.5 miles from the edge of Bristol, but with poor accessibility from both Bristol and Weston, and the deep sea port of Royal Portbury Dock located at the mouth of the River Avon.

Consultation Draft scope and structure

- 1.26 Chapter 2 sets out the spatial **visions** for the district and the **priority objectives** required to deliver the vision.
- 1.27 The **policies** provide the framework for implementing the vision and objectives, to guide investment and development proposals. The **spatial policies** (Chapter 3) are divided into four sections to reflect the Sustainable Community Strategy themes:

Living within Environmental Limits

Delivering Strong and Inclusive Communities

Delivering a Prosperous Economy

Ensuring Safe and Healthy Communities

- 1.28 Separate **area policies** (Chapter 4) set out the overall approach for specific locations while implementation is addressed by the **delivery policies** (Chapter 6).

Area Policies

Delivery Policies

- 1.29 While the Core Strategy does not support development at South West Bristol, or any change to the Green Belt, Chapter 5 addresses the issues and choices relating to the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy's proposed urban extension.
- 1.30 The key spatial implications of the Core Strategy are summarised diagrammatically on the **key diagram** (Chapter 6). A detailed inset is proposed for the Weston urban extension, and this follows the relevant area policy CS30.

CHAPTER 2: **Visions and Objectives**

- 2.1 This section takes the issues and challenges facing the district and describes the visions to guide objective setting and policy development.
- 2.2 The starting point is the North Somerset Vision as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS):
- ‘Sustainable, inclusive, safe, healthy, prosperous communities thriving in a quality environment.’
- 2.3 To help achieve the vision, the SCS has developed six shared priorities:
- Tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity;
 - Developing strong inclusive communities;
 - Ensuring safer communities;
 - Improving health and wellbeing;
 - Developing a prosperous economy and enterprising community;
 - Living within environmental limits.
- 2.4 The role of the Core Strategy and other planning policy documents is to provide the spatial, land-use expression of these shared priorities. In order to create a clear policy framework, the Core Strategy identifies a suite of spatial visions. These are grounded in the work of the SCS, but have been refined and developed to provide a clearer strategic planning context.
- 2.5 The Core Strategy visions have been refined through engagement and discussion with stakeholders. They reflect existing parameters we have to work within, such as the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, and incorporate important aspects of local distinctiveness and key local issues. They are aspirational, yet realistic and deliverable. They provide an agreed framework against which Core Strategy objectives and policies can be produced.
- 2.6 The following visions therefore seek to blend the overarching planning framework with the local context and community aspirations.

The visions

VIS 1: North Somerset Vision

By 2026 North Somerset will be a more prosperous district, with reduced inequalities throughout. Its coastal and rural setting, underpinned by a rich heritage will strongly influence new development. Development will respond to the challenge of climate change and be characterised by high-quality design that contributes to creating successful, thriving places.

Weston-super-Mare will be established as a major economic centre south of Bristol catering for the employment, social and leisure needs of its population whilst attracting visitors to support this role. New development areas will be established, creating mixed-use communities valued for their high standards of sustainability, quality of life and inspired design.

The market towns will increasingly support their populations and play less of a dormitory role. The service villages will cater for rural needs with their character and that of the open countryside protected from intrusive development.

The future planning of Royal Portbury Dock and Bristol International Airport will be guided by the need to balance the advantages of economic growth with control over key environmental issues.

VIS 2: Weston-super-Mare Vision

By 2026 Weston-super-Mare will have an image as an enjoyable and attractive place to live and visit, with a strong cultural identity and good employment base, and successful and thriving communities.

By 2026 an employment-led development strategy will have achieved a strong and diverse economic profile in Weston-super-Mare with an improved range, quantity and quality of local employment opportunities which redresses the imbalance between employment and homes reducing dependency on out-commuting by car for work and improving self-containment and sustainable living.

By 2026 Weston-super-Mare's strategic transport, utilities and flood prevention infrastructure will have been developed in tandem with new residential and employment developments to a high standard. The transportation network will provide an integrated, convenient and sustainable service for all parts of the town, with improved public transport services and external linkages.

By 2026 Weston town centre will be a good quality, diverse year-round shopping and leisure destination set within a high-quality built environment which has retained its historic identity and capitalises on its seafront location and the natural beauty of the area. More people will live and work in the town centre which will add vibrancy during the day and into the evening, resulting in a safe and desirable place for its residents and visitors.

By 2026 Weston town centre will have increased the amount of high-quality tourist accommodation, and offer a range of indoor and outdoor attractions and activities catering for a wide range of visitor needs.

By 2026 the town centre gateway area will have transformed itself into a distinctive entrance to the town creating a sense of arrival set within a consolidated, high-quality built and landscaped environment, providing good pedestrian connections to the town centre.

VIS 3: Clevedon Vision

By 2026 Clevedon will be a thriving, prosperous settlement and local service centre which provides for both its population and that of the rural hinterland, as well as a popular destination for visitors.

The historic fabric of the 'old town' will have been retained and reinforced and there will be an evident sense of pride in Clevedon's historic heart and coastal setting.

The town centre will have regained its popularity and become a thriving local retail and service centre fulfilling the needs of residents and the surrounding area, assisted by suitably-sized retail units and welcoming setting. Hill Road will remain an attractive area for specialist shops, restaurants and cafés.

The employment base will have strengthened allowing more opportunities for residents to work locally. Increasing numbers of those who travel to work outside Clevedon will make the journey by public transport, cycle or shared car journey. Access by public transport within Clevedon and between the other towns will be improved.

The area around the historic seafront and coastline from Church Hill to the historic pier will be a draw for increasing numbers of visitors and residents enjoying the unique setting, diversity of activities and its culture.

VIS 4: Nailsea Vision

By 2026, Nailsea will be a thriving, prosperous settlement and local service centre which provides for both its population and that of the rural hinterland. The quality of life, feeling of safety and community spirit of those who live and work in the town will be highly valued.

Assets such as the built heritage and open spaces will be respected. Community services (such as schools, libraries and health centres) will be retained to meet everyday needs and service provision will grow at a commensurate scale to the needs of the population.

New development taking place in the town will be focused on addressing local housing need to encourage a more balanced age structure and support economic growth. There will be an emphasis on encouraging further job opportunities by supporting our companies to grow and making provision for space to relocate. Accessibility to Bristol and Weston-super-Mare will be improved through a better choice of transport modes.

Opportunities for redevelopment of the town centre will be harnessed where this will improve the leisure and retail offer, ensuring it becomes a focal point for activity within the town. The design of all new places and spaces will be of exceptional quality and evoke pride within the community, together with challenging perceptions of the town.

VIS 5: Portishead Vision

By 2026 Portishead will have undertaken an extensive period of consolidation and become an increasingly popular location for new business as well as providing opportunities for existing local businesses to expand and grow. There will be increased opportunities for residents to work locally, instead of commuting to Bristol and its north fringe.

Access by public transport within Portishead and between the other towns will be improved. A passenger rail or rapid transit link into central Bristol will have been reinstated, providing a real alternative to residents commuting into Bristol for work.

Portishead will continue to be a popular place to live while retaining the existing distinctive character and village atmosphere of the High Street. The new and old communities in Portishead will be integrated and share a joint sense of place and pride in the town. The newly extended High Street will be a thriving and popular place to shop and spend time.

Strong maritime links will continue to provide important focus. The marina and surrounding coastal area will continue to attract visitors. The unique setting of the Gordano Valley will be protected with opportunities to enjoy surrounding countryside and views enhanced around the new development.

VIS 6: Service Villages Vision

By 2026 service villages will become thriving rural communities and a focal point for local housing needs, services and community facilities. They will become more self-contained in terms of providing jobs and serving the local and surrounding community for all their day-to-day needs.

These settlements are defined in the Core Strategy as service villages:

- Backwell
- Banwell
- Congresbury
- Churchill
- Hutton
- Locking
- Long Ashton
- Pill/ Easton-in-Gordano
- Uphill
- Winscombe
- Wrington
- Yatton

VIS 7: Smaller Settlements and Countryside Vision

Rural areas will retain and enhance their countryside character where the quality of the natural environment is the prime objective and any new development will be small scale and strictly controlled. The rural villages will have maintained their individual character, identity and sense of community. Accessibility will be improved to facilities and services not locally available within nearby service villages or towns. The surrounding countryside will have retained its open natural character, its distinctive landscapes protected from inappropriate development, agricultural use supported and valued for its biodiversity.

Priority objectives

- 2.7 At the Issues and Options stage a number of objectives were put forward and have now been developed further as a result of outcomes from that consultation, further evidence, and responding to the priorities set out in North Somerset's Sustainable Community Strategy (2008). These objectives will now be tested as part of the sustainability appraisal.
- 2.8 The priority objectives summarise how we will address the spatial planning issues within North Somerset to 2026. They will take effect through the Core Strategy spatial policies that set out how, when and where the objectives will be achieved. The priority objectives are closely aligned with North Somerset Council's Corporate Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy aims.
- 2.9 These objectives do not repeat generic national principles which will be applied as a matter of course, but instead look to identify issues of local importance. For example, national advice in relation to issues such as the need to promote sustainable development, to promote biodiversity, to protect vulnerable land from flooding, to provide affordable housing, or to preserve and enhance conservation areas and listed buildings are not specifically identified.
- 2.10 Each of the Core Strategy policies will indicate its relationship to these priority objectives, or where appropriate, national planning guidance.

Priority Objectives

1. Deliver sustainable housing development across North Somerset to meet housing needs, through the provision of 17,750 new homes by 2026.
2. Ensure that major development proposals are delivered in tandem with the necessary improvements in physical and social infrastructure such as M5 junction 21 improvements at Weston-super-Mare, Junction 19 improvements at Portishead and access improvements to Bristol International Airport, and that appropriate delivery mechanisms including effective tariffs/developer contributions are in place.
3. Prioritise employment growth throughout North Somerset to support greater self-containment, in particular by ensuring that in Weston-super-Mare housing development is delivered in step with employment growth, and brownfield opportunities in Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead are maximised, and that small and medium enterprises are supported.

4. Focus strategic development at Weston-super-Mare as part of an employment-led strategy to deliver improved self-containment, stimulate investment, regenerate and revitalise the town centre to create a thriving and vibrant retail, leisure, tourist, cultural and commercial centre, and to support regeneration within communities elsewhere in the town, particularly in the South and Central Wards.
5. Support and promote major employers in North Somerset, such as Bristol International Airport and Royal Portbury Dock, to ensure continued employment security and economic prosperity.
6. Improve the vibrancy, prosperity, distinctiveness, quality and range of local services in North Somerset's towns and villages, by encouraging and supporting environmental enhancements and regeneration opportunities in Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead.
7. Continue to support North Somerset's existing Green Belt in order to prevent the sprawl of Bristol and its encroachment into valued countryside and to preserve the character of existing settlements; elsewhere, valued strategic green gaps between settlements and characteristic green spaces and areas will be protected.
8. Continue to redress the substantial inequalities between the most deprived and prosperous areas of North Somerset, both urban and rural, and to reduce the overprovision of one bedroomed dwellings, or one particular type or tenure of housing where this is causing social and/or physical problems.
9. Improve accessibility through the delivery of major transport schemes and local improvements to ensure that, particularly in Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead, people are encouraged to make more sustainable transport choices.
10. To ensure that sufficient parking is provided in new developments to meet the needs of users in a safe and well-designed environment, while public parking in town, district and local centres contributes to their continued vitality, and provides for choice in transport modes.

CHAPTER 3: **Spatial Policies**

3.1 This chapter sets out the spatial policy framework to deliver the identified visions and objectives. This suite of strategic, higher-level policies will provide the context for further more detailed policy formulation in subsequent Local Development Documents. Each policy identifies how it relates to national planning policy guidance or North Somerset’s priority objectives.

3.2 The supporting text accompanying each policy is structured as follows:

Background – *a brief outline of the context.*

The Core Strategy approach – *the reasoning behind the policy approach.*

How and where the policy will be delivered – *how will the policy be delivered, where and by whom?*

Alternative options and contingency planning – *are there reasonable alternative approaches; what happens if circumstances change in the future?*

Monitoring and review – *what are the performance targets or indicators to be used?*

3.3 The spatial policies are grouped into four themes derived from the Sustainable Community Strategy to make explicit the links between the Core Strategy and objectives of the SCS. In this respect the Core Strategy goes beyond purely land-use planning to provide the context for a wider range of objectives and outcomes.

3.4 These four sections are as follows:

Living within Environmental Limits

Delivering Strong and Inclusive Communities

Delivering a Prosperous Economy

Ensuring Safe and Healthy Communities

3.5 There are two further sets of policies; the area policies (Chapter 4) which identify the overarching policy context for specific strategic locations, and delivery policies (Chapter 6) related to implementation.

Living within Environmental Limits

CS1: Addressing Climate Change and Carbon Reduction

North Somerset Council is committed to reducing carbon emissions and tackling climate change, mitigating further impacts and supporting adaptation to its effects, and to support this, the following principles will guide development:

- 1) development should demonstrate a commitment to reducing carbon emissions, including through reducing energy demand through good design, and utilising renewable energy where feasible and viable in line with standards set out in Policy CS2; and by focusing development in major development areas: and
- 2) developments of 10 or more dwellings should incorporate site-wide renewable energy solutions to provide a proportion of the energy required by the development delivered early in the development; and
- 3) maximise the opportunities for all new homes to contribute to tackling climate change through adherence to emerging national standards such as the Code for Sustainable Homes to ensure they perform well against evolving energy standards, and have a reduced carbon footprint; and
- 4) developments of 10 or more dwellings should demonstrate a commitment to maximising the use of sustainable transport solutions, particularly at Weston-super-Mare. Opportunities for walking and cycling should be maximised through new development and in existing areas; and
- 5) a network of multifunctional green infrastructure will be planned for and delivered, through new development. They should be located throughout and in adjacent developments and demonstrate a functional relationship to the proposed development and existing area; and
- 6) protecting and enhancing biodiversity across North Somerset including species and habitats that are characteristic of the area, in order to support adaptation to climate change. This should be achieved through on and off-site measures to conserve species and habitats as well as the reduction or preferably elimination of any adverse impacts through sensitive design and layout and construction of developments; and
- 7) the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste with particular emphasis on waste minimisation on development sites and the creation of waste to energy facilities on the urban extension; and
- 8) the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings in preference to the loss of green field sites; and
- 9) opportunities for local food production and farming will be encouraged to reduce the district's contribution to food miles, and

10) areas will be enhanced to be resilient to the impacts of climate change including flood defence and public realm enhancements.

This policy contributes towards achieving the objectives of Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1.

Background

- 3.6 Adapting to the likely effects of climate change and mitigating further impacts are among the most significant challenges facing local communities, and planning policies can support this by supporting a reduction in non-renewable energy and other resource use, promoting decentralised renewable energy use, reducing carbon emissions, increasing carbon sinks and through the location and design of development. The Core Strategy along with other Development Plan Documents will set out a policy framework to guide and regulate development that addresses the issues of climate change. Policy CS1 sets out a broad context and key strategic directions to which other policies relate and gives expression to wider council initiatives and strategies including the Fuel Strategy, Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan.
- 3.7 Tackling climate change is a key priority for the planning system and in particular implementing the national carbon reduction strategy of an 80% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. Given the scale of development allocated to North Somerset, there are significant opportunities and indeed a responsibility to deliver action on the ground which should be led by a strong policy framework. In terms of the Core Strategy this action is primarily aiming to reduce carbon emissions and to prepare places for the likely impacts of climate change.
- 3.8 The supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1, *Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change* (December 2007) sets out how the planning system can contribute to stabilising and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.9 Policy CS1 sets out a broad policy framework drawing together various themes where development can address climate change issues. Many of the specific themes are dealt with elsewhere in the Core Strategy including green infrastructure (Policy CS9) and sustainable construction and design (Policy CS2), but are included in this more general policy as a means of co-ordinating action to address climate change. Primarily the Core Strategy seeks to address climate change by:

- Reducing unsustainable carbon emissions
- Making all buildings more sustainable
- Encouraging sustainable transport patterns
- Planning for a sustainable distribution of land uses.

- 3.10 In addition to development having a reduced impact on climate change (mitigation), places need to become more resilient to its effects (adaptation). North Somerset may be particularly susceptible to any adverse impacts in relation to flooding, having a significant coastline and areas within the defined Environment Agency flood zones, and a large quantity of low lying land. New development has a role to play in enabling increased resilience through enhancements and the delivery of specific features as key parts of the environmental infrastructure.
- 3.11 The broad location of development and proposal to align residential with jobs and services can support sustainable travel patterns. The sustainability of homes and other buildings as part of planned new developments can offer the potential for significant carbon savings and the provision of renewable energy.
- 3.12 Much of North Somerset is rural in nature having Green Belt, and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designations. The importance of a network of green space for wildlife and habitat protection, recreation and environmental reasons cannot be understated and should be actively enhanced through new development. The Core Strategy approach seeks to encourage a network of green spaces through built-up areas including a range of scales of green space from large multipurpose areas to green 'stepping stones', corridors, gardens and green roofs. As well as habitat creation this will also contribute to urban cooling and the capturing of carbon emissions.
- 3.13 Giving due consideration to biodiversity and how it will be impacted by climate change is a key component of the Core Strategy approach, and in particular how habitats can be supported and enhanced through the regulation of development and land use.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.14 It is recognised that most opportunities to address climate change are where most new development is proposed, primarily at Weston-super-Mare, and to a lesser degree at Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead. The various measures set out in Policy CS1 should be integrated within development proposals in these locations and anywhere else development takes place.

- 3.15 Development proposals should demonstrate how they contribute to addressing climate change by putting in place the necessary measures to make their development as sustainable as possible. Through the development management process planning applications will be considered taking into account the extent to which the proposal addresses climate change issues. The council will plan for development with sustainable development as an underlying principle allocating sites and setting out policies through the Local Development Framework to enable development to address climate change, and will carry out a Sustainability Appraisal of its options for development to ensure sustainable issues are addressed.
- 3.16 Essential to the delivery of action is to ensure the necessary infrastructure is delivered including energy, green infrastructure, flood attenuation/defence, public realm enhancements (for example shading with trees) and transport.



- 3.17 The wide scope of this policy translates to the variety of interests responsible for delivering action on climate change and meeting the strategic objectives and realising the visions set out in this strategy and the need to co-ordinate action, towards comprehensive place-making. Developers and other bodies with development interests should work closely with local communities, specialist groups and the council in order to bring development forward that meets the challenges climate change brings.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.18 Addressing climate change is a central theme that runs through the Local Development Framework. It underpins the spatial distribution of development, the development of all buildings, infrastructure and other features. The alternative options in relation to addressing climate change centre on where development is located.
- 3.19 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) should consider the extent to which various options in the strategy to deliver the broad quantity of development contribute to delivering action on climate change, incorporating reducing carbon emissions (for example the extent to which one option might increase car-based journeys in relation to another), potential for securing infrastructure through economies of scale etc.
- 3.20 The broad quantity of development indicated in the Core Strategy requires significant infrastructure and inevitably relies on significant investment to deliver it. Many measures put forward through this policy are mitigation measures to reduce further impact from new development. Any changes to the broad quantity of development, for example any alternative scenarios for housing delivery, should be accompanied by a commensurate level of infrastructure provision including green, energy and transport.

Monitoring and review

- 3.21 Monitoring will assess a wide range of indicators which together provide a picture of how spatial planning decisions affect climate change and carbon reduction. These will include indicators relating to energy, sustainable design, CO² impacts and the creation of green infrastructure.

Living within Environmental Limits

CS2: Delivering Sustainable Design and Construction

New development both residential (including conversions) and non-residential should demonstrate a commitment to sustainable design and construction, increasing energy efficiency through design, and prioritising the use of sustainable low or zero carbon forms of renewable energy generation in order to increase the sustainability of the building stock across North Somerset. The greatest potential for energy saving opportunities is likely to be at larger scale developments particularly at the Weston urban extension and Weston town centre. In addition these areas are expected to demonstrate exemplar environmental standards contributing to the objectives of Policy CS1, and adding value to the local economy.

When considering proposals for residential development the council will:

- 1) require designs that are energy efficient and designed to reduce their energy demands;
- 2) require the use of on-site renewable energy sources or by linking with/ contributing to available local off-site renewable energy sources to meet a minimum of 10% of predicted energy use for residential development proposals involving one to nine dwellings, and 15% for 10 or more dwellings; and 10% for non-residential developments over 500m² and 15% for 1000m² and above;
- 3) require Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 for all new dwellings and higher levels across major developments of 10 or more dwellings. BREEAM 'Very Good' will be required on all non-residential developments over 500m² and 'Excellent' over 1000m²;
- 4) require all developments of 10 or more new homes to incorporate 50% constructed to the Lifetime Homes standard up to 2013 and 100% from 2013 onwards.

In moving towards zero carbon development, the council will ensure that sustainable principles are established in the new proposals from the outset.

Site-wide renewable energy solutions are expected at the Weston urban extension to serve the new development and ensure it contributes to a low carbon development, recognising that a significant proportion of the development will extend beyond 2016 when all new homes are intended to meet zero carbon standards.

This policy contributes towards achieving the objectives of Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.

Background

- 3.22 The domestic housing sector accounts for around 27% of the total UK carbon emissions. Government is committed to moving towards zero carbon for all new homes by 2016 as set out in the *Building a Greener Future, policy statement* (July 2007) and all non-domestic buildings by 2019 through a 10 year programme of increasing building performance through the Building Regulations. This policy is part of a wider local policy framework necessary to address climate change and reduce the impact development has on the environment, linking to the council's Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan.
- 3.23 Given that North Somerset has to deliver a significant amount of additional homes up to 2026 there is a pressing need to ensure new homes are as sustainable as possible and minimise their impact on the environment and global warming, as well as addressing issues such as fuel poverty and health.
- 3.24 The Code for Sustainable Homes has been developed as a national standard to drive the sustainability of new homes. The code is structured around six performance levels, Level 1 being the entry level (representing a 10% reduction on current part L Building Regulations and Level 6 representing 'zero carbon' (a 100% reduction on Building Regulations). Credits are awarded across the areas of energy and CO² emissions; water; materials; surface water runoff; waste; pollution; health and wellbeing; management; and ecology with most weight (or credits available) being placed on the energy and CO² emissions element.

Lifetime Homes

- 3.25 The Government has a stated aspiration that all new homes will be constructed to the Lifetime Homes standard by 2013 (see *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods*, DCLG 2008). Lifetime Homes have 16 design features that ensure a new flat or house will meet the needs of most households. The features focus on accessibility and design features that make a home flexible enough to meet the demands of a lifetime in order to reduce the requirement to move to alternative accommodation as a family grows, as circumstances in health change or as the household ages. By facilitating adaptation to future lifestyle requirements, such homes contribute to sustainable development. With an increasingly ageing population in North Somerset with an estimated 24% of the population being over the age of 65 by 2026², the council considers it appropriate to require a proportion of housing within new developments to meet Lifetime Homes Standards.

² Figures from ONS sub-national population projections 2008.

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.26 The policy sets out a broad aspiration for all new buildings including conversions to be sustainable, linking to policy CS12 on design and to reduce the demand for and use of non-renewable forms of energy.
- 3.27 It implements national standards on home sustainability and sets out a trajectory to meeting zero-carbon homes by 2016, gradually increasing standards for small scale residential development, and setting high standards where there are most opportunities to deliver. It also uses the industry standard BREEAM assessment methods to determine the sustainability of non-residential buildings.
- 3.28 The Core Strategy requires all new homes to meet as a minimum code Level 4. Higher code levels will be required at the Weston urban extension where the economies of scale can be capitalised on and energy infrastructure can be built into the development from the outset. In addition applications for large schemes will need to demonstrate how the scheme incorporates higher standards over the duration of the development. In all cases flexibility will be exercised where viability and deliverability are critical factors.
- 3.29 Policy CS2 also encourages the use of on-site renewable energy to support the sustainability of new development.



How and where the policy will be delivered

3.30 By implication the implementation of this policy will be linked to the broad distribution of development, but exemplar standards are expected at the urban extension to Weston and the Weston town centre/gateway area. These areas are where most development is directed and where most investment is required, where the economies of scale, comprehensive and phased approach to development can be of benefit.

3.31 New buildings should in the first instance be designed and constructed to be energy efficient performing at least to current Building Regulation standards. Using the principles of 'passive' design, including high insulation levels, solar heating, natural lighting and ventilation, thermal mass and passive cooling, buildings can demonstrate a reduced energy demand and subsequent reduced carbon emissions.

Low or zero carbon technologies

3.32 Having achieved a reduced energy demand through energy efficient design, the second stage is to consider the use of decentralised, renewable and low or zero-carbon technologies. Where viable and feasible this should provide as a minimum 15% of the predicted energy demand (10% for one to nine dwellings) of the building measured in kilowatt hours (regulated energy) of the development in total thus further reducing the reliance on fossil fuels, and reducing the carbon emissions still. Using low or zero-carbon (LZC) technologies will also contribute to achieving a rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes.

3.33 Policy CS2 does not prescribe the type of renewable energy for individual applications but instead advocates that a range of technologies be explored choosing the one that gives the best environmental performance, is cost efficient and has no adverse impacts on the surrounding area. In each instance through the development of the design and feasibility, the available wind, solar and other resource should be considered. When it is considered that achieving the stated percentage of renewable energy is unfeasible or unviable, evidence should be supplied demonstrating that the range of available technologies has been explored. In these cases, where a sufficient case is put forward a reduced percentage may be negotiated. An energy statement should be submitted with the planning application explaining the approach to energy on the development.

Site-wide energy schemes

3.34 On major developments (10 or more dwellings) district heating and power schemes for example Combined Heat and Power (CHP) will be encouraged to serve the new development. Prospective applicants are encouraged to undertake feasibility assessments exploring the different technologies available and financial implications at an early stage. Research has found that it becomes more cost effective to integrate site-

wide renewable energy solutions (*A Cost Review of the Code for Sustainable Homes*, (2007), English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation).

3.35 Prospective applicants are encouraged to discuss proposals with the council at an early stage in the development process in addition to engaging specialist advice particularly on large schemes. Applicants will be responsible for demonstrating the environmental sustainability credentials of schemes submitting energy statements and the necessary compliance documentation.

3.36 Further detail on implementing this policy will be made in a development management Development Plan Document and within a Supplementary Planning Document.

Alternative options and contingency planning

3.37 Alternative options relate to the target percentages of renewable energy, or the code levels, and how they relate to different scales or types of development, and when higher levels should be sought. Further evidence will be required on viability.

Monitoring and review

3.38 Monitoring will assess indicators relating to renewable energy and code levels.



Living within Environmental Limits

CS3: Environmental Risk Management

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

Development in zones 2 and 3 of the Environment Agency Flood Map will only be permitted where the PPS25 Sequential Test and, where applicable, the Exception Test are passed, unless it is:

- development of a category for which PPS25 or its Practice Guide makes specific alternative provision; or
- development of the same or a similar character and scale as that for which the site is allocated in this or another Local Development Document, subject to demonstrating that it will be safe from flooding, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

For the purposes of the Sequential Test:

1. The area of search for alternative sites will be North Somerset unless:

- It can be demonstrated with evidence that there is a specific need within a specific area.
- The site is located at Weston-super-Mare, either within the settlement boundary of the town or within the urban extension. In these cases, the area of search will be the combined area of the settlement and the urban extension.
- The site is located within the settlement boundaries of Clevedon, Nailsea or Portishead. In these cases, the area of search will be limited to the town within which the site is located.

Other Local Development Documents may define more specific requirements.

2. A site is considered to be 'reasonably available' if all of the following criteria are met:

- The site is within the agreed area of search.
- The site can accommodate the requirements of the proposed development.
- The site is either:
 - a) owned by the applicant;
 - b) for sale at a fair market value; or
 - c) is council-owned land and could be purchased subject to negotiation.

Sites are excluded where they have a valid planning permission for development of a similar character and scale and which is likely to be implemented.

This policy contributes towards achieving the objectives of Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk and Planning Policy Guidance 24: Planning and Noise.

Background

3.39 The Core Strategy seeks to raise the quality of development in North Somerset. It therefore sets out aspirations for the environmental standards to be met, including those relating to flood risk management and environmental protection. This will become increasingly important in response to climate change and the level of development proposed throughout the district.

The Core Strategy approach

3.40 The first part of the policy applies where any of the following problems exists or a risk of it occurring is identified, whether or not it arises as a consequence of a development proposal:

- a) Coastal / riverbank erosion;
- b) Contamination (including risk from migrating contaminants);
- c) Electromagnetic fields;
- d) Explosion;
- e) Fire;
- f) Flooding;
- g) Ground instability;
- h) Harmful emissions (including dust and wind-blown litter);
- i) Heat;
- j) Interference with radio transmission;
- k) Light;
- l) Noise;
- m) Radiation;
- n) Smell;
- o) Vibration;
- p) Visual distraction from moving machinery (including shadow flicker from wind turbines).

3.41 The policy approach is precautionary and the aim will always be to resolve issues constructively through agreed proposals for mitigation or compensation wherever appropriate. However, there will be circumstances where this is not possible and the adverse effects predicted, even allowing for all practical mitigation measures, are such as to justify refusal. Developers can assist a speedy decision by early discussion of likely requirements for supporting technical information and by ensuring that all relevant documentation accompanies the planning application.

Water Pollution

- 3.42 The main sources of water pollution include industrial processes, disturbance of contaminated land, run-off from roads and other impermeable surfaces, agricultural activity and foul sewage discharge to watercourses and to ground. In certain circumstances, development can increase the risk of foul sewage discharge into open watercourses.
- 3.43 The disposal of surface water run-off from development both during construction and after completion requires careful consideration in order to minimise harm to the environment. Development that, in the opinion of the council after consultation with the Environment Agency, poses an unacceptable risk of pollution of or damage to the water environment either directly or via the surface water sewerage system, or which does not dispose of surface water run-off in an acceptable manner, will only be permitted if these concerns can be overcome.
- 3.44 Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are the preferred approach to dealing with surface water run-off. Planning for major developments should explore possibilities for SuDS, especially as part of multi-functional green infrastructure.

Light Pollution

- 3.45 While light pollution is outside the scope of any legislation enforced by the council, planning policies must ensure that artificial lighting does not result in unacceptable intrusion.

Noise

- 3.46 PPG24: Planning and Noise indicates that the impact of noise can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and that the planning system has the task of guiding development to the most appropriate locations. Noise-sensitive development is categorised as housing, hospitals and schools (PPG24, para. 6). The council considers that other uses such as libraries and some other community facilities may also be sensitive to an unacceptable degree of noise disturbance. In applying this policy the council will have regard to the scale, nature and type of existing land uses in the surrounding area.
- 3.47 Proposals for noise-sensitive development that would be exposed to an existing noise source will be determined by reference to expected as well as current noise levels, e.g. if plant or roads are currently not operating at full capacity, their likely noise generation at full capacity will be taken into account. Additionally, permission will not be granted on unsubstantiated grounds that excessive noise is likely to be reduced at some indeterminate future date.

Flood Risk

- 3.48 Because much of North Somerset is low-lying, flood risk is a very important matter. PPS25: Development and Flood Risk provides the national framework for planning policy towards flood risk.
- 3.49 PPS25 identifies four flood zone categories with the risk of flooding associated with each flood zone set out at table D.1 of PPS25. These flood zones refer to the natural probability of sea and river flooding only, ignoring the presence of flood defences. If development were considered to be inappropriate for the flood zone within which the site is located then permission would normally be refused.
- 3.50 New development will need to be mindful of the increased risks of flooding as a result of climate change. The North Somerset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (Level 1) maps 'climate change additional extents' shows how zone 3 will expand up to 2108. For long-term planning purposes, these areas – and any intervening zone 2 areas – will be treated as the equivalent of flood zone 3a unless there is evidence to the contrary. For development control purposes, the EA Flood Map extents will continue to apply, with the technical breakdown of the current zone 3 into 3a and 3b provided by the SFRA.
- 3.51 PPS25 categorises different types of development according to their vulnerability to the effects of flooding events. The vulnerability of a proposal can be established by referring to table D.2 of PPS25.
- 3.52 The principal way to manage flood risk is to avoid locating development within areas of flood risk. To encourage new development to avoid these areas, the Sequential Test and the Exception Test are used.
- 3.53 The Sequential Test is a tool to direct new development first to sites at the lowest probability of flooding (flood zone 1). Most development proposals within flood risk areas (flood zones 2, 3a and 3b) must have gone through a Sequential Test process. The circumstances where this rule does not apply are listed in the council's Advice Note, Development and Flood Risk Issues, based upon PPS25 and its Practice Guide.
- 3.54 If the Sequential Test is passed, an Exception Test is required for some vulnerable types of development which should not normally be allowed in flood zones 2 and 3 unless there are exceptional circumstances (see table D.3 of PPS25).
- 3.55 Flood risk assessments (FRA) are used to reduce flood risk at the site level. Planning applications for development proposals of one hectare or greater in flood zone 1 and all proposals for new development located in flood zones 2 and 3 should be accompanied by a FRA. The council

must be satisfied that development proposals within flood risk areas incorporate appropriate mitigation measures which are themselves environmentally acceptable, e.g. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The council will consult with the Environment Agency and Internal Drainage Boards as appropriate. Developers should have regard to PPS25, its accompanying Practice Guide and the Environment Agency's Policy and Practice for the Protection of Flood Plains.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.56 The protection of new and existing residents from potential harmful environmental effects will be applied throughout the district although mitigation measures will be concentrated on areas where large scale development is anticipated.
- 3.57 The council will liaise closely with agencies such as the Environment Agency to ensure that the potential environmental effects of or on development are appropriately assessed and the necessary mitigation measures secured
- 3.58 The council will liaise closely with environmental protection agencies as well as using its own resources and staff.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.59 The options considered were:
- To have no policy on these matters. This was rejected because it would limit the ability to control matters affecting amenity, health and safety.
 - To continue to rely on the Replacement Local Plan until a Development Control Policies Development Plan Document is produced. This was rejected because it would divide policies on environmental risk management between the Core Strategy and the Local Plan (or its successor DPDs). The overall approach will be more readily grasped if this material is available in one place.
 - To have specific policies for sub-areas of North Somerset. This was rejected because any geographically distinct issues arise from the application of the policy rather than from its wording.

Monitoring and review

- 3.60 Monitoring will assess the number of planning applications approved against the advice of environmental protection agencies.

Living within Environmental Limits

CS4: Nature Conservation

North Somerset contains outstanding wildlife habitats and species. These include limestone grasslands, traditional orchards, wetlands, moors, rhynes, commons, hedgerows, ancient woodlands and the Severn Estuary. Key species include rare horseshoe bats, otters, wildfowl and wading birds, slow-worms and water voles.

The biodiversity of North Somerset will be maintained and enhanced by:

- 1) Seeking to meet local, regional and national Biodiversity Action Plan targets and the regional biodiversity targets set out in the South West Regional Spatial Strategy, including those for maintenance, restoration and expansion of Priority Wildlife Habitats within North Somerset, and particularly in Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs), taking account of climate change and the need for habitats and species to adapt to it;
- 2) Seeking to ensure that new development is designed to maximise benefits to biodiversity, incorporating, safeguarding and enhancing natural habitats and features and adding to them where possible, particularly networks of habitats. A net loss of biodiversity interest should be avoided;
- 3) Seeking to protect and enhance important habitats, particularly designated sites, ancient woodlands and veteran trees;
- 4) Promoting the enhancement of existing and provision of new green infrastructure of value to wildlife, notably through implementation of the North Somerset Green Infrastructure Strategy;
- 5) Promoting tree planting and encouraging retention of trees, with a view to enhancing biodiversity, having regard to the Biodiversity and Trees Supplementary Planning Document.

This policy contributes towards meeting the objectives of Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.

Background

- 3.61 Biodiversity is concerned with the rich variety of plant and animal species and fungi, within their various habitats. National guidance promotes the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity as an integral part of sustainable development.
- 3.62 North Somerset has a particularly rich biodiversity and variety of habitats.
- 3.63 Species present include those which have undergone severe national declines, including many birds, bats, water voles, dormice, great crested newts and the brown hare. This rich variety of wildlife is a valuable resource that adds greatly to the identity of the area and quality of life.



- 3.64 Internationally important European Sites or Natura 2000 sites include the Severn Estuary SSSI, a Ramsar site, Special Protection Area (SPA) and proposed Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), an outstanding area for its migratory and over-wintering birds. The other SACs are the North Somerset and Mendip Bats which supports rare greater and lesser horseshoe bats, the Mendip Limestone Grasslands and the Avon Gorge Woodlands.
- 3.65 Natura 2000 sites are statutorily protected under the Habitats Regulations, while the draft RSS draws attention to the fact that the Severn Estuary is particularly vulnerable and requires special protection. Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is required to investigate whether projects or plans, alone or in combination, are likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites.
- 3.66 North Somerset also includes 39 SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) of national importance, and two National Nature Reserves (part of the Gordano Valley and Leigh Woods).
- 3.67 205 sites in North Somerset have been designated as Wildlife Sites in the adopted Replacement Local Plan, important local areas for biodiversity, and there are 12 designated Local Nature Reserves such as at Uphill. It is important that habitats rich in species are not confined to reserves but that networks of such habitats exist throughout an area to allow dispersal and interbreeding between different populations.

- 3.68 The North Somerset Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2005 highlights the value of a wide variety of wildlife habitats, including UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats. They include for example, coastal habitats, such as mudflats, sand dunes, saltmarsh, and maritime cliffs and slopes, and inland lakes. Other examples are the extensive network of watercourses, comprising rivers, streams, rhynes and ditches. These habitats support many types of mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish, invertebrates and plants.
- 3.69 Extensive woodland areas, of many different types, occur, such as ancient and more recent semi-natural woodland, wet woodland, veteran trees, and parkland. However semi-natural habitats (not subject to intensive agricultural practices so retaining a high diversity of species) comprise only 8% of the land area of North Somerset.
- 3.70 UK priority grassland habitats occur, including lowland calcareous grassland, lowland meadows and lowland dry acid grassland.
- 3.71 The traditional hedgerows, stone walls and the extensive network of rural road verges, with scrub and grassland habitats, function as wildlife corridors, as well as refuges for wildflowers, invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals and birds. Hedgerows, areas of livestock grazing and features such as ponds, wetlands, scrub and woodland edges are all important to bats.
- 3.72 Old orchards and urban public and private open spaces, such as parks and urban gardens, are also important for biodiversity. Commons are also a valued resource, often comprising semi improved grassland which can be important for wildlife and recreation.
- 3.73 Trees are very important for wildlife, providing food and shelter, nesting and roosting sites for birds and bats and habitats for invertebrates.
- 3.74 The draft RSS identifies South West biodiversity targets for maintenance, restoration and expansion of priority wildlife habitats in the region, based on priority habitats identified in the United Kingdom BAP. The RSS includes a South West Nature Map showing Strategic Nature Areas where most major biodiversity concentrations are found and where the biodiversity targets might best be met. In North Somerset those areas include coastal habitats, coastal floodplain grazing marsh and woodland.

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.75 The policy reflects the importance of meeting regional biodiversity targets, consistent with the RSS. It also reflects PPS9 in emphasising the need to design development to maximise benefits to biodiversity, incorporating and enhancing natural habitats and features, particularly networks. It stresses that development should not result in net loss of biodiversity interest.
- 3.76 The policy aims to indicate the need to protect and enhance biodiversity in broad terms, although more detailed guidance will be set out in the Development Management DPD.
- 3.77 The policy reflects the importance of strategies very relevant to biodiversity, including the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy. Green infrastructure includes linear green space which can provide valuable wildlife corridors.
- 3.78 The policy reflects the importance of trees for biodiversity, and refers to the Biodiversity and Trees SPD, which includes guidance for developers on planning for biodiversity; e.g. screening for the presence of biodiversity, undertaking tree and ecological surveys and planning to protect, retain and manage existing trees, habitats and species.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.79 Policy CS4 recognises the importance of locations supporting priority habitats, such as Strategic Nature Areas identified in the RSS, and also networks of habitats, designated or not, ancient woodlands and veteran trees. The policy seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity as a whole but particularly at those valuable locations, and locations where development occurs.
- 3.80 Development proposals will be carefully assessed to ensure protection and enhancement of biodiversity, including retention and incorporation of important features, using conditions and or planning obligations to mitigate any potentially adverse impacts.
- 3.81 The council will have close regard to its duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity in exercising its functions, so far as is consistent with the proper exercising of those functions. This includes the need to consider habitats and species of principal importance in England as set out in section 41 of the NERC Act.

- 3.82 Planning applications will need to be accompanied by ecological surveys which incorporate a biodiversity impact assessment, describing the biodiversity interest of the site, and the nature and extent of any impact of the proposed development. They should outline any mitigation measures and the steps to be taken to retain, incorporate, protect, enhance and where appropriate manage the biodiversity interest, as part of the proposals.
- 3.83 Use of guidance for developers such as the SPD on Biodiversity and Trees, and the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy for North Somerset will be particularly useful.
- 3.84 The council and developers will liaise and work closely with the various advisory bodies and interest groups on biodiversity, including for example Natural England, the Avon Biodiversity Partnership, Avon Wildlife Trust, the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC), North Somerset Parish Wildlife Wardens, etc.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.85 There are no reasonable options to the policy approach put forward. For instance an approach that does not adequately take account of the need to conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of wildlife would not be in line with national and international legislation and government policy, and would not be sustainable.

Monitoring and review

- 3.86 As a general approach, it would be prudent to monitor whether the principle that there should be no net loss of native habitat and species as a result of development is upheld. Use of Local Area Agreement measures for biodiversity, and also national indicators, such as implementation of active conservation management of local sites, would also be appropriate.

Living within Environmental Limits

CS5: Landscape and the Historic Environment

Landscape

The character, distinctiveness, diversity and quality of North Somerset's landscape and townscape will be protected and enhanced by the careful, sensitive management and design of development. Close regard will be paid to the character of National Character Areas in North Somerset and particularly that of the 11 Landscape Types and 31 Landscape Character Areas identified in the North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment.

The Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be protected by ensuring that development proposals conserve and enhance its natural beauty and respect its character, taking into account the economic and social well-being of the area.

Historic Environment

The council will protect and enhance the historic environment of North Somerset, having regard to the importance of assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings, buildings of local significance, scheduled monuments, other archaeological sites, registered and other historic parks and gardens.

Particular attention will be given to aspects of the historic environment which contribute to the distinctive character of North Somerset, such as the Victorian townscapes and sea-fronts in Weston and Clevedon.

This policy contributes towards meeting the objectives of Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment and Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning.

Background

Landscape

- 3.87 Policy CS5 recognises the importance of North Somerset's landscape, and the need to protect and enhance its diversity, distinctiveness and quality.
- 3.88 The landscape of North Somerset is highly varied, containing within it sections of four of the Countryside Agency/English Nature's National Character Areas (Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges; Severn and Avon Vales; Mendip Hills; Somerset Levels and Moors and Mid Somerset Hills).

3.89 These provide a broad indication of the landscapes of the district which range from the carboniferous limestone uplands of the Mendips to the level, wet pasturelands of the levels and moors. The significance of the landscape of the Mendip Hills is acknowledged by their designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

3.90 Physical and cultural influences have combined to create the unique and distinctive character of North Somerset. The area is characterised by a diversity of landscapes and these variations and differences are represented by 11 landscape types, broken down into 31 landscape character areas:

- A. Moors.
- B. River floodplain.
- C. Settled coastal edge.
- D. Limestone gorges.
- E. Limestone ridges and coombes.
- F. Sandstone uplands.
- G. Settled limestone plateau.
- H. Settled hills.
- I. Rolling valley farmland.
- J. Farmed coal measures.
- K. Inter-tidal bays.

3.91 Within urban areas, townscapes are also affected by the amount and type of landscaping, both public, in the form of parks, gardens and street trees, and also private areas, particularly gardens and boundary treatments. In certain areas these can make a significant contribution to character of the overall environment and to the quality of life of local residents. Development proposals, such as the residential intensification through the use of garden land ('garden grabbing') must be carefully assessed against the harm they may cause to the character of the local environment.

Historic Environment

3.92 Policy CS5 also reflects the importance of North Somerset's historic environment, and the need to preserve and enhance it in line with PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment, and PPG16 Archaeology and Planning.

3.93 There are 34 Conservation Areas in North Somerset, and 1,079 listed buildings. Particularly interesting is Birnbeck Pier, Weston-super-Mare, (Grade II* listed), the only pier in Britain linked to an island.

- 3.94 Historic parks and gardens are important in historical and landscape terms and may also be of wildlife and recreational value. North Somerset has several designed landscapes on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, including Ashton Court (II*), Barrow Court (II), Clevedon Court (II*), Leigh Court (II), Tyntesfield (II*), Barley Wood (II), Bristol University Botanic Gardens and Rayne Thatch (II) and Grove Park (II), Weston-super-Mare. Other designed landscapes of local historic interest include Abbot's Leigh House, Abbot's Leigh, Alexandra Gardens, Clevedon and Coombe Lodge, Blagdon.
- 3.95 Buildings need not be listed to be of importance to the historic environment. The council is proposing to introduce a scheme by which buildings of local or regional importance are identified, using specific criteria. It is envisaged that this status would be a material consideration in assessing planning applications affecting such buildings.
- 3.96 Archaeological remains are important for their historical and educational interest and may also be important features in the landscape. The Historic Environment Record (HER) contains details of all known sites, structures, landscapes or other areas of archaeological interest in North Somerset. They include Scheduled Monuments such as Worlebury Camp, a large hillfort on Worlebury Hill.

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.97 Policy CS5 sets out a broad policy framework for protection and enhancement of the landscape and historic environment, which can be reinforced by detailed development management policies in the Development Management DPD.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.98 The policy will apply across the whole of North Somerset in order to respect the quality and character of the landscape, and the historic environment.
- 3.99 Much will depend on careful development management to ensure sensitive design and location of development to protect, enhance and respect the landscape and historic environment. This will require formulation and implementation of detailed development management policies, to be included in the Development Management DPD.
- 3.100 Effective delivery will require close liaison with landscape, conservation and archaeology experts and consultation with bodies such as English Heritage, the Mendip Hills AONB Service, etc.

CS5



Alternative options and contingency planning

3.101 There are no reasonable options to the policy approach put forward. An approach that does not adequately take account of the need to protect and enhance the character of the landscape and conserve historic assets would not be in line with government policy, and would not be sustainable.

Monitoring and review

3.102 Monitoring will assess indicators which reflect the impact of development on both the landscape and historic environment.

Living within Environmental Limits

CS6: North Somerset's Green Belt

Within North Somerset the boundaries of the Bristol – Bath Green Belt will remain unchanged during the plan period.

Only in exceptional circumstances where there is an overriding need to accommodate what would otherwise be inappropriate development which cannot be met elsewhere and where Green Belt land offers the most sustainable option, will land be taken out of the Green Belt through an appropriate local review and identified through a Local Development Document.

Further amendments to the Green Belt at Bristol International Airport will only be considered once long-term development needs have been identified and exceptional circumstances demonstrated.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 7.

Background

- 3.103 The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the most important characteristic of the Green Belt being its openness. Green Belts perform five important functions in:
- Preventing urban sprawl
 - Preventing towns from merging into one another
 - Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
 - Preserving the setting and character of historic towns
 - Helping urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of underused and outworn urban land and buildings.
- 3.104 The Joint Replacement Structure Plan (2002) has set out the general extent of the Bristol – Bath Green Belt, with the detailed boundaries defined through the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2007).
- 3.105 The protection and maintenance of the Green Belt is very important to the affected communities, and ensures a clear distinction between urban Bristol and rural North Somerset. It makes an important contribution to their local character and distinctiveness, and is highly valued and strongly supported.

The Core Strategy approach

3.106 A key feature of Green Belts is their permanence. Green Belts are intended to be a long-term designation. Taking account of the recent changes to the Green Belt through the Replacement Local Plan (2007) and the emerging RSS which, with the specific exceptions set out below, does not identify a need for large scale further revisions to either the general extent or detailed boundaries of the Green Belt, therefore a more extensive review of the Green Belt through the Core Strategy is not supported.

3.107 However, the emerging RSS (Policy HMA1) does propose the following Green Belt amendments:

SW Bristol urban extension

3.108 North Somerset opposes the proposed development in the Green Belt (see Chapter 5) but will continue to assess options and choices through the Plan-making process. If the urban extension is eventually confirmed, then further consultation will be required on the land to be removed and the new Green Belt boundaries.

Bristol International Airport

3.109 The RSS proposes “the removal of the Green Belt at Bristol International Airport having regard to development needs of the airport”. This issue was addressed by the Replacement Local Plan and an inset created in the Green Belt to accommodate the requirements of airport development to 2019. Further Green Belt amendment would be premature in advance of exceptional circumstances being demonstrated through evidence regarding future expansion and its land use implications.

Royal Portbury Dock

3.110 The RSS proposes the “removal of the Green Belt between Royal Portbury Dock and the M5 motorway having regard to the development needs of the Royal Portbury Dock”. This issue was addressed through the Replacement Local Plan and land removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded for future port use. There is no further suitable, developable land remaining between the Port and the M5, and therefore no further Green Belt amendment is proposed.

How and where the policy will be delivered

3.111 Through applying the strong presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.112 The emerging RSS proposes changing the general extent of the Green Belt at SW Bristol to accommodate an urban extension. North Somerset opposes this proposal, no urban extension is proposed to be allocated within the Core Strategy Consultation Draft, and consequently no change to the Green Belt. However, as is explored in Chapter 5, the Consultation Draft is also an opportunity to comment on the options and choices related to the SW Bristol proposal, and a key aspect of this will be a debate on the possible future role and location of the Green Belt in this area.
- 3.113 If the proposed SW Bristol urban extension is eventually confirmed through the RSS process, then additional consultation will take place on the Green Belt implications and boundary changes.
- 3.114 The Draft 2006 RSS proposed extending the Green Belt to the south west of Nailsea to compensate for Green Belt losses on the edge of Bristol. Consultation was undertaken at the Core Strategy Issues and Options stage on possible future boundaries, but the deletion of this aspect from the RSS Proposed Changes means that there is currently no strategic context for this to take place. If the final version of the RSS again supports Green Belt extension, then further consultation will be required.

Monitoring and review

- 3.115 Performance will be monitored by the assessment of planning applications, and losses of land to the Green Belt.



Living within Environmental Limits

CS7: Planning for Waste in North Somerset

North Somerset Council supports the prevention and minimisation of waste and the sustainable management of waste, reducing reliance on landfill. That includes reduction, re-use, recycling and composting of waste, and recovery of materials and energy from waste, in line with the emerging Joint Waste Core Strategy for the West of England.

New housing, retail, industrial and commercial development should be designed to facilitate easy and efficient waste collection, incorporating appropriate facilities such as collection points for recyclable material.

Proposals for waste-related development, and the location of waste management facilities will be subject to policies in the Joint Waste Core Strategy and detailed development control policies to be established in a Development Management DPD.

This policy contributes towards meeting the objectives of Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management.

Background

3.116 The government's policy on waste, set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 10 *Planning for Sustainable Waste Management* is to protect human health and the environment by producing less waste and using it as a resource wherever possible. It encourages more sustainable waste management by moving up the waste hierarchy of reduction, reuse, recycling and composting, using waste as a source of energy, and only disposing of it as a last resort.

The Core Strategy approach

3.117 The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy refers to the Regional Waste Strategy that seeks to "minimise the amount of waste produced in the region, and to make a major shift away from current reliance on landfill of untreated waste, so that by 2020 less than 20% of waste produced in the region will be landfilled". This is reflected in the indicative allocations in the RSS:

- 3.118 West of England annual municipal waste management capacities for Landfill Directive Target Years (000s tonnes per annum):

Target year	Minimum source separated	Secondary treatment	Minimum landfill
2010	230	150	300
2013	280	220	240
2020	310	370	120

- 3.119 West of England annual commercial and industrial waste management capacities for Landfill Directive Target Years (000s tonnes per annum) :

Target year	Recycling/reuse	Recovery	Landfilled
2010	420-460	220-240	470-515
2013	440-490	280-310	390-430
2020	490-530	430-470	190-200

- 3.120 The four unitary authorities (UAs) in the West of England are preparing a Joint Waste Core Strategy (JWCS) which sets out the strategic spatial planning policy for the provision of waste management infrastructure in the West of England. It will sit alongside the emerging UAs' Core Strategies, removing the need for the UAs to produce separate Waste Site Allocation DPDs.
- 3.121 The emerging JWCS provides a policy framework for all waste streams (except radioactive waste) including municipal, commercial and industrial, and construction, demolition and excavation waste. It states that hazardous waste treatment and disposal facilities are highly specialised, generally operating at a regional and often national scale, and that the South West region is broadly self sufficient in hazardous waste treatment capacity. It states that there is no identified need for new hazardous waste landfill capacity within the WoE area.
- 3.122 The emerging JWCS includes criteria-based policies on non-residual waste treatment facilities such as those for recycling and composting of waste.
- 3.123 The JWCS also identifies potential locations for residual waste treatment facilities (for treating waste which cannot be recycled or composted). Examples of residual waste treatment methods include anaerobic digestion and thermal methods such as gasification or pyrolysis, which can produce energy from waste. However the JWCS is technology-neutral, and does not specify which method would be used in the identified locations. The JWCS identifies a total need for 800,000 tonnes

per annum (tpa) capacity for residual waste treatment in the WoE to 2020, of which 100,000 tpa is envisaged for a south west sector including Weston-super-Mare.

- 3.124 In North Somerset the emerging JWCS proposes two areas at Weston as potentially being suitable for the location of residual waste treatment facilities:
- 1) The existing Towns waste management facility, Warne Road, Weston.
 - 2) A broad area of search based on the Weston urban extension.
- 3.125 The JWCS acknowledges that landfill will have to continue to have a role, albeit a limited one, and includes a strict, criteria-based policy on landfill and land raise proposals, requiring, for example, prior elimination of methods such as recycling or energy recovery etc, or that landfill is needed to restore mineral workings.
- 3.126 The JWCS also includes development management policies to be used in conjunction with those in the UAs' Development Management DPDs, in assessing proposals for waste management facilities.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.127 The emerging JWCS identifies potential locations for strategic residual waste treatment facilities at Weston-super-Mare. The location of other non-residual waste treatment facilities will largely be determined by assessing proposals against development management policies.
- 3.128 There will need to be close liaison between the council and the West of England Partnership, who are preparing the JWCS, as well as the Environment Agency and waste industry.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.129 Alternative options were explored in the preparation of the Joint Waste Core Strategy which sets out the spatial planning policy for provision of waste management infrastructure.
- 3.130 There is flexibility built in to the emerging JWCS policies in respect of the location of facilities.

Monitoring and review

- 3.131 Monitoring will assess the amounts and proportions of the different waste streams (e.g. municipal, commercial and industrial).

Living within Environmental Limits

CS8: Minerals Planning in North Somerset

Provision will be made for North Somerset to contribute towards approximately 40% of the West of England's aggregates requirement, consistent with national and regional policy and the principles of sustainable development.

The council will seek to maintain a land bank for crushed rock of at least 10 years.

The council will seek to protect mineral resources where appropriate, by such means as identification of Mineral Safeguarding Areas. This will be addressed in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

Detailed development control policies on minerals development will be established through the Development Management Development Plan Document.

This policy contributes towards meeting the objectives of Mineral Policy Statement 1: Planning and Minerals.

Background

3.132 Government guidance in Minerals Planning Statement 1 Planning and Minerals (MPS1) states that minerals are essential to the nation's prosperity and quality of life. It is essential that there is an adequate and steady supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings and goods that society, industry and the economy needs. However this should be in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

The Core Strategy approach

3.133 North Somerset primarily contributes to minerals supply by the winning and working of carboniferous limestone, producing aggregate (crushed rock). The aggregate is mainly used for building and repairing roads, but also in producing concrete.

3.134 Currently there are three active quarries in North Somerset. These are:

- Stancombe Quarry near Flax Bourton,
- Durnford Quarry near Long Ashton, and
- Freemans Farm Quarry off the A38 near Bristol Airport

Requirement for supply of primary aggregates

3.135 National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England 2005–2020 have recently been produced, but only go down to regional level. Work is being undertaken by the South West Councils to apportion the guidelines to the sub-regions, including the West of England, but will take some time to complete.

- 3.136 The RSS sub-regional apportionment for aggregates for the West of England, is 94.95 million tonnes (mt) of crushed rock, 2001–2016, (with a further 59.3 mt for 2016–2026, based on extrapolation of annual production rates).
- 3.137 To determine the district level apportionment, the Joint Replacement Structure Plan approach is still relevant. This states that beyond 2006 the appropriate contribution to crushed rock aggregate supply will be determined in the light of national and regional guidance prevailing at the time, apportioned between South Gloucestershire and North Somerset on a ratio of 60%:40%. This ratio is reflected in the policy.
- 3.138 MPS1 requires authorities to provide for the maintenance of land banks (appropriate levels of permitted reserves), and states that the land bank indicator for crushed rock is at least 10 years. Again this is reflected in the policy.
- 3.139 Figures provided by operators of the three active quarries show that there are substantial permitted reserves of limestone in North Somerset. Those figures suggest that North Somerset has a significant land bank, taking account of the sub regional apportionment in the RSS and the 40%:60% ratio between North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.
- 3.140 Detailed considerations, such as identification of areas where minerals reserves should be safeguarded through designating Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) will appropriately be addressed in preparing the North Somerset Site Allocations DPD or Development Management DPD.

Recycled or secondary aggregates

- 3.141 MPS1 encourages the greatest possible use of alternatives to primary aggregates.
- 3.142 The draft RSS states that provision should be made in the South West for 121 million tonnes of secondary³ and recycled⁴ aggregates to be used over the plan period to 2016, and 75.6 million tonnes between 2016 and 2026.

³ Secondary aggregates includes materials which are the by-product of other extractive operations (e.g. colliery shale and china clay wastes) or the by-product of industrial processes (e.g pulverised fuel ash from coal burning power stations).

⁴ Recycled aggregates include recycled materials, such as those produced from crushing and screening construction and demolition waste.

- 3.143 The emerging West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy (JWCS) includes a policy which accepts in principle proposals for recycling of construction and demolition waste (a key source of recycled aggregate) at mineral sites, provided that the proposed development is for a temporary time period commensurate with the operational life of the mineral site.
- 3.144 Any need for further detailed policies concerning location and control of facilities producing secondary and recycled aggregates will appropriately be addressed in preparing the North Somerset Site Allocations DPD and /or the Development Management DPD.

Potential impacts of mineral working

- 3.145 Government guidance refers to the need to take account of potential detrimental effects of proposals for mineral developments on the environment, such as possible noise, dust, landscape impact etc. It also refers to the need for restoration of sites following minerals working.
- 3.146 These issues will appropriately be addressed in preparing the Development Management DPD.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.147 Most opportunities for minerals development are in the carboniferous limestone areas in the north part of North Somerset, which contains the three active quarries. Deliverability will depend on production of crushed rock in North Somerset being carried out sustainably in accordance with policies in the Development Management DPD. The Site Allocations DPD will assess the potential for the designation of Minerals Safeguarding Areas.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.148 There is little scope for alternative options in terms of a Core Strategy policy, as it sets out the broad approach to minerals planning in the LDF, reflecting national guidance.
- 3.149 The policy appropriately states that the council will seek to maintain a land bank for crushed rock of at least 10 years. Doing so should ensure adequacy of provision, and allow for sufficient flexibility for contingency purposes.

Monitoring and review

- 3.150 The council will liaise closely with the minerals industry and the South West Regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP) to monitor aggregate production levels and the availability of permitted reserves.

Living within Environmental Limits

CS9: Green Infrastructure

The existing network of green infrastructure will be safeguarded, improved and enhanced by further provision, ensuring it is a multi-functional, accessible network which promotes healthy lifestyles, maintains and improves biodiversity and landscape character and contributes to climate change objectives.

Priority will be given to:

- 1) The protection and enhancement of the formal parks and gardens originating from the Victorian era.
- 2) The protection of trees in woodlands and urban areas for public amenity and climate change mitigation.
- 3) The promotion of the north slopes of the Mendip Hills AONB as sub-regional corridors for biodiversity, recreation and landscape retention.
- 4) The promotion of the Congresbury Yeo, River Banwell, Somerset Levels and Moors, and Grumplepill Rhyne as local corridors for biodiversity and landscape enhancement.
- 5) The protection of Wildlife Sites.
- 6) The connection of disjointed woodlands around the Wraxall/Failand ridge.
- 7) The continued development of a network of green spaces, water bodies, paths and cycleways in and around the urban areas.
- 8) The upgrading and extension of the public rights of way network including improved connectivity to areas of green infrastructure outside North Somerset.
- 9) The provision of strategically significant green spaces in association with all areas of development.

A Green Infrastructure Strategy will be prepared in support of green infrastructure policies.

This policy contributes towards meeting the objectives of Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development and Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation.



Background

- 3.151 Green infrastructure is the integrated network of multi-functional spaces within and linking urban and rural environments which has significant environmental, social and economic benefits.
- 3.152 Green infrastructure, particularly if properly planned and integrated into development, can enhance the townscape and visual amenity, promote a sense of place and community identity, and improve the health and sense of well-being of people. Parks, sports fields and play space are clearly beneficial to health. Networks of green spaces and corridors provide opportunities for recreation, walking and cycling and also benefit wildlife by conserving and enhancing habitats, and providing buffers from development to important wildlife sites and watercourses.

- 3.153 Trees are very important elements, greatly contributing to the value of green infrastructure regarding landscape quality, amenity and the environment. Retention of trees and tree planting, together with other green space, can help to combat climate change and flooding, by absorbing CO² and moisture and reducing excessive run off. In urban areas such provision can also have a welcome cooling effect in summer, through providing shade and promoting evaporation.
- 3.154 Attenuation ponds and other sustainable drainage systems, together with larger water bodies, are also valuable aspects of green infrastructure, often having great ecological and landscape value, recreational and educational benefit.
- 3.155 Clear priorities will be established through the overarching Green Infrastructure Strategy which will incorporate local open space standards and requirements for developments to contribute towards the delivery of a comprehensive network of green infrastructure. In particular, the strategy will recognise the need to integrate green infrastructure within the urban extension and to ensure that all communities have access to quality green infrastructure.
- 3.156 Green infrastructure in the rural areas and on the urban-rural fringe is also important, particularly where it supports a vibrant rural economy and enhances facilities available to the existing villages particularly around recreation, walking and cycling.

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.157 Policy CS9 reflects the importance of green infrastructure and its value for health, biodiversity, landscape and regarding climate change. The policy then sets out the green infrastructure priorities for North Somerset although these are not an exhaustive list and may vary over the plan period. A green infrastructure strategy will be prepared to provide more detailed guidance.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.158 There will be opportunities for provision of new and/or improvement of existing green infrastructure, in association with new development, either on or off-site, depending on the scale of the development and feasibility. There is particularly significant potential at major development sites such as the proposed urban extension at Weston-super-Mare.

- 3.159 Much will depend on appropriate development management to ensure development proposals retain, enhance and create appropriate green infrastructure, informed by the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy. This will require formulation and implementation of detailed development management policies, to be included in the Development Management DPD. The council will investigate alternative mechanisms for the provision and long term maintenance of green infrastructure, particularly those which minimise the burden on the public purse. Where provision is to be publicly provided or maintained, this must be adequately resourced.
- 3.160 North Somerset Council has the central responsibility for the provision, delivery and planning of green infrastructure given its role as local planning authority and direct provider of significant areas of open space both in the urban and rural areas.
- 3.161 This role is enhanced by acting in partnership with key players in the public, private and voluntary sectors, whilst ensuring that delivery of quality green infrastructure is based on a strategic view of what is required to serve the needs of the community.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.162 No alternative policy approaches are put forward: the Core Strategy needs to adequately reflect the need to protect, enhance and provide green infrastructure in line with national advice.
- 3.163 The scale of development envisaged in the Core Strategy requires significant infrastructure provision. If there are changes to the quantity, types or locations of development which can be delivered it is important that a commensurate level of green infrastructure provision is made.

Monitoring and review

- 3.164 The Green Infrastructure Strategy will assist in the development of the monitoring framework and key indicators. These will include local standards on accessibility for various categories of open space.

Living within Environmental Limits

CS10: Transportation and Movement

Travel management policies and development proposals that encourage an improved and integrated transport network and allow for a wide choice of modes of transport as a means of access to jobs, homes, services and facilities will be encouraged and supported.

Transport schemes should:

- enhance the facilities for pedestrians, including those with reduced mobility, and other users such as cyclists;
- deliver better local bus and rail services in partnership with operators;
- develop innovative and adaptable approaches to public transport in the rural areas of the district;
- improve road and personal safety and environmental conditions; reduce the adverse environmental impacts of transport; reduce congestion;
- improve connectivity within and between major towns both within and beyond North Somerset.

The following schemes have been programmed in the Regional Funding Allocation (2009) and will be promoted:

- 1) Weston Package (including the Cross Airfield Link, Airfield Bridge Link, upgrading of Worle Station, Marchfields Way widening);
- 2) Bus rapid transit from Bristol to Long Ashton Park and Ride
- 3) South Bristol Link;
- 4) Reopening of the Portishead to Bristol line for passenger services, or its use for bus rapid transit;
- 5) Junction 21 Bypass or Relief Road;
- 6) Bristol Rail Metro (including the opening of bay platform at Weston Railway Station).

Other proposals include:

- 7) A371 and Wolvershill Rd/Churchland Way Link, Weston-super-Mare;
- 8) Banwell By Pass;
- 9) Barrow Gurney By Pass;
- 10) M5 Junction 19 improvements;
- 11) Herluin Way to Locking Road Link, Weston-super-Mare;
- 12) Double tracks on the loop line between Weston Railway Station and Worle;
- 13) Extended car parking facilities at Nailsea/Backwell with improved pedestrian access;
- 14) Expansion of the Park and Ride at Long Ashton;
- 15) A new Park and Ride site at Weston-super-Mare.
- 16) Investigation of bus rapid transit for Weston; and
- 17) Investigation of a new road link between the M5 and South Bristol.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 2 and 9.

Background

3.165 Shared priorities within the Sustainable Community Strategy identify the following aims in relation to transport:

- Providing good access to key facilities through effective land use and transport planning;
- Programmes that combine increased transport investment with measures to manage travel demand to support sustainable growth;
- Integrated sustainable improvements in the transport infrastructure between North Somerset's urban and rural communities and its links to the South West;
- Safe cycling and walking encouraged through integrated planning;
- Improved highways and pedestrian access;
- Well promoted sustainable and accessible transport options.

3.166 The promotion and justification for major schemes are set out in the Joint Local Transport Plan. This plan is prepared by the four unitary authorities of Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Bristol and North Somerset and sets out key transport plans for the next five years as well as a long term vision for the following twenty years.

3.167 The same authorities have united to tackle congestion in the West of England by putting together a Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) bid through the publication of 'Our Future Transport'. This document outlines the sub region's 20 year vision and the necessary measures that will have to be introduced prior to or soon after any road user or workplace charging is introduced in the above three locations.

3.168 The fundamental aim of the above documents are in line with the Core Strategy – namely to provide realistic choices to car use and improve environmental conditions for local residents and businesses. The majority of the major schemes have been subject to detailed analysis and there is no need to repeat these in the Core Strategy. The general location of the majority of these schemes are identified on the Key Diagram.

The Core Strategy approach

3.169 The Core Strategy's locational strategy aims to place new jobs, services and facilities where they are easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and give existing and future residents a choice of how to travel. Where car-based movement is unavoidable the aim must be to accommodate the car but seek ways to minimise harm to the environment through good quality design and maximising car-sharing.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.170 It is recognised that most opportunities to reduce the reliance on the private car will be within the major towns – in particular at the Weston urban extension. However the policy approach is applicable throughout the district and innovative public transport schemes will be explored for rural areas and villages. Through the development management process planning applications will need to address how they can reduce reliance on the car and still retain a wide choice of transport modes.
- 3.171 Layouts and land use distributions must be based on a network of cycleways/footpaths and public transport routes that ensure safe, convenient and direct access to local services. Larger developments in particular must be within safe and direct walking distance of shops and other key services. Developers will be required to undertake an assessment of their development proposals. This would need to include a full accessibility assessment by non-car modes to determine the transport needs arising from the development and the means by which any adverse impacts should be mitigated. For example off-site transport network improvements or payments towards upgrading a bus service may be necessary.



- 3.172 For larger scale developments a Travel Plan aimed at delivering sustainable transport objectives will be required. A Travel Plan will set out measures that will result in a reduction in car usage and an increased use of public transport, cycling and walking as alternative modes of transport.
- 3.173 Some funding for major transport schemes will be sought through the Department for Transport's major scheme bidding process and the remainder will be sought from developer contributions.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.174 Allowing for unrestricted growth in traffic levels would be contrary to national guidance and would potentially lead to increased noise and pollution levels and have an adverse effect on the environment. It would also have the effect of making North Somerset a less attractive location for economic investment and reduce its potential for creating jobs and becoming less reliant on other areas for employment.
- 3.175 For the major transport schemes the options considered are:

a) Prioritising one mode of transport

- 3.176 The preferred approach is based on an integrated transport network where all modes of transport play a part in promoting a more sustainable transport solution. North Somerset is a mixture of urban and rural areas where reliance on one mode of transport e.g. rail or bus is not a viable way forward.

b) Rescind major transport schemes

- 3.177 These major schemes have been subject to previous studies which have taken into account future residential, employment and traffic growth forecasts. These studies demonstrate the need for major schemes to support growth and to maximise economic and safety benefits, whilst mitigating adverse environmental impacts; so their inclusion in the Core Strategy is fully justified.

Monitoring and review

- 3.178 Indicators relating to the West of England sub-region are contained in the Joint Local Transport Plan. These include the proportion of trips by different modes, distance travelled to work, traffic counts, data on public transport use, cycle use and the delivery of transport schemes. They will be monitored in accordance with the JLTP and this Core Strategy.

Living within Environmental Limits

CS11: Parking

Adequate parking must be provided and managed to meet the needs of anticipated users (residents, workers and visitors) in usable spaces. Overall parking provision must ensure a balance between good urban design, highway safety and residential amenity.

New developments must seek to maximise off street provision, assess where on-street provision may be appropriate, demonstrate that buses, service and emergency vehicles are not restricted, and ensure that the road network is safe for all users.

Detailed parking policy guidance for all forms of development will be provided as part of the Development Management Development Plan Document.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 10.

Background

3.179 The council is committed to ensuring the delivery of sustainable development, and an important element of this is to ensure that there are, wherever possible, realistic alternatives to using the car. However, it is also important to recognise that across much of the district cars are still essential for many journeys. National policy in the past has perhaps naively tended to assume that if less provision is made for the car, then less car use will take place. The North Somerset experience is that while much can be done to encourage travel by other modes, there will still be high car ownership, and people will need space to park. Where new estates have been designed so as to discourage casual car parking and fewer spaces are provided within property boundaries (often compounded by garages being used for storage), this can lead to significant problems of parked cars blocking pavements, restricting access for buses, refuse and emergency vehicles, and detracting from the character and appearance of the development and the community's pride in the local environment.

The Core Strategy approach

3.180 The intention is to take a pragmatic approach to parking provision on new developments. The council recognises that there will be a balance between good urban design, highway safety and residential amenity, but that the assessment of a development proposal must always start from the position of ensuring that adequate parking is provided. This is adequate in terms of providing enough provision for likely users, in practical spaces of an adequate size and shape.

- 3.181 The Core Strategy highlights the importance of the parking issue to the place making agenda, and the need for co-ordination between the formulation and interpretation of parking standards, urban design and transport policy. This is an area where further guidance will be required within the Development Management DPD.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.182 Research is currently examining the impact of parking on new estates at Portishead and Weston, and the recommendations from this and other evidence will be used to reassess the approach to parking within the Development Management DPD. Delivery will also be through the production of masterplans and briefs where appropriate, and the assessment of planning applications as part of the development management process.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.183 Policy could be incorporated as part of a more general transport policy, but it was felt that the importance of the issue to key objectives warranted a more specific approach.

Monitoring and review

- 3.184 The effectiveness of parking standards in new developments will be monitored.



Delivering Strong and Inclusive Communities

CS12: Achieving High Quality Design and Place-making

Well designed buildings and places

North Somerset Council is committed to achieving high quality buildings and places across all of North Somerset in particular to support comprehensive regeneration at Weston-super-Mare. High quality architecture and urban design will be sought from development demonstrating a robust design process to generate solutions that have clearly considered the existing context, and contribute to social, economic and environmental sustainability. As part of a comprehensive place-making strategy new development should function well supporting sustainable land uses and improving image. Poor design standards in individual buildings and larger schemes are not acceptable.

Proposals of all scales will be required to demonstrate sensitivity to the existing local character already established in an area particularly regarding villages close to growth areas and proposals should take the opportunity to enhance the sense of place and local identity through a well thought out design. Where the existing design characteristics are not considered of a high quality, new development should actively aim to enhance the area through good design. Schemes must be based on a thorough site appraisal.

Development proposals should demonstrate a commitment to designing out crime through the creation of safe environments (both private and public) that benefit from natural surveillance, visible streets and open spaces, lighting and other security measures, utilising the principles highlighted within the Home Office Safer Places guidance. Achieving Secured by Design certification will help to demonstrate how designing out crime has been taken into account.

Weston-super-Mare

At Weston-super-Mare planning and development should seek to improve the image of the town to support economic regeneration and attract investment to support the employment-led approach to development and address deprivation by contributing to the quality of life through the creation of quality buildings and places.

Masterplanning

Development should be phased to ensure enhancement and investment is secured.

Further detail will be set out in other Local Development Documents alongside this strategic policy direction to guide decisions. Developments should benefit from a rigorous design process in discussion with the local community and the council where appropriate making use of masterplanning, design frameworks and other delivery mechanisms to guide development.

Residential development

In designing residential developments of 10 or more dwellings the Building for Life Gold standard should be achieved. Applicants should demonstrate how they meet the criteria of the standard and the granting of planning permission will take into account meeting the stated standard.

This policy contributes towards meeting the objectives of Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.

CS12

Background

- 3.185 Planning Policy Statement 1: *Delivering Sustainable Development* (2005) provides a clear national policy framework for increasing design quality and emphasises the indivisible link between good design and planning. This principle is carried through the North Somerset Local Development Framework with the understanding and premise that delivering additional homes and all other land uses and infrastructure has to be delivered with quality design as a priority if places are to be shaped as sustainable, and socially, economically and environmentally responsive.
- 3.186 The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy emphasises that all development in all locations should be of the highest possible standards of design. This is essential if we are to create places that work well, where people want to live, work and visit. Well designed buildings and places not only provide pleasant environments but they also function better supporting economic, environmental, and social aspects.
- 3.187 Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, local authorities are required to reduce crime through various strategies. It is recognised that the fear of crime, whether real or perceived, can adversely affect people's quality of life, and affect the choices they make such as whether to walk or drive and where they go for services and facilities. This in turn can affect a wide range of sustainability issues. Policy CS12 reflects the council's priority of making streets and communities safer as set out in the Corporate Plan (2008–2011). Within this priority there is a stated action to help to promote good quality design in new developments to help promote community safety.
- 3.188 High quality design is increasingly linked to sustainable construction practices, and indeed achieving higher levels of sustainability. For example energy efficiency measures are changing the way buildings and places are designed and constructed. Indeed buildings that have been designed to very high environmental standards have a different aesthetic including integrated renewable energy technologies, innovative approaches to passive ventilation and day lighting, and through the use of sustainable building materials and construction techniques. All

buildings should be designed to be fit for purpose, and adaptable for long term use to suit changing occupier needs over time. This puts the emphasis on producing buildings that are robust, use quality materials and demonstrate an efficient use of resources. The 'embodied energy' in building materials should also be actively reduced through careful selection of buildings materials.

CS12

- 3.189 The Building for Life standard comprises 20 criteria that provide a framework for assessing the quality of new residential and neighbourhood development. To achieve the Gold standard 16 out of the 20 criteria should be answered positively. By comparison a poor scheme would achieve less than 10 criteria. This standard should be used to develop proposals for residential schemes and the council will monitor how many of its permitted schemes achieve certain stated standards of the assessment.

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.190 The policy approach aspires to a step change in the quality of new development including residential environments, recognising its role in place-making and its relationship to how places function, and how people interact with them. It is intended to guide the development and decision making process and applies to all scales of development. It complements specific area-based policies at Weston Town Centre and the Weston Urban Extension and seeks to raise design quality to induce other 'spin-off' benefits including for the economy. This is important in terms of realising regeneration and achieving the required investment, and for the enhancement of Weston as an employment location.
- 3.191 The policy aims to deliver action in conjunction with a range of policy areas covered in this strategy recognising the importance of design in promoting healthy neighbourhoods, contributing to the quality of life, increasing environmental standards, and when applied to larger schemes aims to deliver places that function well, reduce emissions and add value to places.
- 3.192 With regard to designing out crime, the policy applies to all new development from the design of individual property to make it secure and to deter opportunistic crime, to large scale developments, parking areas and public areas. The approach is one of integrating 'designing out crime' principles at an early stage so that they form a key element of creating sustainable development.
- 3.193 New developments are encouraged to achieve Secured by Design accreditation, or demonstrate that the key principles have been taken into account in their design. New development areas will minimise the fear of crime, leading to safer communities.



CS12

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.194 The strategy is aimed at development of all scales across the district recognising that all developments contribute to the quality of places and people's experience of them. However due to the scale of development and levels of investment being made, it is expected that the Weston urban extension and development at Weston town centre will demonstrate exemplar standards.
- 3.195 At other market and coastal towns and villages throughout North Somerset, development should respond to the local context and enhance the distinct identity demonstrated through a thorough Design and Access Statement. Characterisation work may take place to identify the defining characteristics of places in North Somerset to support decisions on how new developments should enhance. In many places parish plans are invaluable in terms of a source of guidance on character, distinctiveness and local priorities.
- 3.196 The character of an area is created through its landscape, geology, and land uses within, its buildings and spaces (public and private), social and cultural activities, its heritage ingrained into the built and natural fabric, and the qualities that influence people's experience of a place. Local character and distinctiveness may be established through existing building layouts, urban grain, materials, and predominant styles. The recognition, protection and enhancement of these features are essential ingredients in creating environments that provide people with a connection to history and support a social identity.
- 3.197 Proposals for all development other than householder or for a material change of use will be required to demonstrate quality design through a Design and Access Statement including the process of design thinking

from concept to final scheme, demonstrating how the design has evolved. The best practice guidance on Design and Access Statements should be viewed which gives further guidance on their role. See *Design and Access Statements, how to write read and use them*, 2006, CABE.

Urban design

- 3.198 Sound urban design principles should be used to generate schemes that create a quality public, semi-public and private mix of places that are attractive, durable and function well. The layout, density and scale of development should be planned with passive design in mind where orientation, aspect and thermal mass can be optimised to reduce energy demand. For further guidance see the *Urban Design Compendium 1 and 2* published by English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation which includes useful case studies.
- 3.199 Developers are encouraged to engage with the local community appropriate to the scale of the development proposed using mechanisms such as Enquiry by Design, in addition to discussing proposals early in the development process with council officers.
- 3.200 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) prepared for the Weston Urban Extension should set out more detailed design and place-making principles linking to the delivery of wider policy agendas. In addition subsequent DPDs will include more detail on implementing design policy and other SPDs may be prepared if necessary.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.201 There are no alternative options considered for this strategic policy due to its more general application relating to all development across the district, and its fundamental aim of raising the quality of design across all development. There will however be more detailed choices to make in terms of how design policy and standards will be implemented, for example through design coding, design frameworks and masterplanning through Supplementary Planning Documents. These choices will be explored through SPD process and other Development Plan Documents (DPD) including the Development Management DPD.

Monitoring and review

- The number and proportion of total new build completions on housing sites [of at least 10 dwellings] reaching very good, good, average and poor ratings against the Building for Life criteria.
- Lifetime Homes accreditation
- Number of buildings receiving architectural awards (e.g. RIBA/RICS)
- Secured by Design accreditation/ award for buildings and developments.

Delivering Strong and Inclusive Communities

CS13: Scale of New Housing

Land will be identified to meet the provision of up to a further 17,750 dwellings to meet the 26,750 additional dwellings from 2006 to 2026 proposed by the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (excluding development of 9,000 dwellings at SW Bristol urban extension – see Chapter 5).

North Somerset District (excluding urban extension)

Land is identified within the Weston urban area to deliver in excess of the RSS requirement of 3,000 dwellings (see Policy CS28).

Within the remainder of North Somerset the RSS requirement of 5,750 dwellings will be met by land from existing identified sources. Overprovision within the Weston urban area means that no additional allocations will be required in the plan period.

Urban extensions

Land will be allocated at Weston urban extension to accommodate up to 9,000 dwellings (see Policy CS30). Delivery will continue post 2026.

At SW Bristol the council is opposed to the development of an urban extension in the Green Belt. However, given the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy allocation, the consultation will be used to explore the issues and options relating to the proposal (see Chapter 5).

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 1.

CS13

Background

3.202 As a starting point the Core Strategy must address the emerging RSS requirement of 26,750 dwellings in North Somerset 2006–2026. While the RSS has reached Proposed Changes stage, it has not been approved, and many authorities, including North Somerset, have significant objections. Until the RSS is finally approved and any legal challenges resolved, there will remain uncertainties with regard to its status, particularly as a future government may take a different approach to regional planning. The Core Strategy must therefore be mindful of the weight attached to the emerging RSS while exploring alternatives through the Consultation Draft process which don't prejudice or pre-judge future policy choices.

3.203 The emerging RSS proposes the following dwelling distribution for North Somerset:

Weston urban area	3,000
Remainder of North Somerset	5,750
Weston urban extension	9,000
SW Bristol urban extension	9,000
Total	26,750

3.204 This distribution provides a very significant proportion of the overall allocation in the form of two new urban extensions – nearly 70% concentrated in two major strategic locations. Each of these has issues relating to both viability and deliverability over the plan period, and in the case of SW Bristol, fundamental concerns over the use of Green Belt.

The Core Strategy approach

Residual dwelling requirement

3.205 As at 1 April 2009, there were 3,541 completions, leaving an amended target of 23,209 dwellings when assessed against the RSS requirement of 26,750 dwellings. This total is further reduced by sites with permission (including under construction) and existing Replacement Local Plan allocations.

3.206 The following table summarises the land availability position at April 2009 in relation to existing commitments. There were no commitments at the proposed urban extensions.

	Completions 2006-2009	Permissions @ 1 April 2009	RLP allocations	Total commitments	RSS allocation	Remaining requirement
Weston urban area	1,593	933	418	2,944	3,000	56
Clevedon	131	159	26	316	5,750	1,339
Nailsea	29	92	0	121		
Portishead	1,211	1,534	140	2,885		
Service villages	442	195	44	681		
Remainder of North Somerset	135	259	14	408		
Total	3,541	3,172	642	7,355	8,750	1,395

3.207 The estimated housing supply for the RSS sub-areas over the plan period is as follows:

North Somerset District (excluding urban extensions)

a) Weston urban area

3.208 Delivery within the Weston urban area will exceed the RSS requirement of 3,000 dwellings over the plan period. It is currently anticipated that by 2026 there will be an overprovision of some 3,005 dwellings. This includes sites identified in the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan (Preferred Options) totalling 2,198 residential units.

3.209 The housing supply situation will continue to be closely monitored over the plan period. Any overprovision against the RSS target within the Weston urban area will contribute to the Remainder of North Somerset figure. Development at Weston must be employment-led in order to secure improved self-containment and reduced out-commuting.

b) Remainder of North Somerset

3.210 In RSS terms this relates to the whole of the district outside Weston, excluding the urban extensions. This includes the three towns of Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead, the 12 service villages, and the remaining settlements and rural area. It is currently anticipated that there will be an underprovision of housing against the 5,750 dwelling RSS target of 603 dwellings over the plan period. No further allocations will be required given the predicted overprovision of 3,005 within the more sustainable Weston urban area.

3.211 The anticipated housing trajectory for North Somerset District (excluding urban extensions) is as follows:

	2006-2011	2011-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026	Total	RSS requirement
Weston urban area	2,133	1,506	997	1,369	6,005	3,000
Clevedon	205	111	38	95	449	5,750
Nailsea	65	56	34	84	239	
Portishead	1,881	1,004	74	185	3,144	
Service villages	538	143	65	161	907	
Elsewhere	244	164	—	—	408	
Total	5,066	2,984	1,208	1,894	11,152	8,750

Includes completions 2006–2009, planning permissions as at April 2009, remaining allocations from the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan, sites identified within the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options document and windfall assumptions for the last seven years of the plan period.

Urban extensions

3.212 Two large-scale strategic allocations are proposed within the RSS. For the purposes of housing numbers urban extensions will be treated as self-contained, and will not be transferred elsewhere as this will result in dispersed, less sustainable development contrary to RSS objectives. If RSS numbers at the urban extensions fail to be delivered during the plan period, then the long term nature of these developments means that any residual may need to be identified post-2026.

a) Weston urban extension

3.213 New housing provision at Weston urban extension must be employment-led, and linked to key infrastructure provision particularly flood mitigation and highway improvements, and capacity may also be constrained by helicopter safety and noise constraints. In addition, the urban design consultants (Broadway Malyan) raised significant concerns regarding deliverability and viability. They anticipate that only 5,750 dwellings are likely to be delivered by 2026. While delivery will be monitored, it is currently expected that this development will continue post-2026.

3.214 Weston is the key strategic priority for North Somerset in terms of addressing a range of regeneration issues, and priority is given to making an early start on the urban extension, building on the employment-led approach adopted in the Replacement Local Plan.

3.215 The anticipated trajectory for the Weston urban extension as identified by Broadway Malyan was as follows:

2006-2011	2011-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026	Post 2026
0	800	2,450	2,500	3,250

b) South West Bristol urban extension

3.216 Within south Bristol the priority is the regeneration of brownfield urban areas within Bristol City. There is a concern that development of greenfield, Green Belt land could prejudice these objectives through adversely affecting investment opportunities within the adjacent urban areas. Any development in this area must be carefully phased and sequenced in relation to regeneration initiatives in south Bristol.

3.217 North Somerset is opposed to development in the Green Belt at SW Bristol and is aware that significant changes to regional policy which would rule out Green Belt development could be introduced following the general election. It is therefore important not to prejudice any future policy change. Chapter 5 examines possible options and their implications but the preferred option is for no development at SW Bristol.

How and where the policy will be delivered?

3.218 Housing supply will be focused on opportunities within the Weston urban area and Weston urban extension, plus other commitments elsewhere within North Somerset. Policy CS14 examines the more detailed distribution of the proposed housing supply.

3.219 The policy will be delivered primarily through private development, but there will be considerable partnership working involved, particularly in relation to infrastructure provision, ensuring employment-led development and affordable housing.

Alternative options and contingency planning

3.220 Alternative options are as follows:

a) In the absence on an approved RSS, roll-forward existing Structure Plan requirements.

3.221 By using RSS figures (with the exception of SW Bristol), North Somerset is demonstrating a commitment to delivering the strategic priority location.

b) Identify housing figures for SW Bristol.

3.222 Chapter 5 explains how the allocation of SW Bristol at this stage would be ill advised. If this site is eventually confirmed in the approved RSS, then additional consultation would be required before the Core Strategy could progress to the next stage.

c) Make provision for additional allocations in the 'remainder of North Somerset' area to take account of the anticipated shortfall by 2026.

3.223 Any shortfall in the 'remainder' category is compensated for by overprovision at the Weston urban area, a more sustainable location.

d) Make provision elsewhere in North Somerset to accommodate the non allocation of 9,000 dwellings at SW Bristol urban extension.

3.224 The RSS allocation is in relation to a strategic urban extension which would be unsustainable and contrary to RSS policy to redistribute elsewhere.

Monitoring and review

3.225 Housing supply is monitored annually and assessed in relation to the four five year tranches in order to ensure that there remains a flexible supply of available and deliverable land for housing.

Delivering Strong and Inclusive Communities

CS14: Distribution of New Housing

Outside the Weston urban extension, new housing development to 2026 will be accommodated as follows:

Weston-super-Mare urban area will be the main focus for new residential development within North Somerset with 3,000 dwellings accommodated within the existing urban area.

Residential development at **Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead** will be acceptable within their existing urban areas on brownfield sites where this increases self-containment and enhances their service centre roles.

Within the service villages of **Backwell, Banwell, Churchill, Congresbury, Hutton, Locking, Long Ashton, Pill/Easton-in-Gordano, Uphill, Winscombe, Wrington and Yatton**, small-scale infill housing and conversions may be appropriate but only where it will maintain or improve self-containment, support the retention of existing services or fulfil an identified local housing need in respect of affordability or dwelling mix.

Elsewhere housing development will not be permitted unless it is for essential workers in rural enterprises, replacement dwellings or where a need for affordable housing cannot be accommodated in the higher order settlements. A net increase of replacement housing (of a commensurate scale) and the relaxation of occupancy restrictions will only be permitted as part of a live/work development.

Priority will be given to the re-use of previously developed land. In all cases, new housing development must not conflict with environmental protection, Green Belt, nature conservation or any other relevant policies of the Development Plan and should provide any necessary mitigating or compensatory measures to address any adverse implications.

The target net density across North Somerset is 40 dwellings per ha, although this may be higher at highly accessible locations, and less in sensitive areas.

Settlement boundaries for Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and the service villages will remain as defined in the Replacement Local Plan pending any alterations as part of any future Site Allocations Development Plan Document. All other settlement boundaries will be deleted.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 1 and 4.

CS14

Background

- 3.226 The distribution of new residential development in the Core Strategy needs to reflect the broad settlement hierarchy based on sustainability principles as proposed in the Regional Spatial Strategy:

Development Policy A: Strategically Significant Cities and Towns (SSCTs).

Development Policy B: Market and Coastal Towns.

Development Policy C: Small Towns and Villages.

- 3.227 The Core Strategy must interpret how this approach is to be delivered in the North Somerset context.

CS14

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.228 The RSS identifies Weston-super-Mare as one of the Strategically Significant Cities and Towns within the South West, identified because they are the focal points for economic activity, cultural facilities, service facilities and transport accessibility, and with the potential to deliver sustainable development. Weston is therefore the focus for development within North Somerset, but it is also recognised that development at Weston, both within the urban area and at the urban extension, must be employment-led to secure regeneration and greater self-containment.

- 3.229 Away from the SSCTs, the RSS maintains that the scope for significant development is limited resulting in a scale of development that is more clearly aligned to supporting the role and function of places in their individual localities. The RSS recognises the role that many Market and Coastal Towns play in providing jobs and services both for their own populations and their hinterlands. Within such places, where there exist employment and other facilities and sustainable transport access, provision will be made for housing, employment, shopping and other services that increase self-containment and enhance their service centre roles. The RSS intends that these places will be the focal points for locally significant scales of development, including provision for the bulk of district housing provision outside the SSCTs. Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead are defined as falling within this category. It is considered that these towns offer the range of services, facilities and employment which could contribute to reduced trip generation and increased self-containment.

- 3.230 In addition, targeted small scale development for housing in accessible village communities may be appropriate if it is clearly related to identified local needs. The emphasis here is on creating greater self-containment and stronger local communities with development that supports economic activity appropriate to the scale of the settlement, extends the range of services to better meet the needs of the settlement and the surrounding area, and meets identified local housing needs. Within North Somerset

12 service villages are identified where this approach will apply. These are both the larger villages with a wider range of facilities and services, and also settlements with easy access to the SSCT of Weston. Elsewhere, in order to reduce unsustainable sporadic development new housing will be very strictly controlled.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.231 The bulk of new housing development outside the urban extensions will be accommodated within Weston-super-Mare. Elsewhere, there will be some additional scope within Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead where this contributes to increased self-containment or improved service provision. Within the identified service villages there will be some opportunities for targeted small scale development to meet local needs.
- 3.232 There are existing site allocations in the Replacement Local Plan and these will be supplemented by additional sites in the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document as appropriate.
- 3.233 Settlement boundaries as defined in the Replacement Local Plan will indicate the locations where new residential development is acceptable in principle. Settlement boundaries for those places outside Weston, Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and the Service Villages will be deleted. Amendments to settlement boundaries will be undertaken through the Site Allocations DPD.
- 3.234 New housing will be primarily delivered by the private sector, but with a significant role from the Registered Social Landlords in respect of affordable housing.
- 3.235 New housing must be seen as part of an overall approach towards increased sustainability, particularly where the emphasis is on increased self-containment. There is therefore an important role to be played by a range of partners working with housing providers.

Alternative options and contingency planning

a) Market and Coastal Towns

- 3.236 Alternative options considered:
- i) No settlements are included in this category given their dormitory nature;
 - ii) Nailsea is not included as an appropriate settlement given its relatively higher level of out-commuting;
 - iii) Add additional settlements such as Yatton given its range of existing services and rail station.

3.237 The Core Strategy seeks to maximise brownfield opportunities from the three largest towns, and recognises that there may be opportunities for locally significant development where this contributes to improving self-containment. The relatively smaller scale of Yatton and its range of facilities and services means that it is more appropriately defined as a service village.

b) Service villages

3.238 Alternative options considered:

- i) Include more settlements;
- ii) Include fewer settlements;
- iii) Exclude villages included because of their accessibility to Weston.

3.239 The Core Strategy seeks to focus any development for local needs on the larger villages which have a role in acting as service hubs for surrounding areas. To widen the range of places identified could encourage a more dispersed approach, contrary to the emerging RSS. It is considered that although Banwell, Hutton, Locking and Uphill have a relatively fewer services and facilities, they are easily accessible to Weston, and therefore appropriate to include.

c) Elsewhere

3.240 An alternative option is to increase supply in the smaller villages and countryside.

3.241 While there is demand for a more flexible approach to village development, the cumulative impact of development would lead to less sustainable patterns and potentially an adverse impact on environmental quality.

Monitoring and review

3.242 Housing supply is monitored annually and assessed in relation to the four five year tranches in order to ensure that there remains a flexible supply of available and deliverable land for housing.

Delivering Strong and Inclusive Communities

CS15: Mixed and Balanced Communities

The council will seek to ensure a genuine mix of housing types within existing and future communities in North Somerset through considering proposals for development in terms of the extent to which they:

- 1) Contribute to a well integrated mix of housing types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes to meet identified housing needs in accordance with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- 2) Reduce an existing proliferation of one housing type within an area through encouraging the development of a range of housing types that better meet housing needs and contribute to an improved local environment.
- 3) Contribute to creating an accessible, inclusive and safe community with easy access to a range of services.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 3, 4, 6 and 8.

Background

- 3.243 Creating mixed and balanced communities is one of the government's aims for sustainable development. This means providing sufficient good quality housing of the right types and mix, in the right places, which will be attractive to, and meet the identified needs of, different groups in society. The types of housing include market, social rented, mixed tenure, lifetime homes and special needs housing for groups like the elderly.
- 3.244 The Core Strategy objective to create mixed and balanced communities applies to both existing areas which may currently lack a genuine mix of housing types and tenures, and to new communities that will emerge such as at the Weston urban extension.
- 3.245 Balanced communities consisting of a range of services and housing types can help to achieve a sustainable community by:
- Supporting a wider range of social and community infrastructure such as schools, nurseries and shops;
 - Encourage stability and community cohesion through allowing residents to move house but remain in the same area;
 - Reducing the transient population and fostering community spirit by an increased sense of belonging, identity and pride of place;
 - Increasing local employment levels which can help support local services;

CS15

- Reducing the social isolation of a particular age group such as the elderly or the young;
- Creating a more diverse and inclusive community than the one dominated by a single accommodation type.

3.246 Within North Somerset in 2008 there were approximately 90,464 dwellings of which about 80% are houses (mainly detached and semi-detached) and 20% are flats. The 2001 census showed that in North Somerset 78.6% of houses are owner occupied and of these 35.4% of homes were owned outright. However, home ownership levels vary across the district with for example, Clevedon Walton ward having 92.5% owner occupation, compared to Weston-super-Mare South Ward which has just 43%. Private rented accommodation accounted for 8.2% of the stock. Property rented from the local authority/housing association/registered social landlord (including shared ownership schemes) accounted for 13.1% of the stock.

3.247 North Somerset has a comparatively high level of home ownership (England and Wales average was 68.2% in 2001). However, there are significant disparities in homeownership levels across the district and an inability for people to access the property market due to a discrepancy between house prices and income levels. House prices have risen by 150% since 1996 compared to incomes which have risen by just 43%.

The Core Strategy approach

3.248 This policy aims to ensure the delivery of a mix of housing types and tenures across the district which will address the above issues by increasing accessibility to the housing market, increase equality of opportunity to live in certain areas and facilitate the creation of mixed and balanced communities.

Concentration of one housing type

3.249 In the Central and South Ward areas of Weston-super-Mare there are a higher proportion of sub-divided properties than in the remainder of Weston or North Somerset. In Central Ward in Weston the proportion of the housing stock given over to flats is 70% compared to a Weston average of 30%.

3.250 The North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy aims to tackle inequality and disadvantage in deprived areas with some areas in Weston-super-Mare in the top 10% most deprived in England. Overall North Somerset has the 11th biggest equality gap in the country and it is one of the Core Strategy objectives to reduce inequalities between areas.

- 3.251 Although the predominance of flats and lack of family accommodation are not the sole reasons for the high levels of deprivation in these areas, they contribute to these communities exhibiting a transient population. This concentration of flats has significant implications for the provision of services, community spirit and deprivation levels. Through the implementation of this policy the Core Strategy will seek to retain and where appropriate increase the range and quality of housing, particularly family housing, in these areas.

CS15

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.252 The policy will be delivered through the preparation of detailed masterplanning, briefs and urban design codes for new developments, the assessment of planning applications, and exploring opportunities to re-balance the housing stock within existing communities. There may be an opportunity to examine more detailed area based approaches where a predominance of one particular type or tenure is causing social issues.
- 3.253 Effective delivery requires close working with housing and community development professionals, police and health experts.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.254 The alternative would be not to require a mix of housing types and tenures in new developments. This would result in developments consisting of one housing type or tenure which could lead to a segregation of communities and an increase in the geographical inequalities in the district which would be contrary to national guidance and fail to achieve the sustainability objectives of the Core Strategy.

Monitoring and review

- 3.255 Monitoring will identify the mix of housing types (eg one/two/three/four bed flats/houses) and tenures (private rented/social rented/affordable/market etc) in new housing developments. Within identified areas such as Central and South wards in Weston-super-Mare, the number of applications and implementation of flats or homes in multiple occupation and conversions will be assessed.

Delivering Strong and Inclusive Communities

CS16: Affordable Housing

Affordable housing comprises social rented and intermediate housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. On-site affordable housing provision will be sought to meet local needs on all residential developments of 15 dwellings or more (or on sites of 0.5 hectare or above). On all other sites the council will seek to negotiate a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing.

Within North Somerset the target for the provision of affordable housing is at least 155 dwellings per annum. To reflect identified needs this will be provided as 82% social rented housing and 18% intermediate housing.

The precise size and type of affordable housing to be provided on individual sites will be determined through negotiation, guided by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, data from the housing needs register, and local housing needs surveys. The presumption is that to create mixed and balanced communities affordable housing will be provided on-site without the need for public subsidy. Only in exceptional circumstances where it can be robustly justified, off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu of off-site provision (of equivalent value) may be acceptable where it contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

The capacity of a site to deliver a level of affordable housing that can be supported financially will be determined by individual site viability analysis. This analysis will take into consideration existing use values, as well as other site specific factors. The assessment will be made having regard to the residual land value once the cost of development has been deducted. There is no upper limit to the potential affordable housing provision or contribution, but a benchmark of 30% will be sought as a starting point. This benchmark is aimed at meeting local need. Local need is not fixed and changes over time can vary between housing type, size and tenure. The policy refers to current identified need.

Guidance on the level of contribution expected from sites below the threshold will be set out elsewhere following viability assessment and reviewed on a regular basis.

This policy contributes towards achieving the objectives of Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing.

CS16

Background

3.256 The national definition of affordable housing as set out in PPS3 Annex B:

"Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:

Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision".

3.257 One of the key elements of sustainable development is to ensure the creation of mixed and balanced communities, including an appropriate supply of affordable housing. The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy proposes that within the region as a whole, provision will be made for at least 35% of all housing developments to be affordable. Policies should specify targets for and proportions of affordable housing, and an appropriate division of affordable housing between social rented and intermediate tenures to help and secure an appropriate supply of affordable housing in the wider context of maintaining an overall five year housing land supply.

3.258 PPS3 paragraph 29 makes it clear that local planning authorities need to undertake an informed assessment of the economic viability of any thresholds and proportions of affordable housing proposed, including their likely impact upon overall levels of housing delivery and the creation of mixed communities.

3.259 Within North Somerset the Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified a significant shortfall of affordable housing in relation to needs.

The Core Strategy approach

3.260 The Core Strategy seeks to set out a realistic and viable approach to the delivery of affordable housing. For consultation it is proposed to retain the existing Replacement Local Plan target of 30% affordable housing as a benchmark against which schemes will be assessed, as well as the approach of seeking on-site affordable housing provision on sites of 15 dwellings/0.5ha. In addition, the council will seek to negotiate a financial contribution towards affordable housing delivery from all other residential developments. In all cases this will be subject to the viability testing of schemes. The council will be assessing economic viability of affordable housing contributions through the delivery work supporting the Core Strategy.



CS16

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.261 The main opportunity to deliver affordable housing numbers is through open market schemes delivering a proportion of affordable housing. The principal opportunity will be at the Weston Urban Extension where this will make a significant contribution towards addressing the area with highest identified needs, although deliverability must take into account the employment-led approach and other requirements. Provision of affordable housing will be primarily through Registered Social Landlords.
- 3.262 Detailed implementation will be through the use of planning briefs and site specific negotiations, taking account of needs evidence, and deliverability aspects. The level of affordable housing contributions will be tested by economic viability analysis provided by the developer who will be responsible for all reasonable costs associated with its production. This will be assessed by the council or an independent surveyor.

- 3.263 North Somerset Council will co-ordinate the approach through its housing and planning functions, and through partnership working.

Alternative options and contingency planning

a) Apply a lower threshold than 15 dwellings for on site contributions.

- 3.264 The national minimum size threshold is 15 dwellings although PPS3 states that local planning authorities can set lower minimum thresholds where viable and practicable.

- 3.265 Other options include using thresholds for on-site provision of:

- 10 dwellings
- 5 dwellings
- 5 dwellings within rural areas only.

- 3.266 Reducing the threshold to 10 or five dwellings will catch more sites, but their overall contribution to affordable housing is unlikely to be significant. Reducing the threshold to five in the rural areas would potentially deliver more sites in areas where larger sites are unlikely to occur. Further evidence would be required on viability.

b) Use a different percentage target for affordable housing

- 3.267 The Replacement Local Plan uses 30%, while the emerging RSS suggests increasing this to 35% while evidence suggests a higher figure could be justified. The headline percentage is important in terms of providing clarity to landowners and developers but the key test is viability on a site by site basis. An alternative would be not to use any headline percentage target and to seek the maximum amount of affordable housing a site is able to deliver and still remain viable.

Monitoring and review

- 3.268 Affordable housing will be monitored on an annual basis in terms of permissions, commitments and completions, and the type and tenure of housing delivered. Overall delivery will be assessed in five year tranches, and the policy approach reviewed as appropriate.
- 3.269 The Local Area Agreement target is for 155 affordable houses to be provided per annum.

Delivering Strong and Inclusive Communities

CS17: Residential Sites Providing Affordable Housing Only

Rural Exception Sites

Housing schemes for 100% affordable housing to meet local needs within small rural communities will be supported where:

- 1) the development meets an identified local need demonstrated by an up-to-date needs survey or other evidence, and
- 2) the development is supported or initiated by the parish council, and
- 3) the site search has followed a sequential approach with priority given to sites within any settlement boundary, sustainability principles, and avoiding sensitive locations, and
- 4) the scale of development is appropriate for the location, and
- 5) the affordable housing is provided in perpetuity.

Allocated sites

In order to meet an identified local need for affordable housing, specific sites may be allocated at Weston-super-Mare, the defined Market and Coastal Towns and Service Villages, for 100% affordable housing either within or adjacent to settlement boundaries. Affordable housing provided in this way must be available in perpetuity.

Affordable housing sites (rural exceptions and allocated sites) will not be permitted in the Green Belt.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 8.

Background

3.270 The affordability of housing, particularly within the rural areas is a key issue for many communities. This is exacerbated by the principles of sustainability and protection of the countryside which results in very few opportunities for new residential development in such areas. This policy sets out the mechanisms through which new schemes for 100% affordable housing could be delivered.

The Core Strategy approach

3.271 The council will use the rural exceptions approach to address local needs in rural communities. This permits the development of affordable housing in locations where market housing would not be acceptable, but only where it meets identified local needs, has local community support, alternative sites have been carefully assessed, and that the housing provided will be affordable in perpetuity. Elsewhere, there may be

CS17

opportunities to allocate sites for affordable housing through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

- 3.272 When assessing potential sites, it is important to balance the need for affordable housing within a particular community with sustainability principles and other planning considerations, such as transport accessibility and access to jobs, facilities and services. This may mean that the site assessment may conclude that affordable housing is best provided in a higher order settlement to meet the needs of a surrounding rural area. Where there is a settlement boundary then priority will be given to sites within the boundary. In all cases, development of locally sensitive sites will not be acceptable.
- 3.273 The Green Belt is a key policy constraint within the north of the district. Those rural communities living within the Green Belt are generally well related to higher order settlements, including Bristol, where affordable housing opportunities should be concentrated. Affordable housing proposals in the form of either rural exceptions sites or allocations will not be acceptable in the Green Belt.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.274 New affordable housing will be specifically targeted to meet the needs of local communities.
- 3.275 In the case of rural exceptions sites the process will be bottom-up, championed by the local community to meet identified housing needs, and involving a site assessment process which considers wider issues than simply the merits of a particular development proposal. The allocations route will provide an opportunity to formally allocate specific sites to meet identified needs, perhaps within or adjacent to urban areas where sufficient affordable housing is being delivered by other means.
- 3.276 Partnership working is key to the delivery of affordable housing, particularly the need for close liaison between housing and planning functions of North Somerset, Registered Social Landlords, landowners and the local communities.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.277 An alternative would be to apply the rural exceptions approach to all sites outside settlement boundaries, but this could be seen as being inconsistent with government guidance that such development is targeted towards small sites within rural communities.

Monitoring and review

- 3.278 Assessment of permissions, allocations and completions of affordable housing will be monitored.

Delivering Strong and Inclusive Communities

CS18: Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Provision will be made for an additional 36 residential and 10 transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers for the period 2006 to 2011.

Future provision for both Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be addressed through Local Development Documents having regard to the West of England Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment and any subsequent reviews.

Residential Sites

Proposals for the use of land for residential caravans occupied by Gypsies or other Travellers or as a permanent base for Travelling Showpeople will be permitted in the Green Belt in very special circumstances only. Preference will be given to proposals for the use of previously developed land, land associated with new major housing development, including the Weston urban extension and the expansion of existing sites.

The following considerations will be taken into account in the determination of locations for sites:

- 1) the site is well related to local services and facilities including schools, health and welfare facilities; and
- 2) the site is already or capable of being adequately screened and would otherwise respect the landscape character of the locality; and
- 3) the proposal would not unacceptably prejudice the amenities of adjoining occupiers; and
- 4) the site is capable of being provided with foul and surface water drainage, including appropriate infrastructure and facilities to manage wastes; and
- 5) there is adequate parking and safe access into and out of the site; and
- 6) the site is capable of being developed within the required timescale.

Transit Sites

All proposals for transit sites for Gypsies and Travellers will be considered in the context of the above policy and criteria, excluding (i). Preference will be given to proposals on land with easy access to the major road network, including M5 motorway junctions.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 8.

CS18

Background

3.279 The approach of the Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople policy is to confirm the residential and transit site requirements of the draft Regional Spatial Strategy, and to set out criteria for the assessment of proposals. The Core Strategy is required to be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy and work is already underway on preparing a Gypsy and Travellers Sites Allocations Development Plan Document that will allocate sites sufficient to meet the identified accommodation needs in North Somerset.

3.280 The emerging RSS identifies a need for 36 residential and 10 transit pitches to meet Gypsy and Traveller needs to 2011, with future need dependent upon a review of the West of England Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment, and an assessment of unauthorised encampments in respect of transit requirements. The RSS identifies a need for 51 plots for Travelling Showpeople in the West of England to 2011, but there is no requirement identified for any of that provision within North Somerset.

The Core Strategy approach

3.281 The policy reflects government guidance as set out in Circular 01/2006 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites' and Circular 04/2007 'Planning for Travelling Showpeople'. It also reflects the findings of the West of England Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment undertaken in 2007. The policy seeks to ensure that sites are located in



sustainable locations, well screened and accessible and that opportunities for integration between the travelling and settled community are maximised.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.282 The Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Development Plan Document will allocate specific sites to accommodate the identified need. Such sites will be accessed through a sustainability appraisal on how they meet social, economic and environmental objectives and will need to conform with this policy. Future reviews will be required to identify longer term requirements and to identify sites.
- 3.283 The strategy will be delivered through the provision of private or publicly managed sites. These sites will either be identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Development Plan Document or come forward as planning applications. Government finance is available for councils to provide both residential and transit sites.
- 3.284 There will be co-ordination between public bodies to ensure that all available public land is assessed for its suitability as a Gypsy and Traveller site.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.285 The RSS figures only relate to 2011, and additional provision may be required for both Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople needs during the rest of the plan period. An option would be to make provision for anticipated needs for the medium or longer term, but without the evidence base this is difficult to define.

Monitoring and review

- 3.286 Gypsy and Traveller residential and transit pitches permitted and implemented will be assessed and compared with identified requirements, as well as unauthorised encampments. Reviews of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and other evidence will need to be taken into account and future needs identified.

Delivering Strong and Inclusive Communities

CS19: Green Wedges/Strategic Gaps

The council will seek to protect green wedges/strategic gaps to help retain the separate identity, character and/or landscape setting of settlements and distinct parts of settlements.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 7.

CS19

Background

- 3.287 The maintenance of green wedges or strategic gaps between settlements or distinct parts of settlements, helping to prevent their coalescence, can help to retain their separate identities and maintain and enhance their landscape setting. It may be particularly appropriate where significant development could potentially cause coalescence. Green wedges/strategic gaps could be incorporated into the masterplanning process.
- 3.288 Reliance on countryside policies alone would be unlikely to provide sufficient protection against the reduction or loss of important gaps to development, particularly in the long term. Without the added protection of designated green wedges/strategic gaps it is likely that incremental development would eventually lead to coalescence, with loss of the individual character and/or setting of the settlements concerned.

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.289 Green wedges/strategic gaps will be identified, and defined in detail, in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document. It is not appropriate for the Core Strategy to identify their location, but the following are examples of locations where they may be appropriate, subject to further more detailed assessment:
- 3.290 Between:
- Weston-super-Mare and Hutton
 - Weston-super- Mare and Locking
 - Weston-super-Mare and Uphill
 - Locking and Hutton
 - Congresbury and Yatton
 - Nailsea and Backwell.



CS19

How and where the policy will be delivered

3.291 The locations of green wedges/strategic gaps will be determined in preparing the Site Allocations DPD, and guidance for how to assess development proposals affecting these areas will be set out in the Development Management Development Plan Document.

Alternative options and contingency planning

3.292 An alternative approach would be to not designate green wedges/strategic gaps and to simply rely on countryside policies. However this would not provide such strong protection and would potentially mean greater risk of coalescence, and potential loss of the separate identities of settlements.

3.293 It is likely that any significant changes to the broad quantity of development may need to be reflected in the number/extent of any green wedges/strategic gaps identified. However that would only be determined in formulating the Site Allocations DPD.

Monitoring and review

3.294 As a general approach, the policy's effectiveness could be monitored by identifying to what extent identified green wedge/strategic gaps have been maintained, and not reduced, over a set period.

Delivering a Prosperous Economy

CS20: Supporting a Successful Economy

Development in North Somerset will be employment-led with a strategy to both deliver significant employment development and to ensure that new residential development is provided in association with employment opportunities. Employment provision that leads to greater self-containment and reduces outcommuting will be prioritised.

The Core Strategy provides for around 29,500 jobs. To facilitate this around 88 hectares of land will be required to meet demand for office, industrial and warehousing (B use classes). Jobs provided from land uses outside of the B use classes will be delivered through regeneration and the development of other uses planned with public/ private sector organisations and phased as part of a comprehensive approach to development at the broad locations identified in this policy.

Broad location of employment development

Employment provision will be focused at Weston-super-Mare, primarily within the urban extension and at the town centre/gateway area. Elsewhere, appropriate scale provision at Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead will be identified/approved where this improves self-containment, and reduces outcommuting. Elsewhere, economic activity appropriate to the scale of the settlement will be approved where this leads to greater self-containment and stronger local communities.

The broad strategy aims to achieve a more sustainable alignment between jobs and the economically active population across towns and villages in North Somerset, increasing their sustainability, decreasing out-commuting, providing a range of local jobs and reducing carbon emissions from unsustainable car use. In all cases priority will be given to the reuse of previously developed land.

Safeguarding employment sites and premises

Existing and proposed employment generating sites will be safeguarded through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document. A Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared setting out masterplanning and phasing requirements for the Weston urban extension including the provision of employment sites.

Employment development will be delivered alongside infrastructure improvements, as part of mixed use sites, or as part of wider regeneration initiatives to 'unlock' sites for development in the short to medium term of the plan period.

The strategy for Weston as a whole relies on employment being delivered early in the plan period within a masterplanning framework and using employment-led mechanisms.

Where appropriate, opportunities should be taken to support innovative ways of working, including the provision of live/work units where acceptable and planned for in other Local Development Documents.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Background

- 3.295 The growth of the economy is inherently linked to housing development and the increasing labour force. The increase in jobs across a range of sectors and prosperity takes place in part influenced by the commercial market and also by local land use planning and initiatives such as regeneration to stimulate activity. A key role for the Local Development Framework in addition to co-ordinating wider action to deliver employment development is to ensure that plans and policies make provision for enough land to support and encourage future business activity and that a range of proactive policies are in place to support job creation in the context of sustainable development.
- 3.296 The economic functioning of North Somerset is largely influenced by its geographic position in addition to the local workforce, infrastructure capacity and commercial attractiveness. Its proximity to Bristol, adherence to national trends of rural land use changes, and largely dispersed settlement pattern has resulted in significant out-commuting and poor self-containment particularly at Weston-super-Mare which underperforms in an economic sense in comparison to similar sized towns.
- 3.297 It is against this context that the aspiration to create more sustainable places, both existing and new is derived, to increase the range of jobs, local prosperity, necessary to achieve a sustainable settlement pattern across the district.

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.298 The council considers employment and the economy as key priorities and will seek to facilitate employment and economic investment where it accords with the Core Strategy.

Employment-led approach across the district

- 3.299 There is a general strategic policy aspiration to ensure that all new development is sustainable and contributes to reducing the existing problems of out-commuting, lack of local employment opportunities and associated problems such as congestion and deprivation.

3.300 Policy at Weston-super-Mare in particular has a history of attempting to achieve a greater alignment between jobs and homes. The emerging strategy is to link housing provision to employment development at the urban extension. The delivery of 1.5 B use class jobs for every new home in addition to employment opportunities that will derive from non B use classes will be required to ensure the town is more balanced.

3.301 Within Weston town centre the emerging Area Action Plan identifies a range of regeneration sites including residential, employment and other mixed use sites that together provide an employment-led strategy. However at this stage it is not proposed that housing will be linked to employment the same way as at the urban extension in an effort to stimulate development/regeneration. Nevertheless it is considered that mixed use sites should have some mechanism linking delivery of employment elements to residential.

3.302 At Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead greater self-containment will be pursued with the provision of employment opportunities to meet local needs. It is considered that the Core Strategy should have targets for employment development (job numbers and land take) matched to the quantity of residential expected to be developed between 2006 and 2026. Such employment need is mainly going to be small scale development on brownfield land and will be identified within the forthcoming Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

Indicative employment requirements

Weston Town Centre	15.2 hectares
Weston Urban Extension	61 hectares
Clevedon, Portishead, Nailsea	12.1 hectares

3.303 This could provide around 20,160 business industrial and warehousing jobs⁵. Additional jobs from non B uses take the Core Strategy total up to around 29,500 jobs which is considerably more than baseline forecasts suggest though these are based on historic activity and continuance of past trends. The Core Strategy seeks to create an office market at Weston, regenerate the town centre and continue employment development along the M5 corridor (at existing employment sites with residual capacity in Portishead and Clevedon). It is important to note most of this requirement could be met on existing sites.

3.304 This policy sets out these broad employment land requirements to meet future demand up to 2026 setting out a strategic framework to guide the broad quantity and distribution of employment development, giving certainty to local communities and the business community about where employment development will be encouraged. It also sets out a general provision to protect the existing stock of employment land.

⁵ There is however significant potential for variation dependant on employment densities and plot ratios.

Broad location of new employment development

3.305 Employment development is directed to the main areas of population growth linking to the underlying strategy of aligning jobs with homes in key areas. This strategy is underpinned by the Regional Spatial Strategy which aims to link local jobs to meet local labour supply and thus achieve a sustainable balance between land uses. This has the potential to reduce the levels of out-commuting and increase self-containment bringing additional spin-off benefits including reducing carbon emissions from dispersed development due to increased car use.

How and where the policy will be delivered

3.306 There remains in North Somerset a considerable supply of land and sites available to meet business needs alongside existing regeneration initiatives. However additional sites are required to be allocated as part of the Weston urban extension alongside the allocation of mixed use sites in Weston town centre to support regeneration. At the major development areas employment allocations will be phased with residential and other infrastructure to deliver a comprehensive development. At Weston-super-Mare employment development and land uses that create employment will be delivered ahead of residential schemes to ensure additional residential development takes place in a sustainable way without contributing to additional pressure on infrastructure.

3.307 Strategic Allocations will be made in this Core Strategy that will include employment development indicated on a key diagram in broad terms. Further detailed masterplans will form part of SPD to guide development and decision making with the necessary phasing and delivery mechanisms set out accordingly.

3.308 Consideration should be given to mechanisms for stimulating and promoting economic development. This could include setting up an Employment Investment Fund whereby funds contributed through development can go towards supporting employment development, skills enhancement, local labour agreements, marketing activity and business support. Schemes contribute through mechanisms such as Section 106 agreements.

3.309 In order to encourage a wide skills base and strong workforce within North Somerset, opportunities should be sought to develop initiatives to support learning and skills development in association with key public and private partners. Opportunities should be sought to harness relationships between local business and education facilities.

3.310 Developers are encouraged to collaborate to bring forward comprehensive development requiring considerable negotiation to co-ordinate delivery with the necessary infrastructure providers.



CS20

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.311 There are alternative scenarios that could be pursued in the Core Strategy centring on different employment targets possibly expressed as a range, where employment should be directed, and how employment should be delivered alongside new housing including the use of phasing mechanisms.
- 3.312 The council will be flexible in applying its policies to prioritise employment development, especially in the early years to ensure delivery and job creation.

Monitoring and review

- 3.313 Monitoring will assess employment land take-up monitored through the Employment Land Survey, and indicators such as unemployment rates, and jobseeker claimants as well as indicators of the level of self-containment.
- 3.314 Employment development will be monitored within Weston-super-Mare against net housing completions in order to provide an indication of the balance between jobs and homes and the effectiveness of the employment-led strategy.

Delivering a Prosperous Economy

CS21: Retail Hierarchy and Provision

The vitality and viability of the following hierarchy of centres will be maintained and enhanced:

1 Sub-regional Centre

- Weston-super-Mare Town Centre

2 Town Centres in the Market and Coastal Towns

- Clevedon (Triangle)
- Nailsea
- Portishead

3 District Centres

- Clevedon (Hill Road)
- Locking Castle, Weston-super-Mare
- Phillips Road (Asda), Weston-super-Mare
- Queensway, Weston-super-Mare
- Worle High Street

4 Local Centres

a) within Weston-super-Mare

- Bournville (St Andrews Parade)
- Castle Batch
- Coronation Estate (Loxton Road)
- Locking Road
- Milton Hill
- Milton Road
- Oldmixon (Aller Parade)
- Whitecross Road

b) outside Weston-super-Mare

- Backwell
- Churchill
- Congresbury
- Long Ashton
- Pill
- Winscombe
- Wrington
- Yatton

Elsewhere in the district the council will resist the loss of small-scale shops including neighbourhood and village stores, and eating and drinking establishments that support the needs of local communities and support self-containment.

Proposals for town centre uses in the identified centres (1–4 above) will be supported, provided that they:

- 1) are of a scale appropriate to the size and role of these centres
- 2) support the creation of a comfortable, safe, attractive and accessible shopping environment
- 3) improve the mix of town centre uses in each centre.

CS21

Proposals for new or extended town centre uses outside these centres with a floorspace above 200 m² will need to demonstrate that:

- 1) there is a quantitative and qualitative need for the development
- 2) the uses could not be located within or on the edge of an existing centre
- 3) they would have no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of these centres.

Proposals resulting in the loss of town centre uses in these centres will need to demonstrate that:

- 1) the vitality and viability of the centre is not adversely affected
- 2) adequate retail provision remains for local residents.

A future Site Allocations Development Plan Document will define exact boundaries to the retail centres, and where appropriate shopping frontages to be protected. The aim in defining boundaries and frontages will be to retain the predominance of town centre uses in general and retail uses in particular.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 4, 6 and 10.

CS21

Background

3.315 The policy reflects Planning Policy Statement 6: *Planning for Town Centres*, which states that local authorities should plan positively for the growth and development of town centres by:

- developing a hierarchy and network of centres each performing their appropriate role to meet the needs of their catchment;
- assessing the need for town centre use and ensure there is capacity to accommodate them;
- focusing development in and planning for expansion of existing centres as appropriate;
- planning for new centres of an appropriate scale in areas of significant growth, e.g. new district centres at Weston-super-Mare;
- strengthening local centres, particularly in rural areas, by ensuring that there is a range of facilities and that these are retained;
- indicating an upper limit for the scale of development likely to be acceptable in particular centres.

The Core Strategy approach

3.316 The North Somerset Retail and Leisure Study (2006) assessed the need and demand for additional retail and leisure facilities throughout North Somerset up to 2021. It identified a requirement for the following types of additional retail floorspace:

Location	Type of goods	Requirement by 2021	
Weston-super-Mare	Town Centre	Comparison ⁶	32,100 m ²
		Convenience ⁷	3,000 m ²
	Non-central	Comparison	25,750 m ²
		Convenience	5,150 m ²
Clevedon	Comparison	6,050 m ²	
	Convenience	0	
Nailsea	Comparison	9,150 m ²	
	Convenience	-600 m ²	
Portishead	Comparison	3,150 m ²	
	Convenience	-200 m ²	

CS21

3.317 This policy allows for provision of the forecast scale of development in each of the centres. At Weston-super-Mare it is envisaged that new district and local centres will also be required to meet the needs of the urban extension.

3.318 Draft RSS Policy TC1 proposes a concentrated retail strategy, where most new town centre uses are located in major centres. The flexibility allowed in the Core Strategy mainly concerns the classification of the different type of centres, identification of their boundaries and interpretation to reflect local circumstances.

3.319 In the context of this policy, 'town centre uses' include retail, leisure, entertainment, intensive recreation, offices, arts, culture and tourism facilities (PPS6, para 1.8). When defining what constitutes the 'scale appropriate to the size and role of these centres', the upper limits are as follows:

Sub-regional/town centres	No limit
District centres: existing	500m ²
Local centres: existing	300m ²
District/local centres: proposed (Weston-super-Mare urban extension)	The Weston urban extension policy sets out specific requirements

Retail Hierarchy

3.320. Centres have been identified according to their amount of town centre floorspace, existing and planned roles as follows:

⁶ Goods required on an infrequent basis e.g. clothing, electrical goods.

⁷ Goods required on a daily or weekly basis e.g. food.

CS21

Category	Definition	Existing role	Planned role
<p>Sub-regional Centre: Weston-super-Mare Town Centre</p>	<p>Town Centre currently defined, with Primary Shopping Frontages, in North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2007). Weston-super-Mare Town Centre AAP considering future of retail core</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largest centre in North Somerset, serving all needs of the town and surrounding area short of those met by major attractions such as Cribbs Causeway and Bristol and Bath city centres 	<p>Strategically Significant Town (Draft RSS Policy A), whose sub-regional role as a service centre should be enhanced. The retail study identified need to accommodate significant new floorspace to enhance sub-regional role and improve attractiveness for North Somerset residents relative to the major attractions</p>
<p>Town centres in the Market and Coastal Towns: Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead</p>	<p>Town centres currently defined, with Primary Shopping Frontages, in North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2007)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of service provision, playing a major role in promoting increased local self-containment • Cater for residents' daily needs but also for higher-order, less frequent goods for the surrounding parishes • Proximity to each other means overlapping catchment areas, somewhat smaller than expected in a rural area • Proximity to Bristol and Weston means they are not expected to provide highest order goods 	<p>All identified in the retail study as healthy centres not needing significant further floorspace. Need is for upgrading/regeneration, dependent on availability of funding</p>

Category	Definition	Existing role	Planned role
District centres: Four in Weston-super-Mare; One in Clevedon (Hill Road)	<i>Either:</i> a large supermarket plus some large retail units, (e.g. Locking Castle), <i>or:</i> more than 60 units of town centre uses (e.g. Worle High Street)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve a wider neighbourhood area with a catchment of about 800m • Often have a monopoly position with regard to convenience goods for that neighbourhood 	Existing role maintained, taking opportunities to increase retail/social self-containment of the settlement. New district centres to be planned as part of Weston-super-Mare urban extension
Local centres: within Weston-super-Mare	Minimum of one small foodstore and six other retail units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve a narrower neighbourhood area with a catchment of about 400m 	Existing role maintained, taking opportunities to increase retail/social self-containment of the settlement. New local centres to be planned as part of Weston-super-Mare urban extension
Local centres: outside Weston-super-Mare	Minimum of 20 units of town centre uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve the parish and sometimes neighbouring parishes with essential day-to-day goods 	Existing role maintained, taking opportunities to increase retail/social self-containment of the settlement

CS21

How and where the policy will be delivered

3.321 A net addition to floorspace accommodating town centre uses is expected at the four towns, to meet forecast growth in demand. The Weston-super-Mare Town Centre AAP, the Site Allocations DPD and master planning for the urban extension will identify site-specific opportunities. Other aspects of the policy are permissive rather than aspirational.

3.322 Retail and town centre development is led by the private sector, though the council may also have a role in land assembly in some circumstances.

CS21



Alternative options and contingency planning

3.323 The hierarchy of centres accords with the settlement strategy set out in this Core Strategy, reducing the need to travel long distances for shopping trips and protecting and consolidating the roles of existing centres. Only one alternative has emerged, which is to

- include the Marchfields Way Retail Park in Weston-super-Mare as a district centre

3.324 This has a supermarket and a number of retail warehouses but lacks other services typical of a district centre, such as banks and restaurants, libraries or other public facilities. It is by definition a retail park and in accordance with PPS6, para. 2.54 the preferred approach is not to designate it as a district centre and 'sequentially preferred' site for town centre uses.

3.325 Retail and leisure provision to meet local needs is a by-product of population and employment growth. Any economic slowdown would result in reduced demand for floorspace, which would therefore come forward more slowly than the Core Strategy proposes. The adverse effect of this would be continued reliance on higher order centres, involving longer shopping trips. It is therefore important that the LDF identifies land for retail and related development, which is then safeguarded from short-term demands to release it for other uses.

Monitoring and review

3.326 Key performance targets will be:

- Proportion of vacant shops in all centres
- Number of all retail and other uses in all centres
- Proportion of units given over to retail use in all centres.

Delivering a Prosperous Economy

CS22: Tourism Strategy

North Somerset

Visitor facilities and accommodation will be supported across the district provided they :

- 1) are of an appropriate scale and improve the quality and diversity of the tourist offer;
- 2) do not result in a significant increase in car use and where possible maximise any opportunities for alternative means of access;
- 3) support conservation and economic development objectives; and
- 4) there are no adverse implications for the environment, local amenity and character of the area.

Weston-super-Mare

In Weston-super-Mare the focus will be on encouraging proposals that support the development of a vibrant, modern town within the South West with a broad appeal. This will be achieved through

- 1) Diversifying the range and improving the quality of attractions and activities in Weston-super-Mare to appeal to a broader range of visitors.

New visitor attractions will be expected to:

- a) Comply with a sequential approach which firstly identifies sites within the town centre or seafront;
 - b) Be of high quality environmental standards in terms of design and access;
 - c) Support the regeneration of the town centre;
 - d) Improve the range of year-round attractions;
 - e) Offer a high quality visitor experience and value for money.
- 2) Improving the range and quality of accommodation including hotels. All visitor accommodation will be encouraged to obtain national quality accreditation and to adopt sustainable tourism principles.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 4 and 5.

CS22

Background

- 3.327 The geographical location of North Somerset makes it an attractive tourist destination. Its combination of coastal setting, beautiful countryside, accessibility via the M5 and Bristol airport, and close proximity to Bristol, the city of Bath (a world heritage site), Cheddar Gorge, Wells and the rest of Somerset make it a versatile location which could appeal to a wide tourist market.
- 3.328 In 2000 North Somerset Council began work on a 20-year tourism strategy known as 'Blue Skies'. The aim of the research was to find out the views of stakeholder groups, look at tourism trends nationally and regionally, and create a vision for the future of tourism to which most stakeholders could subscribe and support. The Blue Skies Tourism Strategy sets out a vision for the district stating that "North Somerset will take advantage of its geographical location and the growth areas in tourism to ensure that tourism is a high quality, profitable and sustainable activity".
- 3.329 Weston-super-Mare has traditionally been the main tourist destination within the district, but changes to the tourism industry over the last ten years mean that Weston's role for tourism needs to be redefined. Weston-super-Mare's largest market is currently day visitors and this market is growing. The Weston-super-Mare Visitor Survey 2007 shows that 69% of visitors to the resort are day visitors compared to 58% in 2005 indicating a general upward trend in day visitor numbers.

CS22

The Core Strategy approach

North Somerset:

- 3.330 The tourism focus for North Somerset will be to promote and enhance its role as a centre for regional and sub-regional activities and events, capitalise on its outstanding natural environment through the sustainable promotion of outdoor activities and pursuits and emphasis its excellent location as base for exploring the other attractions within the sub-region.

Weston-super-Mare:

- 3.331 Visitors now expect a wider range of attractions and events with more activities such as sport, good shopping, restaurants and evening entertainment. If Weston-super-Mare is to compete effectively as a tourism destination, it needs to develop specific experiences and attractions to appeal to its day visitor market, as well as looking to attract staying visitors. The natural amphitheatre of the beach and beach lawns is excellent for holding events as demonstrated through existing successful events in the town such as the T4 music concert and the Beach Race. Maximising these natural assets as well as developing and promoting niche activities such as adventure sports, will give Weston specific tourism identity.

CS22



- 3.332 Equally, attractions also need to be provided which reduce seasonality through providing year-round, all weather family attractions and developing activities which are not weather dependant.
- 3.333 New attractions should firstly be located in the town centre and seafront to contribute to the regeneration of the town centre. A sequential approach will be taken to leisure development in the town to ensure such uses contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre and are in the most sustainable locations with easy access by public transport. As well as attracting more visitors and in turn increased spending in the town, the design and integration of any new attraction within the town are equally important factors and should be taken into account.

- 3.334 Tourist accommodation in Weston-super-Mare is generally low quality and improving the quality of accommodation is an objective of the Blue Skies Tourism Strategy. There is a strong link between the quality and range of attractions that the town has to offer and the level and quality of tourist accommodation that is provided. Higher quality tourist accommodation, including a 3 or 4 star hotel within the town, is likely to be provided alongside new attractions and if more people are being attracted to the town there will be increased demand for better tourist accommodation.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.335 In accordance with the Blue Skies Strategy the increase in tourism activities will be concentrated at Weston-super-Mare. However, provided proposals do not conflict with Green Belt, sustainable development and environmental policies, then an increase in tourism will be supported throughout the district.
- 3.336 By seeking to improve the quality and range of tourist accommodation and facilities, visitor numbers and satisfaction levels will increase and have a positive effect on the local economy.
- 3.337 Working together with tourism professionals, local businesses and other partners a co-ordinated approach to promoting tourism while protecting the environment of the district will be undertaken.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.338 The alternative approach to tourism in North Somerset would be not to focus on Weston-super-Mare as the primary location of attractions and events. The problem with this approach is that:
- it would not take positive steps to achieve the objective of developing sustainable tourism through locating tourist attractions and accommodation close together within easy walking distance of each other, or easily accessible by public transport; and
 - within Weston-super-Mare it would not take positive steps towards raising the quality and diversity of attractions which would fail to lift the image and profile of the town.

Monitoring and review

- 3.339 Monitoring will assess visitor numbers, accommodation, events and attractions across the district.

Delivering a Prosperous Economy

CS23: Bristol International Airport

Proposals for the development of Bristol International Airport will be required to demonstrate the satisfactory resolution of environmental issues, including the impact of growth on surrounding communities and surface access infrastructure.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 5.

Background

3.340 The 2003 Air Transport White Paper supports the development of Bristol International Airport (BIA) to accommodate up to 12 million passengers per annum (mppa) by 2030. Draft RSS (Policy RTS6) confirms that this is the level of growth to be planned for.

The Core Strategy approach

3.341 Development requiring consent up to 2011 is provided for by Policy T/12 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan and is the subject of a current planning application. As well as taking account of the wide range of environmental issues including climate change, the Core Strategy emphasises the importance of assessing the local impacts, particularly in relation to surrounding communities and surface access issues.

3.342 Additional development requiring consent beyond that date is expected to form the subject of an Area Action Plan or other development plan document, such as a subject-based plan for aviation. This would be co-ordinated, as far as possible, with the review of the Airport Master Plan around 2011. To meet this timetable the background work, including consultations with the local community and key stakeholders, would be largely completed during 2010. Consistent with partnership working and effective use of resources there would seem to be advantage in combining the first stage of the Area Action Plan with the Master Plan review, once monitoring has clarified what the scope of the review will need to address. Pending adoption of an AAP, the intention is that Policy T/12 should continue in place.

How and where the policy will be delivered

3.343 The policy relates to the development of Bristol International Airport only. Off-site car parking is regulated by Local Plan Policy T/12; the Core Strategy proposes no change to this policy's approach.

3.344 Development of the airport is led by its owners, whose responsibility it is to ensure that the environmental impacts of growth are satisfactorily addressed.



CS23

- 3.345 In relation to future development beyond that which is identified in the Replacement Local Plan, the council will liaise with the airport, to ensure that the timing of a future Development Plan Document is co-ordinated with additions to the evidence base arising from review of the Airport Master Plan.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.346 The alternative considered is to produce detailed proposals for the airport at this stage, including associated changes to the Green Belt boundary. The airport could then be identified in the Core Strategy as a strategic allocation, with a defined boundary outlined. This has been rejected for the following reasons:

- (1) Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: *Green Belts* (para. 2.8) states that Green Belts should have a degree of permanence. As it would devalue the concept of the Green Belt to make frequent changes, it is important to consider any change in the context of the fullest possible understanding of future development needs. This is not currently available.
- (2) The emerging RSS (Policy HMA1) proposes that land will be removed from the Green Belt, having regard to the airport's development needs. The form of development envisaged as requiring consent post-2011 is not well-defined in the airport's current master plan, but it is understood will be better defined in the review.
- (3) While the airport has its own preferred direction of growth (defined by current ownership boundaries), all reasonable alternatives need to be tested. This work could unnecessarily delay the Core Strategy and could be abortive if the Master Plan review suggests a different approach.

CS23

3.347 The growth of the airport is a by-product of population and employment growth. Any economic slowdown would result in reduced demand for aviation, and therefore slower growth in facilities at BIA than the Air Transport White Paper or the airport master plan envisaged. The adverse effect of this would be continued reliance on other airports, involving longer surface journeys, contrary to the government's aim of reducing 'leakage' to airports outside the South West. A stronger political emphasis on limiting the climate change impacts of aviation could also constrain growth. However, the current and proposed planning policies both designate as Green Belt the land around the airport, which is therefore protected from short-term demands to release it for other uses.

Monitoring and review

3.348 Surface access improvements and public transport use will be monitored, particularly the proportion of air passengers using the Flyer bus link.

Delivering a Prosperous Economy

CS24: Royal Portbury Dock

The role of Royal Portbury Dock will be maintained and enhanced.

Land at Court House Farm, Easton-in-Gordano/Portbury will continue to be safeguarded for port uses, subject to demonstrable need for those uses that cannot be accommodated elsewhere within the port estate and to detailed requirements to be set out in a Site Allocations DPD. Further expansion of the port within North Somerset is not supported.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 5.

Background

3.349 Draft RSS (Policy RTS5) confirms that the future needs of the port can only be assessed across the whole complex, which involves Bristol as well as North Somerset. The RSS Panel report concluded that the next longer-term development of the port will occur on the north side of the river.

The Core Strategy approach

3.350 Expansion at Royal Portbury Dock up to 2011 is provided for by Policy E/6 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan and land safeguarded, subject to proof of need and other detailed requirements. The Core Strategy continues this approach. No further land for port use will be identified.

How and where the policy will be delivered

3.351 Development of the port is led by its owners, whose responsibility it is to ensure that the environmental impacts of growth are satisfactorily addressed. The council will seek the preparation of a port master plan covering the whole of the Port of Bristol.

3.352 The policy safeguards land and will be applied through development management procedures.

Alternative options and contingency planning

3.353 The alternative considered would be to take a more relaxed approach to the expansion of the port. This has been rejected because the amenities of residents of Easton-in-Gordano and Portbury are an important consideration that should be highlighted in policy. So too is the protection of open countryside, which the RSS recognises should not be sacrificed in advance of a demonstrable need for development. Other land around the port in North Somerset is approved Green Belt; this status is only alterable in exceptional circumstances.

Monitoring and review

3.354 Monitoring of planning applications.

CS24

Ensuring Safe and Healthy Communities

CS25: Children, Young People and Higher Education

Where local provision for children and young people will be inadequate to meet the needs of new residential developments, improved facilities/services or new learning facilities (i.e. schools, pre-schools, children's centres, childminding provision, youth provisions etc) will be sought to meet any identified shortfall.

These learning facilities will be provided in tandem with population growth. Where appropriate, new schools will become focal points for communities and act as a venue for a wide range of community activities.

New schools/children and young people facilities will be sited in a location that would facilitate safe routes to the venue and be directly accessible to a pedestrian and cycleway network.

The provision of further and higher education and training initiatives and facilities, particularly with regards to the role and expansion of Weston College as a focus for higher education within the district, will be supported.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 8.

Background

- 3.355 With a large amount of development planned up to 2026 there is going to be increasing pressure on the children services system to meet the needs of residents. New housing developments can increase the number of children in an area and place greater demand for pupil places in local schools and other children focused services.
- 3.356 This is particularly true in the case of the expansion of Weston. Here six new primary schools (with possible co-located community facilities such as children's centres, pre-schools etc), up to two new secondary schools, and the probable relocation and expansion of other existing schools will be required to serve the new developments.
- 3.357 For smaller developments any deficiencies can be more problematic to solve as needs are often greater than the provision of just a classroom(s) and associated servicing and supporting facilities such as toilets, play space etc. Class organisational structures may necessitate the need for a range of additional facilities to support the council's policy of working towards having single aged teaching bases and the legal requirement for infant-aged pupils to be taught within teacher pupil ratios of 1:30. In addition, any supporting accommodation such as the hall, play areas, green fields and other teaching rooms also need to adequately cater for the rising school population. These education facilities will need to be provided in tandem with population growth to ensure that all children have safe and convenient access to school facilities that meet their needs.

- 3.358 Weston College also plays an important role in Weston-super-Mare in terms of provision of higher education. Weston College now offers degree courses and has many sites across the town including its new University Campus which opened in 2007 and is leading in a range of new initiatives including work based learning and higher education.
- 3.359 A successful Weston College can provide the workforce with skills to support local businesses and its continued success is critical to the future of the town. The town centre with its good public transport links is ideally located to support the future expansion of the college including facilities such as students' halls of residence.

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.360 Developer contributions will be sought to meet the children and young people's educational and play needs of new developments. Depending on the extent of the shortfall and the scale of development proposed contributions could be required for secondary, primary and special schools as well as pre-schools, youth centres, play needs and children's centres. As well as built accommodation, contributions towards improving safe routes to school or home to school transport may be required.
- 3.361 Any contributions will be influenced by the North Somerset School Organisational Plan (2007–2012). This strategic document includes an assessment of future demand for school places and how these may be accommodated. The main conclusions arising from the document which are relevant to the Core Strategy are:
- To ensure that there is a surplus of around 5–7% of places in all schools to enable parental preferences to be realised as much as possible;
 - To enable the council to support school organisational structures that enable approved curriculum planning structures to be put in place by all schools;
 - To progress amalgamations and federations where they contribute to academic achievement, improve standards and give greater financial sustainability;
 - To progress Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and the Primary Capital Programme (PCP) where funding permits;
 - To expand primary and secondary school place provision in Portishead and Weston-super-Mare to meet residential needs;
 - To promote extended services and children's centre provision across the district to match Government requirements;
 - To review school place provision across all clusters and make changes as necessary.

- 3.362 Schools are often focal points for communities and can provide a valuable community resource outside of school. They can act as a venue for clubs, societies and community groups as well as more active recreation and sport. The design and layout of new education facilities should therefore include features aimed at facilitating community use.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.363 Most of the new schools in the district will be associated with the expansion of Weston-super-Mare although the policy will apply to any development that requires the expansion of facilities for children and young people.
- 3.364 The strategy will be developed through the implementation of the North Somerset School Organisational Plan (2007–2012) which will be funded mainly by a combination of developer contributions and also, where available, through public sector finance. Developer’s contributions will be set out in a forthcoming Supplementary Planning Document.
- 3.365 There will be effective co-ordination with the council’s children and young people directorate and local community groups to ensure that local needs are clearly identified and implemented.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.366 One of the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy is to “meet the learning, social and cultural needs of North Somerset communities” and there are no alternative approaches that would meet this aim. It would be unrealistic to expect these facilities to be totally funded and provided from the public purse.

Monitoring and review

- 3.367 Monitoring will assess the provision of facilities.



Ensuring Safe and Healthy Communities

CS26: Supporting Healthy Living and the Provision of Health Care Facilities

The planning process will support programmes and strategies which increase and improve health services throughout the district, promote healthier lifestyles and aim to reduce health inequalities. This will be achieved through:

- 1) Requiring Health Impact Assessments (HIA) on all large scale developments in the district;
- 2) Joint working with health providers to help deliver a district-wide network of health facilities which are located within towns or service villages and are easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport or travel. Where the local provision of health services is insufficient to support an increased population arising from large scale new residential development additional health facilities will be sought to meet any identified shortfall;
- 3) Working with relevant stakeholders to reduce geographical inequalities in health within the district;
- 4) Encouraging development that promotes active living through creating places that are easily accessible, attractive and safe to move around by walking or cycling;
- 5) Promoting healthy lifestyles by addressing existing deficiencies in provision, and aiming to improve the quality and quantity of sports facilities, playing pitches and children's play spaces throughout the district and access to them;
- 6) Encouraging development which incorporates, or is within walking distance, from attractive, usable green public open space and contributes to enhancing the green infrastructure network;
- 7) Recognising and safeguarding the role of allotments, small scale agriculture and farmers' markets in providing access to healthy, affordable, locally produced food options.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 4 and 8.

Background

3.368 Planning policy plays an important role in creating healthy communities from the design and provision of infrastructure which supports healthy lifestyles through to the need to provide access to decent housing, sport facilities, recreation, cultural and community facilities, and health care facilities.

CS26

- 3.369 There is significant evidence that the quality of the environment people live in greatly influences people's physical and mental health and factors such as access to open space, the ability to lead an active lifestyle, access to health care facilities, community cohesion through the provision of facilities and services within neighbourhoods and good quality housing all impact on people's health and well-being and can all be influenced through planning policy.
- 3.370 Over the next 20 years North Somerset is projected to have a population increase of 32.3% with 65,000 additional residents taking the total population for the district to 266,400 by 2026. The North Somerset Community Strategy identifies a number of challenges the district faces with regard to health such as an increasing number of frail and vulnerable older people with health problems.
- 3.371 Within North Somerset there is a widening gap in life expectancy between people living in the most deprived areas and those in the most affluent. The life expectancy gap between the fifth most deprived and those least deprived is 7.8 years for males and 5.9 for females⁸. Some areas in North Somerset have the lowest life expectancy in the South West. The determinants of health are closely linked to factors such as ability to earn a reasonable wage, access to good quality housing, access to open space, an active lifestyle, healthy food, access to cultural and community facilities, and easy access to health care facilities. Therefore, addressing health inequalities in the district requires a comprehensive approach working with a variety of organisations and departments such as health providers, education, and housing. Equally, environmental factors, the design of buildings and places, and the quality and maintenance of the public realm are all recognised as factors which can have significant influences on health.

CS26

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.372 Health Impact Assessments are an important tool used to assess how development proposals will contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of the local population and end users of the scheme. Public authorities and developers alike increasingly need to consider how policies, strategies or developments will impact on health and health inequalities. A Health Impact Assessment can identify the potential health gains and potential risks to health and help to identify additional measures to reduce or avoid these risks. This policy requires Health Impact Assessments to be submitted with applications for all major development within the district.

⁸ North Somerset Health Profile 2007.



CS26

- 3.373 Designing places which are attractive and easy to walk or cycle around, where facilities and services are located close together and there is convenient access to open spaces and leisure/recreational facilities will support the health agenda objectives. Other policies set out the importance of mixed use developments and the importance of urban design on creating attractive, safe and inviting places and spaces.
- 3.374 Other aspects such as the role of allotments can also be valuable in terms of enabling people to grow their own food, but also involving exercise, fresh air and frequent interaction with the natural environment which has proven to be positive for mental well-being. Demand for allotments is variable over time but with rising food prices, increased awareness over food quality and reducing food miles coupled with smaller gardens and increased leisure time, demand is likely to remain stable or even increase over the plan period.

- 3.375 Community supported agriculture systems also to help support local producers and create a much stronger link between customers and their food, particularly in deprived areas where cost continues to be a significant or perceived barrier to buying fresh produce.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.376 New health facilities will primarily be delivered in areas of housing growth to meet the needs of new communities. New health facilities will also be provided in towns and service villages where there is a proven deficit in such a service and within Weston-super-Mare to meet the needs of the growing population of the town. Where appropriate, sites will be identified through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

- 3.377 Partnership working between North Somerset Council, North Somerset Primary Care Trust and other health care service providers will ensure that appropriate health facilities are provided in the best locations. Equally, the development control process will ensure that any new developments meet the necessary requirements in terms of provision of green infrastructure, access to open space, and the requirement for Health Impact Assessments to be submitted with large scale applications will ensure that health issues are given due consideration at the planning application stage.

CS26

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.378 There is a significant drive nationally and regionally for strategic policies to have consideration of the impact they have on levels of physical activity and other aspects of health, and to include policies which ensure that the health agenda is at the heart of policy and decision-making. Not to include a policy relating to planning for healthy communities would be short-sighted and fail to capitalise on the spatial role the Core Strategy has to make a positive contribution towards improving the health of residents in North Somerset.

Monitoring and review

- 3.379 The number of facilities delivered, and Health Impact Assessments provided on large scale applications will be monitored.

Ensuring Safe and Healthy Communities

CS27: Sport, Recreation and Community Facilities

Where the local provision of sport, recreation, children's play and other community facilities arising from new residential development is inadequate to meet projected needs and standards, additional provision in safe and accessible locations will be sought to meet any identified shortfall. This provision may be in the form of on-site provision or the enhancement/ improved access to existing facilities.

Existing facilities will be safeguarded from alternative use unless suitable alternative facilities can be made available or the existing facilities are surplus to requirements.

On large scale developments facilities will be provided in step with population growth and will be designed as an integral part of the development.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 2.

Background

3.380 Sport, recreation and community facilities not only underpin people's quality of life but can help create diverse sustainable communities as well ensuring that biodiversity, learning and health targets are met. With the population of North Somerset to expand considerably by 2026, it is imperative that these facilities are provided to meet this demand. Any lack of provision will result in future residents having to travel outside their immediate area and the opportunity for a thriving and vibrant community will be lost.

The Core Strategy approach

3.381 This policy, which covers all indoor and outdoor sports facilities as well as libraries, community halls, and other community facilities, will ensure that for all residents there is safe and convenient access to these facilities, in particular those living within new development areas. In the past, development has often proceeded with poorly located or insufficient facilities and this policy seeks to avoid this situation.

3.382 Flexible and imaginative design will create buildings and spaces which can be used for a variety of organisations, services and facilities. Consideration should be given to facilities for policing to support community safety objectives.

3.383 Facilities need to be accessible by public transport and located on cycleway/pedestrian networks and imaginative design of buildings structures and open spaces will be required so they can enhance the setting of any surrounding residential and commercial areas.

CS27



- 3.384 These facilities are key infrastructure requirements and in accordance with PPG17 *Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation*, North Somerset council is undertaking an assessment of existing provision, in order to identify shortfalls against a local standard of provision for all facilities and set out future requirements for the future population of North Somerset. It is intended that this assessment will be published as a Supplementary Planning Document and will be used to secure appropriate contributions from developments throughout the district.
- 3.385 The policy also recognises the importance of retaining existing facilities and the role they can play in meeting future demands.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.386 Delivery of facilities will take place across the district. North Somerset will work with partners and the private sector to deliver sport, recreation and community facilities where required. The council will consider mechanisms for delivering and maintaining facilities in ways which minimise the burden on the public purse.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 3.387 The requirement for and benefits of adequate sport, recreation and community facilities to meet future population needs is well established and there are no alternative approaches that would meet this requirement.

Monitoring and review

- 3.388 Planning applications for new and extended facilities will be monitored.

CHAPTER 4: **Area Policies**

- 4.1 These policies pull together the overall strategic policy requirements relating to specific areas. These demonstrate how the area visions and priority objectives (Chapter 2) will be addressed, and should be read in conjunction with the spatial policies set out in Chapter 3.
- 4.2 The area policies bring together the different policy strands and include the infrastructure requirements (environmental, social, and economic) necessary to deliver development in a sustainable way.

CS28 Weston-super-Mare

CS29 Weston-super-Mare Town Centre

CS30 Weston Urban Extension

CS31 Market and Coastal Towns

CS32 Service Villages

CS33 Smaller Settlements and Countryside

- 4.3 No specific area policy is included for the South West Bristol urban extension as proposed in the RSS. Chapter 5 explores the issues and options related to this proposal.

Area Policies

CS28: Weston-super-Mare

Weston-super-Mare will be the primary focus for development within North Somerset. The town will accommodate 12,000 new dwellings and about 10,000 jobs between 2006-2026 as part of an employment-led strategy to deliver improved self-containment and reduced out-commuting during the plan period.

New development in Weston-super-Mare will be focused on two key locations:

The **Weston urban extension** where the emphasis is on comprehensive development to create sustainable new communities and linked to employment areas (see Policy CS30).

The **town centre and gateway** where the emphasis is on the regeneration of a range of key sites to stimulate investment, including residential, retail, employment and leisure opportunities (see Policy CS29).

No strategic development will be permitted to the east of the M5 motorway. The settlement boundary of Weston-super-Mare will be extended to incorporate the Weston urban extension.

Within Weston-super-Mare, new development proposals will be encouraged where they:

- 1) Contribute to increasing self-containment and do not further exacerbate the existing unsustainable jobs/homes imbalance in the town. Large sites proposed for residential development must either provide on-site employment opportunities or, where this is not appropriate, provide off-site contributions.
- 2) Reinforce the focus of the town centre as the location for higher order facilities and services, including retail, tourism and leisure opportunities.
- 3) Prioritise the development of previously developed land, particularly within the new development areas.
- 4) Support existing community hubs of local retailing and other services located within the town.
- 5) Reflect and enhance the characteristic built historic elements of Weston-super-Mare such as its stone buildings, formal parks and conservation areas.
- 6) Enhance its green infrastructure and biodiversity, particularly the ridges to the north and south, the woodland areas, the rhyes network, and the seafront.
- 7) Address issues of deprivation and inequality particularly in South Ward and Central Ward.

- 8) Improve accessibility within Weston-super-Mare by walking, cycling and public transport, particularly where they enhance connectivity with, for example, local facilities, service centres, the town centre and seafront.
- 9) Retain and enhance the boulevard effect of the main approaches into the town.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Background

- 4.4 The draft Regional Spatial Strategy categorises Weston-super-Mare as a Strategically Significant Town which means it will be the primary focus for development in the district and provision will be made to maintain and enhance the town's sub-regionally significant role and function for housing, employment, cultural, education, retail, health and other services and facilities.

The Core Strategy approach

- 4.5 The purpose of this policy is to provide a set of principles for all development within the town to adhere to and to ensure a comprehensive approach to development which results in a co-ordinated process of town-wide regeneration.
- 4.6 The policy also seeks to contain development of the town within the clear physical boundary of the M5 motorway. The town has sufficient land to the west of the M5 to deliver the required growth. Locating future development to the west of the M5 will consolidate the town ensuring a sustainable new urban extension that is well linked to the town centre by sustainable modes of transport, minimising car trips and ensuring that the future population of the town will support and sustain the regeneration of the town centre. Development to the east of the M5 is inappropriate as it would result in developing greenfield land in an unsustainable location effectively dispersing the development of the town further along the A370, resulting in more car trips and increased congestion.
- 4.7 The economic regeneration of Weston is a key strategic aim of North Somerset Council to be achieved through the promotion of a more sustainable balance between employment and housing. By requiring large sites (of 10 dwellings or more) to provide either on-site employment provision or, where this is not appropriate, off-site contributions towards employment generating initiatives, the policy aims to ensure that further residential development within the town is matched by employment development.

- 4.8 Weston-super-Mare town centre has been identified as a focus for higher order facilities and services. The town centre area (as identified in Policy CS29) includes the seafront and gateway area around the train station extending along the A370 to just beyond Winterstoke Road roundabout. This area has been identified for significant growth and regeneration and an Area Action Plan is being produced to provide detailed guidance for development in this area. The focus will be on providing a significant increase in the town's retail offer over the next twenty years focused on the retail core, creating an office quarter around the railway station on a number of vacant or underused sites in this location and focusing on the town's role as a tourist destination by concentrating leisure, hotel and tourist uses along the seafront and in the town centre.
- 4.9 Within Weston-super-Mare to ensure a sustainable approach to development within the town the priority for housing development will be on previously-developed land. This includes the phasing for the urban extension as identified in Policy CS30.



- 4.10 Although the majority of new development within the town will be focused in the town centre and Weston urban extension it is important to support existing communities and local centres as the town grows and develops over the next twenty years. The council will resist the loss of small-scale shops outside the town and district centres that meet the requirements of local communities. Policy CS21 sets out the Core Strategy approach to supporting local centres.
- 4.11 Weston has a strong identity as a Victorian seaside town and the town centre and seafront contains five conservation areas and numerous listed buildings. This policy seeks to reflect and enhance this setting to reinforce the character and identity of the town.
- 4.12 Green infrastructure consists of strategic networks of accessible, multifunctional sites such as parks, woodland, informal open spaces, nature reserves, wildlife corridors such as rhynes and hedgerows and historic sites. Green infrastructure serves a number of important uses and the emphasis within this policy is on enhancing existing provision and ensuring that new development makes a positive contribution towards the provision of new green infrastructure.
- 4.13 The growth and development of Weston-super-Mare over the next twenty years has an important role to play in helping to deliver on a range of regeneration issues including providing a broader range of jobs, provision of training and helping to improve the range of local skills. South and Central Wards in Weston-super-Mare have been identified as being in the top 2% most deprived wards in the country and this brings a range of social, environmental and economic issues that need to be addressed as part of the regeneration of the town, especially in terms of access to employment and training opportunities.
- 4.14 Weston-super-Mare has the benefit of being a predominantly flat town which lends itself to the promotion of walking and cycling as sustainable modes of transport. Any new development should consider how it integrates and connects with the rest of the town in terms of accessibility by foot and bicycle. Development of the urban extension must ensure that direct, safe pedestrian and cycle routes are provided to the town centre and seafront to ensure its integration with the rest of the town.
- 4.15 Due to Weston-super-Mare's coastal location there are a number of main approaches to the town leading to the town centre and seafront. This creates a boulevard effect of direct routes, rather than through-routes or rings roads that may be found in other towns. These routes create the first impressions of Weston-super-Mare and therefore any development along these approaches will be of an exceptional design to enhance their appearance. Public realm improvements, tree planting, public art and landscaping will also be sought along these routes.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 4.16 The policy applies within the redefined settlement boundary of Weston-super-Mare which will be extended to incorporate the new urban extension.
- 4.17 Further planning policy guidance in the form of an Area Action Plan for Weston town centre, Supplementary Planning Guidance including a master plan and delivery plan for Weston urban extension, a Site Allocations DPD, and a Developer Contributions SPD will provide detailed guidance to deliver this strategy. Development will primarily be delivered through private investment. As a landowner the council will ensure that its land is used effectively to meet the wider Core Strategy objectives and will where appropriate work closely with other landowning interests and developers.
- 4.18 The council will work in conjunction with the landowners, developers, the South West Regional Development Agency, the Homes and Communities Agency, the main service providers, the local community and other key stakeholders to deliver this strategy.

Alternative options and contingency

- 4.19 The alternative option would be to disperse growth around the district. This would result in an unsustainable form of development and would not provide the quantum of development necessary to facilitate the regeneration of Weston-super-Mare.

Monitoring and review

- 4.20 Key monitoring indicators will include:

- Amount of new employment development completed and occupied.
- Amount of new retail floor space.
- Amount of new leisure development within the town.
- Percentage of new development on previously developed land.
- 'Health checks' on local centres in terms of monitoring loss or gain of retail units/services.
- Levels of unemployment particularly in South and Central Wards.

Area Policies

CS29: Weston-super-Mare Town Centre

Within Weston-super-Mare town centre areas will be defined, through an Area Action Plan, to provide a focus for retail, leisure and entertainment facilities and commercial office development to regenerate the town and provide a prosperous, modern, vibrant town centre to serve the existing and future population of Weston. Housing, along with other appropriate uses, will also be incorporated as part of mixed use schemes in these areas.

Retail Core

The regeneration of Weston-super-Mare's town centre will be achieved through the provision of land for major retail development within the retail core. This may include other uses that are appropriate and compatible with town centre activities and which will assist in the enhancement of the centre and the range of shops, services and facilities it has to offer. The two main sites prioritised for retail-led development within the town centre are Victoria Square and Dolphin Square. Retail-led development proposals will need to:

- 1) Significantly contribute towards the provision of 20,050m² of comparison floorspace needed by 2016.
- 2) Address the need for an additional 2,250m² of convenience floorspace in the retail core needed by 2016, through an improved and enlarged food store.
- 3) Be of the highest quality design which makes a positive and distinct contribution to the existing built environment.
- 4) Strengthen physical and visual connections between the retail core, the seafront and gateway area.

Seafront

Alongside and adjacent to the seafront priority will be given to entertainment and leisure uses, tourist facilities and accommodation. Priority will be given to regeneration of key redevelopment sites such as Tropicana and Birnbeck Island.

Development proposals in this area should:

- 1) Have consideration for the sequential approach to development based on PPS6: *Planning for Town Centres* and not prejudice the vitality and viability of the retail core, but instead should complement activities in the town centre.
- 2) Strengthen pedestrian and visual links and connections between the seafront and the retail core such as through planned improvements to 'Pier Square'.
- 3) Be of the highest quality design which will enhance the visual appearance of the seafront and promenade.

Gateway Area

The redevelopment of sites within the gateway area will make more efficient use of land intensifying development in this area. Redevelopment proposals in the gateway area will primarily be for commercial office development and should not harm the viability or vitality of Weston's town centre or seafront. Development in this area should:

- 1) Contribute towards the provision of approximately 80,000m² of class B1 floor space.
- 2) Be of a high quality design that will enhance the visual image, and emphasise the importance of the gateway to the town centre.
- 3) Minimise the generation of car trips by concentrating uses around the train station and improving the public transport infrastructure.
- 4) Strengthen connections to the town centre through new and improved pedestrian and cycle routes.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 10.

Background

4.21 Weston-super-Mare's town centre has suffered from a lack of major investment over the last thirty years. The town centre is perceived to be uncompetitive with other centres in the sub-region because of access constraints and its relatively poor retail offer. Due to its coastal location Weston's town centre is, to a certain extent, constrained in terms of expansion. However, this coastal setting is also the town's main asset.

4.22 The planned expansion to Weston-super-Mare over the next twenty years through a 9,000 home urban extension and the creation of over 10,000 jobs will see a huge increase in demand for shops, services and leisure facilities.

4.23 Weston-super-Mare's town centre needs to meet this demand in order to secure future self-containment of the town and to fulfil its role as a Strategically Significant Town within the district and the sub-region.



CS29

The Core Strategy approach

4.24 **Retail:** North Somerset's Retail and Leisure Survey (April 2006) identified a need for new comparison (non-food) shopping of approximately 32,100m² and the need for approximately 3,000m² of additional food retail in Weston town centre until 2021. However, retail forecasts which project so far into the future should be treated with caution. Therefore, the projected figures up to 2016 have been used as a guide of approximately 19,000m² comparison (which has been increase to 20,050m² as it is estimated there is slightly more capacity on the sites identified for comparison retail uses) and 2,250m² convenience retail. These should give a more accurate projection, and are more realistic in terms of delivery within the immediate plan period⁶.

⁹ These figures have been rounded to the nearest 1000m².

- 4.25 Weston town centre has historically suffered from having a lack of readily identifiable sites for new retail development, which has resulted in occupiers locating in competing centres such as Bristol, Bath and Taunton. The town centre policy, which will be expanded upon through the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan, aims to identify sites within the town centre for retail development to meet the projected retail need. This will achieve the step-change in the quantity and quality of the retail provision needed to improve Weston's image and enable it to compete as a shopping destination within the sub-region.
- 4.26 **Tourism:** Tourism and leisure activities have traditionally played an important role in Weston's economy. The council recognises that tourism is an important part of the town's economy, but also recognises that Weston currently caters for a very small section of the tourist market. According to the Weston-super-Mare Visitors Survey 2007 there were 6.1 million visitors to Weston, 85% of which were repeat visitors. In order to retain its role as a tourist destination Weston needs to broaden its appeal and tap into the wider tourist market offering attractions, events and accommodation which will attract a varied range of visitors.
- 4.27 Improving the image of Weston-super-Mare as a holiday destination will depend on a number of factors. The provision of high quality accommodation, a more upmarket retail, leisure and restaurant offer and an improved built environment are all factors that will significantly contribute to raising the image of Weston. Equally, branding of the town and positive publicity such as high profile new developments or national events such as T4 on the beach, creates the necessary exposure to attract new visitors. North Somerset Council's destination management team is currently developing a new brand for Weston-super-Mare which aims to establish a clear identity for the town which reflects and conveys its special qualities and can be used to link together and reinforce the range of products, experiences, attractions and events Weston has to offer.
- 4.28 **Employment:** The strengthened role of Weston town centre needs to include an expansion of employment opportunities. The economic regeneration of Weston-super-Mare is a key strategic aim of North Somerset Council. This is to be achieved through the promotion of a more sustainable balance between employment and housing.
- 4.29 Traditionally the lack of employment opportunities in Weston-super-Mare has resulted in significant out-commuting. Increasing local employment opportunities will assist in minimising the number of residents who commute to work at destinations outside the town, increase the self-containment level of Weston and result in a larger labour force which will support and sustain the services and facilities in the town centre.

- 4.30. The town centre lacks any existing good quality well-located office space and there are few sites allocated for this use. These have been major obstacles to expanding the employment opportunities in Weston town centre.
- 4.31 The town centre offers the most sustainable location for commercial office development and there is scope to provide significant new office floor space, particularly around the railway station. Allocating centrally located sites for office development will intensify development in the gateway area creating a sense of arrival in the town centre, increase levels of activity in the gateway area and strengthen links with the town centre.
- 4.32 Ensuring there are employment uses in the town centre will add to the mix of uses which combine to create a more vibrant, viable, dynamic town centre and office-led regeneration will diversify the local economy, thereby ensuring the town has less reliance on seasonal industries and tourism.
- 4.33 **Housing:** The council is committed to increasing the amount of employment uses in relation to the amount of housing to redress the current imbalance that exists in the town. This is a strategic objective set out in the emerging RSS and Core Strategy.
- 4.34 However, the council also recognises that within Weston town centre residential development will be an essential component to delivering a vibrant, viable dynamic town centre. Furthermore, due to the complex nature of developing a number of the sites including issues such as potential retention and conversion of historic buildings and remediation costs on a number of sites, residential uses may act as enabling development to ensure the viability of a number of schemes.
- 4.35 While the council is committed to increasing the jobs to homes ratio within the town as a whole, some flexibility may be needed to ensure delivery of financially viable, sustainable mixed use schemes on sites within the town centre.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 4.36 The outcomes will be delivered within the boundary for the town centre identified in the Area Action Plan. This boundary includes the seafront and extends out along the A370 incorporating a numbers of sites on the approach to the town centre. The AAP identifies 15 priority sites for development and it is anticipated that development proposals will be focused on these sites.

- 4.37 The Weston-super-Mare town centre policy will be delivered through close liaison between the council, its partners, landowners and developers. The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their sites can play in the regeneration of Weston town centre.
- 4.38 As a landowner the council will ensure that its land is used effectively to meet the wider town centre objectives and will where appropriate work closely with other landowning interests and developers.
- 4.39 A Weston Town Centre Landowners Group was established in March 2007 and is used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests in the town centre. The Weston Advisory Group, which was established in 2005 provides co-ordination between landowners in the town centre and major landowners outside the town centre linked with the proposed urban extension to Weston-super-Mare.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 4.40 The alternative approach to development in the town centre would be to allow piecemeal development on a site-by-site basis. This is an unacceptable option as it does not provide a comprehensive long-term approach which would achieve the vision for Weston-super-Mare town centre. By identifying areas and sites within the town centre for specific land uses the policy ensures that the uses on each site complement each other and do not prejudice the vitality or viability of the town centre.

Monitoring and review

- 4.41 In order to assess the success of the policy in meeting the objectives various indicators will be monitored. These include the proportion of vacant shops in the retail core, the amount of retail (A1) floorspace in the retail core, the amount of new business floor space in the town centre and gateway area and the amount of additional leisure floor space within the AAP area.

Area Policies

CS30: Weston Urban Extension

To the south east of Weston-super-Mare a major mixed-use, employment-led socially, economically and environmentally sustainable urban extension will be developed. A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) including a Master Plan, Design Codes and Delivery Plan will provide the detailed guidance to support this policy and guide the development of, and decision making on, proposals at the extension. The Draft Key Diagram: Weston urban extension sets out the indicative strategic development framework.

Subject to a viability assessment the development of the urban extension south-east of Weston-super-Mare must satisfy the following key requirements:

- 1) Development within the urban extension will be employment-led with the provision of 1.5 B use class jobs per dwelling in addition to jobs from non B uses. Detailed mechanisms for delivering employment-led development will be set out in the Weston Urban Extension SPD.
- 2) Provide 9,000 new homes in a mix of housing types, tenures, sizes and styles of which a target of 30% should be affordable. An average density of at least 40dph should be achieved across the area, with higher densities surrounding the district and local centres and lower densities on the edge of each neighbourhood.
- 3) Provide at least 42 ha of B use class employment land located within allocated employment sites, mixed-use development areas and at local and district centres.
- 4) Development within the urban extension will be phased prioritising the release of brownfield sites at Weston Airfield and Locking Parklands. If provision of strategic infrastructure is dependant on development on greenfield land then this will be taken into consideration as part of the phasing strategy.
- 5) The urban extension will be characterised by linked communities on the east and western sides of the A371. Each community will be anchored by a district centre which will provide necessary retail, health, children's services and educational and community facilities to serve the new housing development.
- 6) Site(s) for on-site renewable or low carbon energy production including associated infrastructure to facilitate site-wide renewable energy solutions will be provided.
- 7) Provision of a site to accommodate pitches for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.
- 8) Provision of a network of green infrastructure across the whole urban extension including a 'Green Heart Park' as a central feature as well as playing fields, allotments, play areas, pocket and community parks, green

CS30

corridors linking through development allowing wildlife movement and access to open space, wetlands and water corridors linking through development, including the retention of existing rhynes where appropriate.

- 9) Integrated transport infrastructure including:
- The Cross Airfield Link
 - The Airfield Bridge Link
 - Junction 21 Relief Road
 - A371 to Wolvershill Road/Churchland Way Link
 - Potential park and ride subject to feasibility studies
 - Convenient and accessible bus routes
 - Accessible and safe cycle routes and public footpaths
 - Rail and bus improvements.
- 10) A clear hierarchy of roads (from distributor to home zones) producing discernable and distinctive neighbourhoods which are integrated and linked to existing areas.
- 11) A comprehensive flood management scheme is essential to facilitate the development of the urban extension. This will require off-site flood mitigation measures. Any development within the urban extension will be required to contribute towards these flood mitigation measures through the tariff approach.
- 12) Interim and long-term on-site flood mitigation measures, such as sustainable urban drainage systems, must be included as part of any development proposal. Any proposed development will need to be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which will include a surface water drainage strategy.
- 13) The realignment and safeguarding of safety and noise corridors associated with the helicopter flights linked with the Helicopter Museum. Employment, open-space and uses that are least sensitive to helicopter disturbance will be located around the museum.
- 14) A development tariff approach will apply to all planning applications within the urban extension area. The tariff will contribute towards the strategic infrastructure that is necessary to achieve a comprehensive sustainable development. Details of the development tariff will be set out in a future SPD for the Weston-super-Mare urban extension and the Developer Contributions SPD.
- 15) Development must be of a high quality and locally distinctive to Weston enhancing the existing character and qualities that contribute to the town's identity. This should include a comprehensive approach to place-making including all the elements that make up an area including land uses, parking, movement and green spaces.
- 16) Strategic gaps between the urban extension and Hutton and Locking will protect their individual character and identity.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10.



Background

4.42 The draft RSS requires Weston-super-Mare to secure employment-led regeneration by significantly improving the employment offer of the town, reducing the impacts of car-based commuting, while requiring housing growth to be phased and linked directly to job growth. It proposes a well planned, mixed-use urban extension south east of Weston-super-Mare to accommodate 9,000 new homes. The RSS also requires planning for employment to provide about 10,000 jobs in the Weston-super-Mare Travel to Work Area including the provision of at least 34ha of employment land in the period to 2026.

4.43 In 2008 North Somerset commissioned consultants Broadway Malyan to undertake detailed master planning and design work to inform the Core Strategy. This work formed the basis for discussion with landowners and stakeholders in terms of formulating the policy for the Weston urban extension.

The Core Strategy approach

4.44 *The site:* The Weston urban extension includes a total of approximately 650 hectares of land bound by the A370 to the north, the A371 and open land to the Cross Rhyne to the south, the M5 motorway to the east and Winterstoke Road to the west. It comprises three main areas:

- The disused Weston Airfield which forms a major part of the western half of the urban extension area.

- RAF Locking which was in operation until 1998 as an RAF training facility and has now been cleared although some former features remain. This includes Flowerdown Park which is an area of housing at the former RAF Locking which is now in private ownership.
- The eastern half of the site is primarily low-lying agricultural land and is characterised by a series of geometric rhynes.

4.45 Also within the urban extension area is the industrial estate on Winterstoke Road which contains a large number of former airfield buildings and is currently used for a variety of vehicle, transport and storage uses. Additionally, the Helicopter Museum is located at the heart of the urban extension and is an important tourist attraction for Weston.

4.46 *Landownership:* Within the urban extension area there are a number of individual land ownerships, of which there are six primary landowners which are central to the delivery of the urban extension:

- The Housing and Communities Agency and South West Regional Development Agency own the RAF Locking site, renamed Locking Parklands in October 2006.
- Persimmon Homes own the majority (175 ha) of the former Weston Airfield.
- The Helicopter Museum, located between the Weston Airfield and the A371 has air experience, visitor, demonstration and maintenance/conservation flights as part of their attraction, the continued operation of which is a key factor in the development of the Airfield, as discussed further on in the text.
- Mead Group Land control/promote land to the north east of the RAF Locking site.
- Moss Land own an area of land to the west of RAF Locking adjacent to the A371.
- North Somerset Council owns a large amount of land both within and immediately adjacent to the urban extension. Within the urban extension the primary land holdings are located to the north/northwest of RAF Locking. Adjacent to the urban extension, the council also owns land between Weston Airfield and Hutton village to the south.

4.47 *Adjoining Land:* Land adjacent to the urban extension is also needed for strategic infrastructure. Land south of Weston Airfield and land east of the M5 will be required for flood mitigation measures. Additionally land east of the M5 will be required for the junction 21 bypass and part of the Avoncrest site north west of the Weston Airfield will be needed for the Airfield Bridge Link Road which will connect the urban extension to the town centre.

- 4.48 *Phasing:* The Weston urban extension comprises two predominantly brownfield sites – Weston Airfield and the former RAF Locking site – with the remainder of the site being greenfield land. The development of these two sites will be prioritised ahead of green field land to the north east of the Weston urban extension.
- 4.49 *Urban Design:* The aim is to achieve a development that is not only exemplar in its design but is based on key sustainability principles such as low carbon use, less dominance of the car and a full range of local facilities and employment opportunities. The completed development must be an area which residents are proud of and respect and which will meet most of their day-to-day needs.
- 4.50 It is imperative that the urban extension at Weston-super-Mare is integrated fully with the existing development. This can be achieved through a series of direct and safe pedestrian/cycle routes as well as better road and public transport connections to Weston town centre. Notwithstanding this, the new development will be as self-contained as possible with key community facilities within walking distance of most dwellings.
- 4.51 Although a high density of development is proposed this will be broken up by the following four key areas of open space which will also function as pedestrian/cycle routes and wildlife havens:
- The Green Heart at the junction of the A370/A371;
 - Open space link between Hutton village and Weston Airfield;
 - Green corridor based on the Grumplepill Rhyne north of Locking parklands
 - Open space based on the motte and bailey west of Locking Parklands.
- 4.52 Development should front onto these areas as much as possible so as to improve its setting and provide public surveillance.
- 4.53 The design of the road layout within the area should aim to eliminate ‘rat running’ and allow for safe and direct cycle/pedestrian access to key community facilities and employment areas. Densities will be varied throughout the development with a wide range of heights and styles. Key gateway sites at junctions, district centres and entrances will need to be occupied by landmark buildings that will act as focal points and generate a sense of identity for each neighbourhood area.
- 4.54 Hedges, trees and important viewpoints should be retained and enhanced. The character and identity of the surrounding villages of Hutton and Locking should be protected by appropriate green buffers

- 4.55 *Residential:* Policy HMA1 of the draft Regional Spatial Strategy states that Weston-super-Mare should secure employment-led regeneration including provision for sustainable housing growth of 9,000 dwellings. Policy H2 of the draft RSS states that local planning authorities should promote net densities of 50dph or more overall. However, North Somerset Council and other primary landowners in the Weston Urban Extension area have objected to the RSS density requirement on the basis that it is too high, particularly given the market saturation of flats. Accordingly, the Core Strategy policy assumes that residential development will have an average density of 40dph which would result in a total land take of 225ha.
- 4.56 *Employment:* Policy HMA1 of the draft Regional Spatial Strategy requires that Weston-super-Mare secures concerted employment-led regeneration and more specifically states that Weston-super-Mare will provide for about 10,000 jobs. North Somerset Council is determined to deliver two primary objectives which accord with the RSS employment objectives:
- i. Increase self-containment and therefore a higher ratio of jobs to homes;
 - ii. Increase Class B1 employment provision to attract a different type of employment to the area.



4.57 With these objectives in mind the following level of employment provision is proposed within the urban extension:

Class B1 Offices = 16ha

Class B2 General Industrial = 13ha

Class B8 Distribution/Warehousing = 13ha.

4.58 This results in a total of 42ha of land to be allocated for B Class employment uses. The employment uses will be identified as specific allocations on Weston Airfield, but dispersed as part of mixed-use developments on the Locking Parklands site.

4.59 It is recognised that achieving an employment-led strategy relies on the timely delivery of infrastructure to 'unlock' employment potential; the enhancing of the image of the town through recognising and building upon the characteristics and qualities that underpin the town; delivering high quality building and urban design; and addressing skills and training.

4.60 In the urban extension the emphasis is on a comprehensive development, including the majority of employment development, with the provision of 1.5 B use class jobs per dwelling in addition to jobs from non B uses. This will deliver significantly more jobs than the RSS target. The mechanisms for delivering the employment-led strategy will be set out in detail within the Supplementary Planning Document and/or other LDF Documents. It will also set out a mechanism for monitoring and reviewing the employment-led strategy throughout the plan period.

Strategic Infrastructure Requirements:

4.61 *Highways/Transportation:* In terms of essential infrastructure required within the urban extension there are four main transport routes. These are:

- i. A cross-airfield road linking Winterstoke Road with the A371.
- ii. A371 to Wolvershill Road/Churchland Way link.
- iii. Airfield Bridge Link from Weston Airfield to Winterstoke Road roundabout.
- iv. Junction 21 Relief Road.
- v. Contributions to rail and bus improvements.

4.62 The exact alignment of these routes will be fixed in the Weston Urban Extension Supplementary Planning Document.

4.63 In addition there may be a longer term requirement for a park and ride facility. A site adjacent to the Helicopter Museum meets all the requirements in terms of accessibility, but its detailed implementation will be subject to feasibility studies.

- 4.64 *Flood mitigation Measures:* As all of the urban extension is within the floodplain the focus is on avoiding development areas most liable to flooding as set out in the sequential approach in PPS 25. The Environment Agency has confirmed that no development would be allowed in the functional floodplain at the centre of the urban extension, on the corner of A370 and the A371. Given the development requirements for the urban extension as identified by the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, it is clear that the majority of the remaining land within the urban extension, in flood zones 2 and 3a, would need to be developed.
- 4.65 Given the flood risk issues relevant to Weston-super-Mare as a town, a holistic approach has been advocated by the Environment Agency to promote a comprehensive flood management scheme. North Somerset Council commissioned a Weston-super-Mare Flood Management Study for the urban extension which was completed in March 2007. The study recommended the creation of a lake and wetland area to the south of the Weston Airfield, and improvements to the River Banwell, and this is the agreed flood management solution to development at the Weston urban extension. Any proposed development will, however, need to be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which will include a surface water drainage strategy.
- 4.66 *Renewable Energy:* On-site energy generation is anticipated to be required in order to meet the aspirations of a low carbon development. Site-wide solutions will be encouraged with necessary infrastructure delivered from the outset.
- 4.67 *Parks/Green Spaces/Allotments:* There is a requirement for certain forms of green spaces within the urban extension. These include formal parks and gardens, community parks and neighbourhood parks as well as allotments. The amount and location of the green infrastructure is shown on the key diagram, but will be set out in detail in the SPD.
- 4.68 There is a long established and documented requirement for the provision of a 'Green Heart' within the urban extension. The Green Heart which was first identified in the Weston Development Framework is proposed to be a significant strategic open space and recreational resource for Weston-super-Mare. The provision of the Green Heart is fundamental to the redevelopment of the urban extension and the key diagram identifies land on the south eastern corner of the Airport Roundabout to serve as the Green Heart. The specific role and function of this space will be identified in more detail through the Weston Urban Extension SPD.

Social Infrastructure Requirements:

- 4.69 *Children's Services:* Schools will play a vital role and be a key focus of the community. Having regard to the population created by the new development six 420 place Primary Schools, two 1,500 place secondary schools and one special school will be needed to serve the new population.
- 4.70 *Retail:* The assumptions for retail provision within the urban extension have been based upon the conclusions of the North Somerset Retail and Leisure Study (April 2006) and its Addendum (August 2006). Floorspace figures from the study have been factored upwards by 20% to produce a figure to 2026. This then equates to the need for approximately 32,000m² of comparison retail space and 6,500m² of convenience retail floor space in non-central locations in Weston-super-Mare. It is assumed that the majority of this need will be met in the urban extension at the three district centres.
- 4.71 Based on an assumed plot ratio of 40% this equates to a requirement of 8ha for comparison retail and 1.6ha for convenience retail equalling a total of 9.6ha.
- 4.72 *Community Facilities:* There is a requirement for a number of multi-purpose community facilities within the Weston urban extension to cater for a range of community use, including community halls, libraries and health centres. Some of these community facilities, particularly community halls, could be co-located on the primary school sites and a land allowance should be made for this dual use within the allocation for the primary schools. Alternative mechanisms for delivery and ongoing maintenance will be explored as part of the Delivery Plan.
- 4.73 *Sports and Recreation:* The key sports and recreation requirements for the urban extension are a leisure centre which should be combined with the proposed secondary school at Locking Parklands enabling dual use of facilities. The dual use of this facility would reduce the need for the secondary school to provide the usual amount of playing pitches, and therefore, the land area for the secondary school could be reduced.
- 4.74 There is also a requirement for a range of sports pitch provision including adult grass pitches, rugby pitches, cricket pitches and junior/mini football pitches. It is assumed that these will all be provided at the proposed leisure centre, primary schools, secondary schools and parks and therefore additional land would not be required. Alternative mechanisms for delivery and ongoing maintenance will be explored as part of the Delivery Plan.

- 4.75 *Helicopter Flights:* The ancillary helicopter flights associated with the Helicopter Museum, located on the eastern edge of Weston Airfield, currently result in a constraint to achieving the housing and employment figures identified in the emerging RSS due to the alignment of the helicopter flight path, and noise and safety issues associated with the flights.
- 4.76 Discussions between the Helicopter Museum Trustees and the relevant landowners of Weston Airfield to try and resolve this situation are ongoing and this policy requires that land uses that are least sensitive to helicopter disturbance will be located nearest the museum and that the helicopter flight path is realigned to enable the comprehensive and compatible development of Weston Airfield. The helicopter flights and the impact of new development on helicopter flights will be kept under review in particular in relation to noise nuisance and safety considerations.
- 4.77 The detailed land use arrangements around the Helicopter Museum will be determined through work on the Weston Urban Extension SPD once the detailed realignments are agreed on.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 4.78 The Weston urban extension draft key diagram inset shows the indicative distribution of land uses. This will be refined as part of the masterplanning work to be finalised through the Supplementary Planning Document. This and the Developer Contribution SPD will guide development, set out the exact requirements for social infrastructure and put forward mechanisms for the contributions to strategic infrastructure.
- 4.79 The urban extension is a strategic requirement and the council is actively working with key partners and landowners to ensure its delivery. This includes key landowners and other partners such as the Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Primary Care Trust, Weston College, Regional Development Agency, Homes and Communities Agency, as well as other local stakeholders.

Alternative options and contingency planning

4.80 The proposed strategic framework for the delivery of the Weston urban extension has emerged as a result of discussions with landowners and stakeholders and taking account of advice prepared by Broadway Malyan on masterplanning, design codes and delivery. The principal alternative options are:

- Develop land immediately to the east of M5 to support J21 improvements and encourage employment.
- No priority phasing of brownfield sites.
- Allocate two district centres instead of three.
- Increase the housing density to 50dph in accordance with the emerging RSS.

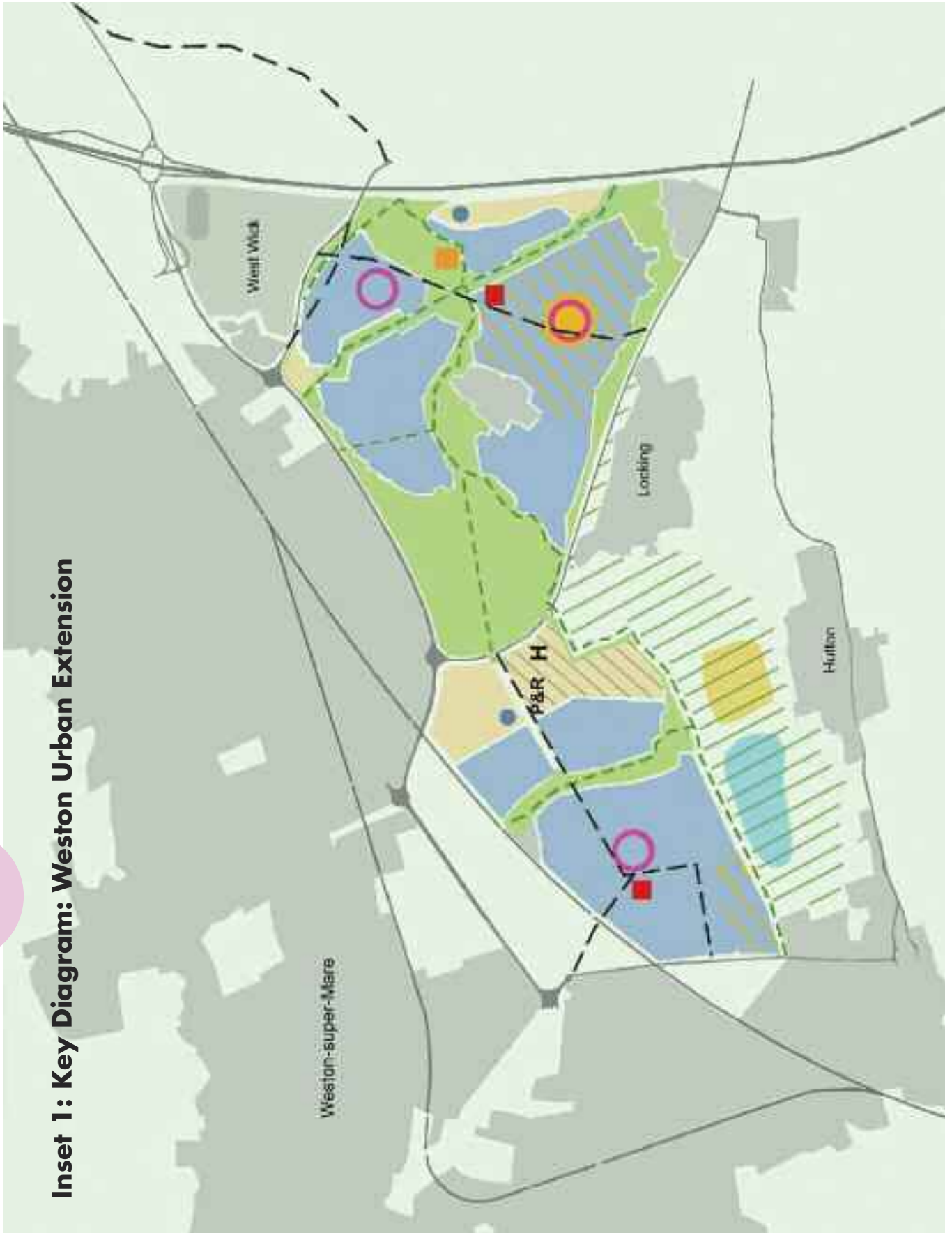
Further discussion and testing will be required before the Core Strategy diagram is confirmed.

4.81 Delivery in relation to the employment-led objective and infrastructure provision will be regularly monitored, and if necessary, adjustments made to the timing or phasing of the development. If development is not going to be completed by 2026, then alternative allocations will not be made; instead development will continue post-2026.

Monitoring and review

4.82 The principal objective of the monitoring strategy is to ensure that the employment-led strategy is effective, and that a range of job opportunities is delivered and that self-containment is enhanced. If not, then the strategy may need to be adjusted in the future. Monitoring will also need to ensure that essential infrastructure, particularly for transport and flood mitigation, is delivered in step with development.

Inset 1: Key Diagram: Weston Urban Extension



CS30

Key

-  Green space
- P&R** Park and Ride
- H** Helicopter Museum
- New transport link
-  B2/8 Employment allocation and helicopter safeguarding
-  Secondary school
-  Mixed use employment-led centre/ district centre
-  Regeneration Area boundary
-  Employment-led/ mixed use
-  Residential development
-  Mixed use district centre
-  Leisure centre
-  B use class employment
-  Green infrastructure
-  Existing built up areas
-  Energy centres
- Cycle/ pedestrian link
-  Lake and wetland area

Area Policies

CS31: Market and Coastal Towns

Proposals for development in Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead will be supported which:

- 1) increase self-containment;
- 2) ensure the availability of jobs and services for the town and surrounding catchments; and
- 3) improve the town's role as a service centre.

Employment proposals will be supported that ensure the regeneration of previously developed land, or conversion and/or refurbishment of existing premises to deliver around 5,718 additional jobs (3,800 of these in the B use class). Employment should be appropriate in scale to the role and function of the town in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS20. Mixed use schemes will only be considered where they are shown to address local housing need.

- Within **Portishead**, encouragement will be given for the take up of existing business premises and site allocations. Proposals which provide opportunities for existing businesses to expand will be supported.
- At **Nailsea** additional employment opportunities will be encouraged to support economic growth, reduce out-commuting and encourage a more balanced community.

Shopping and town centre uses will be supported within the town centres (and expanded town centre at Portishead) which improve the town centre environment and the retail, leisure, and employment offer. The removal of town centre uses will only be supported in accordance with policy CS21.

- **Clevedon, Hill Road** – proposals which support its focus for specialist shopping and leisure will be supported.
- **Nailsea** – proposals for regenerating the town centre will be supported.

Housing proposals for infill, redevelopment, subdivision and conversion will be supported on sites not previously in commercial use, with an emphasis on affordable housing.

- At **Nailsea**, housing development should be focused on addressing local housing needs for smaller, more affordable homes to encourage a more balanced age structure and support economic growth.

Other services and community facilities will be encouraged within the urban areas, in locations accessible to the community which they are intended to serve, in conjunction with Core Strategy policies CS25, CS26 and CS27.

Transport proposals which provide opportunities for cycling, walking or increase public transport within the towns will be supported. Proposals to improve connectivity by public transport with the other market towns, Bristol and Weston-super-Mare will also be supported.

- For **Portishead** the re-opening of a rail/rapid transit link to Bristol is a priority.

Tourism proposals throughout Clevedon and Portishead will be supported with particular emphasis on enhancing the appeal of the seafront/waterfront area to visitors and residents alike, while retaining the historic and natural settings.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Background

- 4.83 The policies provide a link between the visions and the specific subject policies relating to housing, employment, community facilities etc. in the various sections of the Core Strategy.
- 4.84 The RSS identifies Market and Coastal Towns as places which should only consider locally significant development ensuring the availability of jobs and services for themselves and surrounding communities.

The Core Strategy approach

- 4.85 Clevedon, Portishead and Nailsea have been designated as Market and Coastal Towns. Due to their close proximity to each other, these three towns have overlapping catchment areas which are perhaps somewhat smaller than would be expected in a rural area and due to their proximity to Bristol and Weston, they are not expected to provide highest-order goods and services for their population, but they nevertheless act as local service centres for their populations and adjacent parishes.
- 4.86 All of these towns have high out-commuting levels and the emphasis will be on discouraging development which would reinforce this and on encouraging local employment and service provision which would stem the flow of commuters. Nailsea in particular has suffered from being planned as a dormitory town in the 1960s and would benefit from development which would enable a more balanced community to take shape.
- 4.87 On sites previously in non-residential use, therefore preference will be given to development proposals for employment, shopping, public transport and other services which will increase self-containment and improve their role as service centres. With regard to new housing development, this will be restricted to infill, redevelopment and

conversion, or subdivision, which will improve the current mix of house types and sizes, improve affordability and make contributions towards infrastructure and facilities.

How and where the policy will be delivered

4.88 Within the Market and Coastal Towns of Portishead, Clevedon, and Nailsea new jobs, dwellings and retail floorspace will broadly be provided as follows:

Land use	Nailsea	Portishead	Clevedon
Employment (jobs, all sectors)	357	4,691	670
Residential (dwellings)	239	3,144	449
Retail (m ²)	8,550	2,950	6,050

4.89 The future of the Market and Coastal Towns relies on co-ordination across sectors from transport providers to affordable housing and healthcare facilities providers.

Alternative options and contingency planning

4.90 Having an area-based policy adds clarity by allowing all the main strands of the visions and individual subject policies to be expressed together and supports ‘place-making’. The alternative would be to not have area policies.

Monitoring and review

4.91 This will be measured against individual policy targets for each of the towns.

CS31



Area Policies

CS32: Service Villages

Proposals for development which support or enhance their role as local hubs for community facilities and services, employment and affordable housing, including public transport will be supported.

New employment development must be located within or adjacent to the settlement boundaries and be of an appropriate scale and character, and contribute towards improved self-containment.

New residential development will be located within settlement boundaries, and be of an appropriate design, scale, character and type. Such development will only be acceptable where it will maintain or improve self-containment, support the retention of existing services or fulfil an identified local housing need in respect of affordability or dwelling mix.

Transport proposals will be supported which increase accessibility by public transport, community transport, cycling and walking.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Background

4.92 The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (Policy C) supports/proposes a more sustainable approach to development in the rural areas, than has previously been the case, with the emphasis being on supporting services, employment and facilities in smaller towns and larger villages, rather than dispersing development throughout smaller villages.

The Core Strategy approach

4.93 Service Villages are places where a small amount of development (particularly economic, or which extends the range of services available) may be appropriate.

4.94 With regard to non-housing uses, allowing a certain level of new service and employment uses in or adjacent to the settlement boundaries of Service Villages (but not in the Green Belt) is in line with comments received during consultation, which set out a general desire for development to be employment-led and for expanding the employment base of villages.

CS32

- 4.95 It is important that all development taking place in small towns and villages supports their roles as local hubs for community facilities, employment and services, including public transport. Given their relative accessibility to local services and facilities, the Service Villages will also be a focal point for affordable housing provided it is supported by a needs assessment.
- 4.96 The settlement boundaries as defined in the Replacement Local Plan for the Service Villages will remain, although there is scope for these to be reviewed and adjusted via the Site Allocations DPD.
- 4.97 Within North Somerset there are a number of villages which carry out the role of Service Villages. Service villages have been classified as settlements which have at least a village shop, post office, primary school, GP surgery, community hall and pub accumulating to at least 20 units of town centre uses¹⁰. They provide a service role function beyond their immediate locality and normally serve the population of one to three parishes. They range in size from 2,000 to 5,000 population per settlement.
- 4.98 Churchill was identified as a possible service village in the Issues and Options report. While it does not have a sufficient amount of retail floorspace, it does have all the other facilities, plus a leisure centre and a secondary school. In addition, consultation comments identified a need for a focal point in Churchill and the Parish Plan found that 50% of the residents were in favour of “some new housing for local people or those in vital services”. Furthermore, the Parish Plan is looking to establish a new village centre/hall and upgrade to the existing leisure centre all of which could be supported by allowing a small amount of new housing development.
- 4.99 In addition, Hutton, Locking, Uphill and Banwell villages are included given their proximity to Weston. There are small settlements close to Bristol, but given their rural character and limited range of facilities and services these would be inappropriate for additional development; the mere fact of their relative proximity to Bristol would not make them sustainable locations.

¹⁰ Town centre uses are defined in PPS6 as retail, leisure, entertainment facilities, restaurants and pubs, offices, arts, culture and tourism.

4.100 The list of settlements where the service village policy will apply is set out in Policy CS14 and listed below:

Backwell	Long Ashton
Banwell	Pill/ Easton in Gordano
Congresbury	Uphill
Churchill	Winscombe
Hutton	Wrington
Locking	Yatton

How and where the policy will be delivered

4.101 The policy will apply within the defined Service Villages. Identifying opportunities to enhance the role and function of these places will benefit from close working between developers and landowners, the council, local communities and other partners.

Alternative options and contingency planning

4.102 Having an area-based policy pulls all the main strands of the visions and individual subject policies to be expressed in one place and supports 'placemaking'. Alternative options include:

a) Not having area policies – would make the policy context for these places less easy to identify.

b) Include more settlements. Taking into account national and regional policy, further dispersal of development to other settlements not exhibiting the requirements set out in RSS Development Policy C is likely to create a more unsustainable pattern of development.

Monitoring and review

4.103 The policy will be measured against individual policy targets.



Area Policies

CS33: Smaller Settlements and Countryside

Proposals for development within the rural areas outside the Service Villages will be strictly controlled in order to protect their character and prevent unsustainable development.

New housing will only be permitted where it is for affordable housing (within or adjacent to a non-service village and only if it can be demonstrated that a specific local need cannot be met in an adjacent town or Service Village), replacement dwellings (provided any net increase is part of a live/work unit), or dwellings for workers in essential rural enterprises.

Small-scale new employment development will only be permitted within or adjacent to non-service villages where it would increase self containment or meet the needs of an existing local employer. Employment development will not be permitted in the open countryside.

Shops and community uses will only be permitted within non-service villages where there is a specific local need for a facility and provided it is appropriate in scale, and located within or adjacent to the main body of the settlement.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 7.

Background

4.104 National and regional guidance emphasise the importance of ensuring that inappropriate development is not dispersed into rural areas as this will encourage unsustainable patterns of development.

The Core Strategy approach

4.105 Demand for housing in the countryside has historically been high, with the result that North Somerset villages and hamlets have become dormitory settlements. To avoid perpetuating unsustainable patterns of development and retain the character of our villages and openness of our countryside, development will be very strictly controlled. This will mean the removal of settlement boundaries from non-service villages, as stated in policy CS14, acknowledging that they are no longer appropriate for additional development.

4.106 Within small settlements and the countryside, new housing is therefore not permitted unless it is for essential rural workers or replacement dwellings. Any remaining Local Plan housing allocations affected by the removal of settlement boundaries will lapse when the policy change takes effect.



4.107 Affordable housing to meet the needs of these areas would be expected to be met in or adjacent to the nearest town or Service Village where there are appropriate facilities to support the housing. Where it is demonstrated that suitable sites are not forthcoming in these locations, then sites for 100% affordable housing will be considered in accordance with the rural exceptions policy CS17.

4.108 Non-housing development will also be very carefully controlled within the small settlements and countryside. Some limited employment development may be permissible within or adjacent to the main body of the village in order to increase self-containment, provided it is of a scale appropriate to the village. In respect of retailing or other services most places will look to the nearest towns and Service Villages to meet their day-to-day needs, although where local provision is justified, then permission may be granted.

How and where the policy will be delivered

4.109 The policy applies to the smaller settlements and countryside. Development will be provided by a number of individuals and bodies, and will require close liaison with local communities.

Alternative options and contingency planning

4.110 A less restrictive approach to development within the rural areas would encourage less sustainable development patterns, contrary to national and regional advice.

Monitoring and review

4.111 Measurement will be against individual policy targets

CHAPTER 5: **South West Bristol**

Urban Extension

No development is proposed at South West Bristol, and no change to the Green Belt.

Notwithstanding the council's objection to the principle of development, given the Regional Spatial Strategy's proposed urban extension, comments are invited on options and choices related to different forms and scales of potential development.

Introduction

- 5.1 North Somerset Council is opposed to the principle of development in the Green Belt at SW Bristol. However the council acknowledges that the Core Strategy must reflect the emerging RSS and that eventually the Submitted version must be consistent with any approved RSS.
- 5.2 The draft RSS generated a substantial level of objection from across the region and final approval has been delayed pending an assessment of the implications of challenges to RSS elsewhere in the country. In addition, the Conservative Party has indicated that should they be successful in the forthcoming general election, than they will scrap the current RSS structure and remove any potential Green Belt development of this nature. Given the uncertainty over both the current RSS and the direction of future regional policy, it is inappropriate at this stage to prejudge future development choices of this scale and significance.
- 5.3 This Consultation Draft makes no provision for any development at SW Bristol. However, it is important that policy issues continue to be assessed and this chapter therefore invites comment on the options and choices for locating additional development in this area. In effect, the council's preferred approach is for no urban extension, but it is recognised that there are alternative options and this consultation process will help explore the implications.
- 5.4 Should the urban extension eventually be confirmed through an adopted RSS, then further consultation will be required on the proposed policy wording and form of any strategic allocation for SW Bristol before proceeding to the next stage of the Core Strategy.

Background

- 5.5 The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes July 2008 proposes an urban extension to the South West of Bristol. This should be a 'sustainable community, within a revised Green Belt, fully integrated into the existing urban area'. Policy HMA1 proposes that 10,500 homes should be provided, 9,000 in the North Somerset area, 1,500 in Bristol in the period to 2026. It recognises that this 'can support and complement the regeneration of South Bristol'.
- 5.6 The council has undertaken a significant amount of consultation and engagement in relation to the SW Bristol proposal. The Core Strategy Issues and Options document and Topic Paper – Sustainable Urban Extensions at South West Bristol, October 2007, opened the debate. This was followed by a series of Planning Together Workshops (2008) which brought together developers, community representatives and other stakeholders to debate and assess the implications of the RSS proposal and to identify the key elements which would contribute to creating a sustainable development in detail.
- 5.7 As part of the assessment process North Somerset Council appointed consultants, Broadway Malyan, to advise on the preparation of a master plan, design codes and delivery plan for a 10,500 dwelling urban extension to the south west of Bristol.
- 5.8 In trying to accommodate the total RSS housing requirement and respect the environmental and other constraints within the area of search, the consultants acknowledged that their emerging master plan contained significant compromises. The amount of land required for a development of this scale at an appropriate density, taking account of the land use requirements of other uses (such as employment) and supporting services (such as shops, schools, community services and open space) was considerable. This had to be delivered within a high quality natural landscape which needed to be respected and retained. The area also has numerous constraints including floodplain, areas of high ecological value, landfill and is crossed by major transport routes which create severance issues.
- 5.9 Broadway Malyan recognised that their master plan resulted in three physically separated development areas which could create relatively isolated communities, and that development did not relate particularly well to the adjacent urban area. In addition, the council had significant concerns about the need to respect local environmental constraints and communities, and the need to create places which were more appropriate and locally distinct for the North Somerset context. The delivery plan also highlighted the difficulty in delivering such a large amount of development

within the RSS timescale. The consultants were therefore asked to explore a number of alternative spatial growth options for the area. The instruction was to base these options on a bottom-up assessment of local constraints, aspirations and alternative spatial options, not on the top-down RSS requirement. This involved different scales of possible development.

- 5.10 The Broadway Malyan work does not represent the views of North Somerset council. Their role was to advise on the options and choices, which would allow the council to assess alternative developer proposals, and should the RSS allocation be confirmed, to inform the plan making process.
- 5.11 The Council has now received a planning application from Land Trust (Ashton Park) for the development of a 9,500 dwelling urban extension and is aware of other developer aspirations in the area. Any urban extension proposal must also be considered in the context of other development proposals in the area, such as Bristol International Airport, and proposals within Bristol City.

Alternative options

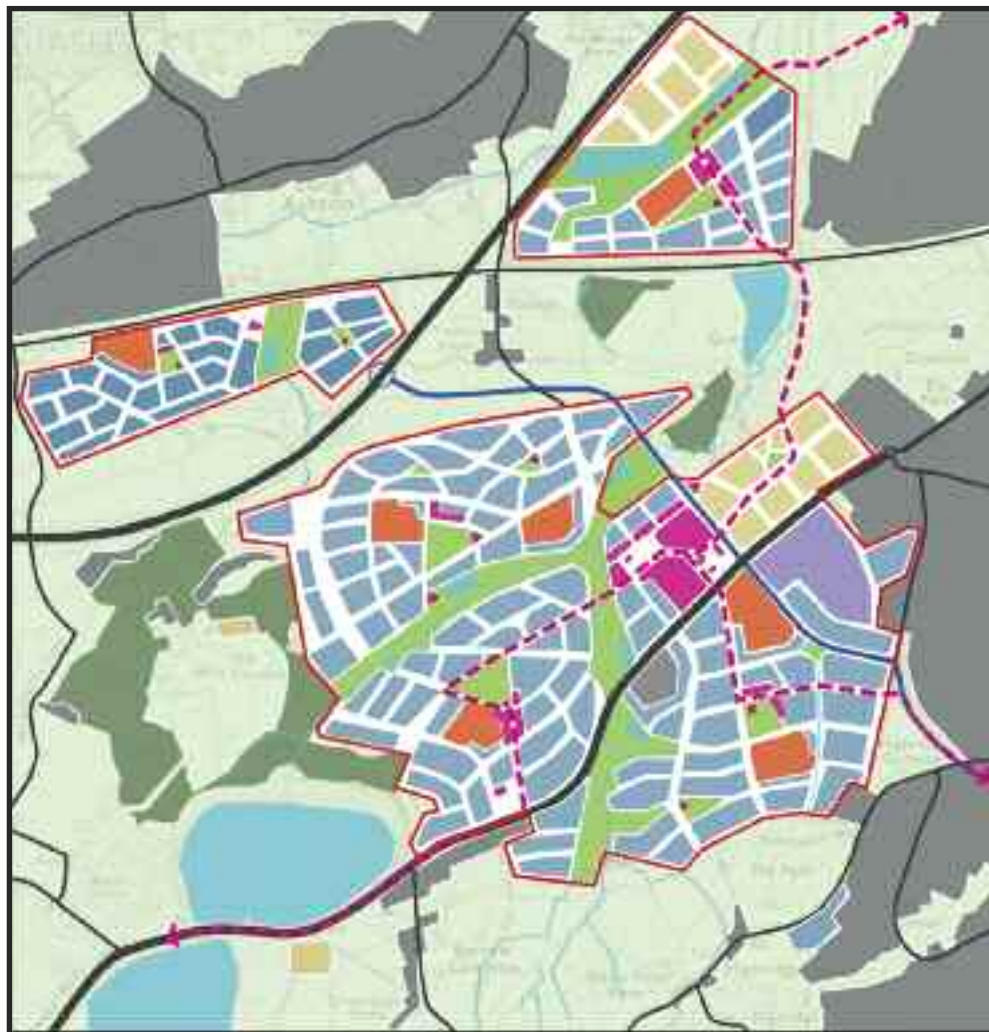
- 5.12 Broadway Malyan identified four broad spatial options:
- Main masterplan (full RSS requirement)
 - Option 1: Linked new settlement
 - Option 2: Urban extension with a green wedge/buffer
 - Option 3: Integrated urban extension
- 5.13 These are used as the basis for this consultation to illustrate the issues related to the delivery of development at SW Bristol. Full details are contained in the supporting documentation.

Main masterplan (full RSS requirement)

5.14 This demonstrates the extent of land required to support the RSS proposal, and its potential impact on the area.

5.15 The main masterplan includes:

- 9,500 homes (at 40 dph) 9,000 in North Somerset, 500 in Bristol
- 37 ha of employment
- A town centre and four local centres
- Six primary schools and one secondary school.



KEY

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Residential |  Existing Roads |
|  Schools |  Proposed Key Roads |
|  Local Centres |  Bristol Rapid Transit Route |
|  Employment |  Existing Urban Area |
|  Open Space |  Water Courses / Bodies |
|  Balancing Pond |  Woodland |

Option 1: Linked new settlement


5.16 This is the smallest scale of development which the consultants suggest could be sustainable in terms of the range of facilities which would be provided. Development of this scale enables the retention of significant Green Belt/landscape buffer.

5.17 This option includes:

- 3,440 homes (at 40 dph)
- 12.2 ha of employment
- Large local centre
- Two primary schools and one small secondary school



KEY

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-----------------------------|
|  | Residential |  | Existing Roads |
|  | Schools |  | Proposed Key Roads |
|  | Local Centres |  | Bristol Rapid Transit Route |
|  | Employment |  | Existing Urban Area |
|  | Open Space |  | Water Courses / Bodies |
|  | Balancing Pond |  | Woodland |

Option 2: Urban extension with a green wedge/buffer





5.18 This represents a larger form of development, roughly equating to the size of development which the consultants suggest could be delivered by 2026.

5.19 The urban extension with a green wedge/ buffer includes:

- 5,320 homes (at 40 dph)
- 18 ha of employment
- Two large local centres
- Three primary schools and one large secondary school.



KEY

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Residential |  Existing Roads |
|  Schools |  Proposed Key Roads |
|  Local Centres |  Bristol Rapid Transit Route |
|  Employment |  Existing Urban Area |
|  Open Space |  Water Courses / Bodies |
|  Balancing Pond |  Woodland |

Option 3: Integrated urban extension









5.20 This is the largest form of development which the consultant's felt could perhaps be accommodated without completely compromising key environmental constraints, while enabling the creation of a distinctive and sustainable community.

5.21 The integrated urban extension includes:

- 7,360 homes (at 40 dph)
- 26 ha of employment
- One district centre or three large local centres
- Four primary schools and one large secondary school.



KEY

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-----------------------------|
|  | Residential |  | Existing Roads |
|  | Schools |  | Proposed Key Roads |
|  | Local Centres |  | Bristol Rapid Transit Route |
|  | Employment |  | Existing Urban Area |
|  | Open Space |  | Water Courses / Bodies |
|  | Balancing Pond |  | Woodland |

- 5.22 The development of the main masterplan and three options enables the exploration of the critical issues arising from different scales of development in the area. The pros and cons of the alternative growth options are set out in the Broadway Malyan work. If the RSS eventually requires development at SW Bristol, then North Somerset will need to assess the relative merits of different proposals and set out its preferred approach, this will be the subject of a separate consultation process.

Emerging guidelines for development

- 5.23 From the work already undertaken however it is clear that any emerging policy for the development, at whatever scale, would need to:

1. Set clear boundaries for the limit to the development and the consequent change to the Green Belt. This will need to ensure the resultant Green Belt fulfils the purposes of Green Belt as effectively as possible. The individual identity of the North Somerset settlements is highly valued and Green Belt policy will be used to ensure that Long Ashton does not merge with either the existing Bristol area or any proposed extension.
2. Ensure the delivery of critical transport infrastructure. All levels of development will need to include provision for both the South Bristol Link and the Bus Rapid Transit and ensure that these are phased in conjunction with the housing development. Within the development a clear hierarchy of roads will integrate neighbourhoods and link to existing areas.
3. Respect the local landscape, topography, ecology and heritage. This will include the protection from development of the higher slopes of Dundry Hill, and ensure that existing woodland and parkland is conserved and enhanced particularly at Barrow Hospital and Hanging Hill Wood.
4. Ensure that green space and green infrastructure provision is central to the design of the development. An accessible major strategic green infrastructure corridor stretching from the open countryside along Yanley ridge incorporating a restored Yanley landfill site into the city at Bedminster Down and Ashton Park will be required. This will be linked with a network of green infrastructure across the whole development area which will also include playing fields, allotments, play areas, pocket and community parks, green corridors linking through development allowing wildlife movement and access to open space, wetlands and water corridors.

5. Minimise the impact on climate change through the promotion of sustainable resources and efficient buildings including energy and waste provision.
6. Ensure that the place created has a clear and distinct identity. The character will be defined by its unique setting and the quality of the built form. High quality local vernacular and current best practice design will ensure local heritage and tradition is combined with modern energy efficiency and design. Landmark buildings, high quality public spaces and links, and public art will all be required in order to ensure distinct identity.
7. Provide homes, jobs, schools, services and facilities in a modern sustainable community that includes a vibrant mixed use centre as a focus for activity and identity. Additional local centres will also be required dependent on the size of the development.
8. Provide a mix of employment space and provision. This will allow residents the choice of working without the need to commute into the city centre or beyond. A dormitory settlement or suburb will not be acceptable.
9. Include a mix of housing types, tenures, sizes and styles and including affordable housing. Provision of a site(s) for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. An average density of at least 40dph should be achieved across the area.
10. Reduce the need to travel and car dependency and make it easier for people to make more sustainable travel choices through careful design, layout and location of the development and facilities. High quality public transport, walkways and cycle paths will permeate the development and link with the surrounding settlements and urban area. Parking provision will need to be carefully designed and managed so as not to encourage car use but at the same time ensure sufficient space is provided to ensure parking is consistent with good urban design, highway safety and residential amenity. The potential for an extension to or an additional Park and Ride facility will also need to be considered.
11. Include comprehensive flood management and flood mitigation measures as well as any necessary measures arising from the proximity of the Barrow reservoirs.
12. Ensure proper provision is made for local governance and community involvement in the development and management of the community.

Critical issues still to be resolved

- 5.24 Even if the draft RSS were to be approved there are still critical issues to be resolved regarding the scale of development which could be accommodated in this area. The Broadway Malyan main master plan demonstrates that the amount of land take required has implications particularly with regard to maintaining the separate identity of Long Ashton and in delivering an integrated urban extension. The smaller scale options of development raise other issues regarding sustainability, infrastructure and service provision.
- 5.25 Phasing of any development will be critical and it is still uncertain as to how this could be best achieved. Priority provision should be made for delivering development on brown field land at Weston-super-Mare and in South Bristol.
- 5.26 The delivery of the key infrastructure needs to be phased with the development. This needs to be assured and adequate funding arrangements made. Broadway Malyan work on deliverability gives a strong indication that the level on development envisaged in the RSS could not be achieved within the RSS timescale. Phasing beyond the plan period may therefore need to be considered.
- 5.27 Issues around the scale of development impact very much on the type of place that would be created. Recent suburban developments are often criticised by the general public as soulless housing estates with few services and little character and it is clear from the public consultation work undertaken that this scenario must be avoided. It is, however, less clear as to the type of place to be created and its function. Should it be a suburb of Bristol, or a more self-contained locally distinctive place? How much provision should be made for employment and how can employers be attracted to this new location? How should the development relate to existing communities both within Bristol and North Somerset? How can severance within the community be avoided? What is an appropriate overall density for housing? The proposed RSS (Policy H2) states that local authorities should promote net densities of 50dph or more in planned urban extensions. Higher density results in less land being required but has implications for the form and character of the development. Is this area suitable for city centre densities? Should it have a more North Somerset market town feel?

CHAPTER 6: **Delivery**

- 6.1 The delivery section focuses on the procedural aspects of delivering the Core Strategy policies and proposals including a framework for achieving the necessary infrastructure enhancements. It includes a policy on developer contributions to infrastructure and an implementation policy that encompasses a range of aspects considered necessary to effectively deliver the Core Strategy including joint working, coordination, and phasing.
- 6.2 Infrastructure requirements will be set out in this document in the relevant policy sections and within a more general infrastructure provision in Policy CS35. While particular infrastructure needs will be identified it is recognised that provision needs to be made for flexibility allowing the council to seek contributions for infrastructure needs emerging throughout the plan period.
- 6.3 Each policy is accompanied by explanatory text and a more detailed Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be prepared to support the Core Strategy. This chapter sets out the strategic framework for how development will be implemented.

CS34 Developer Contributions to Infrastructure

CS35 Implementation

Delivery Policies

CS34: Developer Contributions to Infrastructure

Financial contributions will be sought in the form of a standardised tariff scheme applied across the district and at the Weston-super-Mare urban extension, to ensure the effective and timely delivery of the key infrastructure requirements to support new development. Planning obligations will also be sought and negotiated from individual developments on an individual site basis.

Development proposals will be expected to provide or contribute towards the cost of providing necessary physical and social/community infrastructure. Contributions may also be required to meet the management and maintenance of services and facilities. In all cases delivery will be expected to minimise the cost to the public purse. In determining the nature and scale of any planning obligation, viability issues will be taken into account.

The appropriate range and level of contributions (including tariff levels) will be assessed in a comprehensive manner, taking into account strategic infrastructure requirements and using standard charges where appropriate. Standards and formulae for calculating contributions will be set out in separate Supplementary Planning Documents or Development Plan Documents.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 2.

Background

- 6.4 The significant levels of development planned for North Somerset require a comprehensive strategy to deliver the levels of investment in infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to facilitate and enable new development in a sustainable way. Traditional Section 106 agreements have long been used under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as a means of obtaining contributions to mitigate any impacts imposed by development. Circular 05/2005 sets out how to achieve this including five tests that need to be met in order to justify seeking contributions.
- 6.5 Tariff mechanisms have developed elsewhere in response to changing government initiatives as a way of pooling contributions from various developments to fund large scale provision of infrastructure and services, with infrastructure in some cases being forward funded by a third party investor.

The Core Strategy approach

- 6.6 The Core Strategy will be supported by a Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to be used to seek development contributions to fund new infrastructure, services and facilities.

- 6.7 This will articulate the infrastructure and service requirements including transport schemes stemming from additional housing development, and the associated costs of bringing this forward. This will provide a total cost requirement that will need to be met from various sources of funding and in relation to the SPD, through new development. This will then be used to calculate the tariff payment to cover all infrastructure needs appropriate to the development.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 6.8 It is proposed that a tariff arrangement would be applied in respect of three tiers of development contributions:

Tier 1: A district wide tariff payable for strategic infrastructure and other services including policing, and education.

Tier 2: An area based tariff payable for locally specific (to the urban extension for example) infrastructure and services and facilities.

Tier 3: Negotiated elements including affordable housing on a site-by-site basis.

Alternative options and contingency planning

- 6.9 A tariff is the preferred method of seeking contributions as a key delivery mechanism of this Core Strategy pending the introduction of other mechanisms, most notably the Community Infrastructure Levy.

- 6.10 The Community Infrastructure Levy has been developed by Government as a way of accruing payments from development to provide infrastructure, and is due to become statutory in April 2010, when the council has the opportunity to adopt CIL as a means of seeking contributions. The Government has published draft regulations setting out how CIL is intended to be implemented, with Regulations coming into force in April 2010.

- 6.11 Essentially the council could prepare a charging schedule to apply to new development that could be reviewed and updated depending on local circumstances and viability.

Monitoring and review

- 6.12 A monitoring framework will assess the effectiveness of the policy in relation to securing developer contributions.

Delivery Policies

CS35: Implementation

Implementation will take place as part of a co-ordinated strategy, provided in step with the necessary infrastructure, utilities and service provision needed to support and enable the development.

The council will prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to support the Core Strategy through the identification of infrastructure requirements and associated costs, existing delivery plans, funding streams, delivery mechanisms, phasing and co-ordination, and potential delivery vehicles for significant areas of growth and regeneration.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 2.

Background

6.13 Delivery mechanisms for spatial and area-based policies include:

- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), Area Action Plans and masterplans, for key policies and areas of growth and regeneration.
- Delivery of strategic and local infrastructure through private, public and third-sector investment.
- Implementation of national and local policies through the development management process.

The Core Strategy approach

6.14 The Core Strategy will set out a strategic framework for delivery, supported by a North Somerset Infrastructure Delivery Plan to provide more detailed consideration to infrastructure co-ordination and delivery by public, private and third-sector partners across the district.

6.15 The IDP will focus on strategic sites and infrastructure and provide indicative information on more local requirements, funding plans and delivery mechanisms. It will incorporate and further develop the work done by the West of England Partnership.

6.16 The IDP will identify:

- Infrastructure requirements and estimated costs, to include physical, social and green infrastructure. Consideration will be given to the most effective co-ordination of infrastructure, for example, through co-location of public services.
- Existing plans to deliver infrastructure, for example, through public sector investment or known developer contributions. Public-sector contributions may include land or other existing assets.

- Funding gaps and mechanisms for responding to these. Mechanisms will include developer contributions.
- Suggested delivery mechanisms and phasing schedules for infrastructure delivery, linked to the phasing and delivery of development. Delivery mechanisms may take the form of public, private or third sector investment.

- 6.17 The creation of the plan will be led by North Somerset Council and co-ordinated through the North Somerset Partnership. It will include consideration of effective asset management and forward planning of publicly funded infrastructure, as well as of private-sector investments.
- 6.18 The IDP will be subject to a viability appraisal carried out by an independent external assessor. It will be monitored as part of the Annual Monitoring Report process and will undergo a full review and re-appraisal at least every five years.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 6.19 Key areas of growth and regeneration will require dedicated and proactive support if delivery is to be secured. These include Weston-super-Mare town centre and the Weston-super-Mare urban extension.
- 6.20 Consultants have advised that a non-statutory local delivery vehicle (LDV) should be considered for this purpose. This would be a multi-agency partnership dedicated to the co-ordination and operational delivery of development, with strong council involvement. It would be likely to hold some limited and specific delegated powers to facilitate efficient delivery, including land assembly, investment and planning powers.
- 6.21 Alternatives would include continued coordination of delivery by North Somerset Council, or the creation of a statutory local delivery vehicle, which would be sponsored by national government.
- 6.22 The primary partnerships for agreeing and monitoring delivery will be the West of England Partnership and North Somerset Partnership. North Somerset Council has established focused consultation and co-ordination groups in Weston-super-Mare and South West Bristol as areas identified for growth in the draft RSS. These include landowners and government agencies contributing to delivery. Town and parish councils have an important role to play in shaping and supporting growth and may in some cases contribute to the provision of local infrastructure. The council will engage with the community and voluntary sectors through the umbrella organisation Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS) and with specific organisations with an interest, where appropriate – for example, community groups who own land or buildings in development areas.

Alternative options and contingency plans

6.23 The council will continue to review alternative mechanisms to implement the Core Strategy objectives.

Monitoring and review

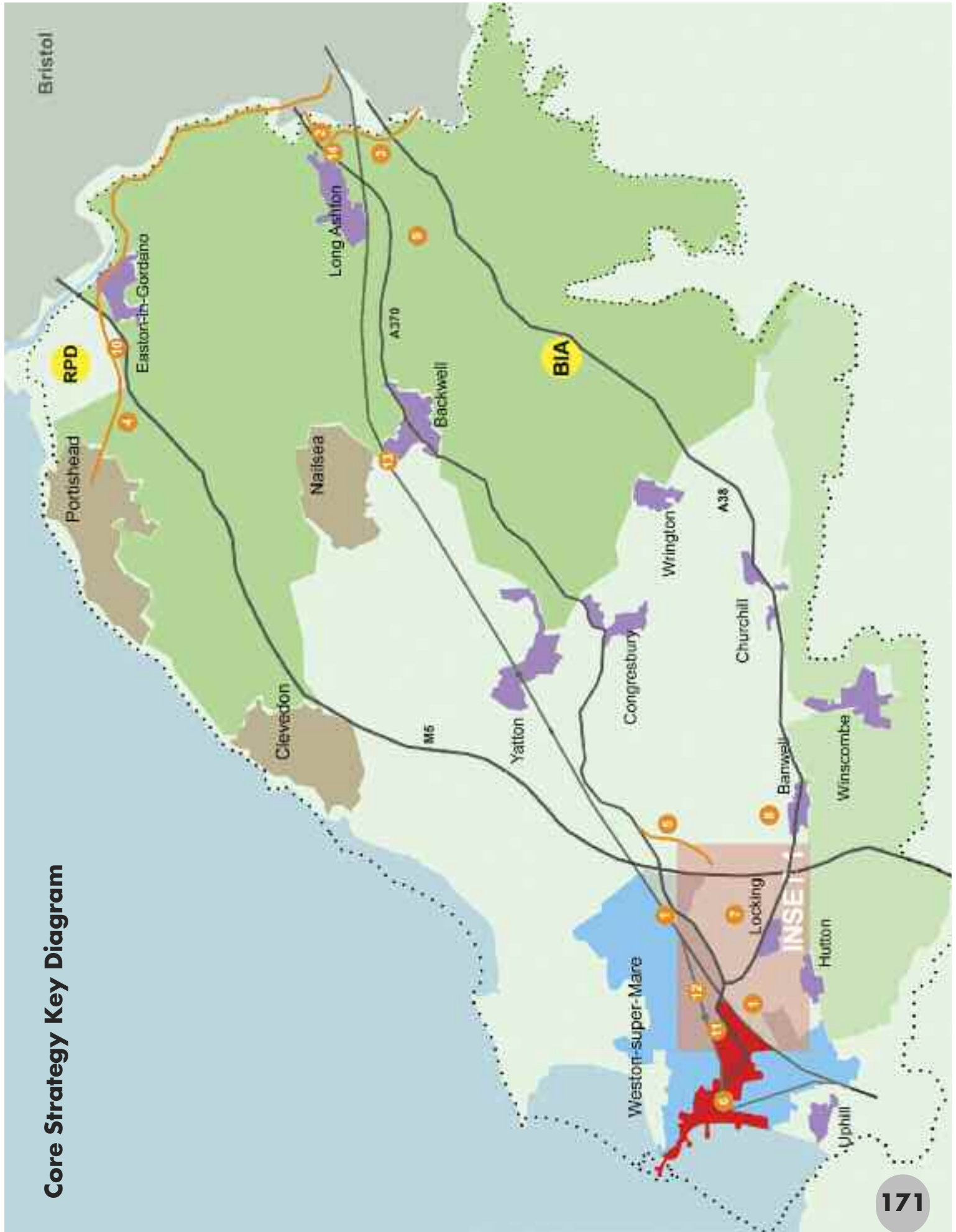
6.24 A monitoring framework will assess the effectiveness of the policy in relation to implementation.

CHAPTER 7: Key Diagram

- 7.1 The Core Strategy is accompanied by a strategic **key diagram** to illustrate policies described within the document. This is not presented on an Ordnance Survey base and should not be used for the precise interpretation of boundaries or sites. A greater level of detail is shown in respect of the strategic allocation of the Weston-super-Mare urban extension and this can be seen in the Weston Urban Extension Draft Key Inset Diagram within the supporting text to Policy CS30.



Core Strategy Key Diagram



How to give us your comments?

If you would like to comment on the consultation draft Core Strategy you can respond on-line at **www.consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk**.
The closing date is 19 February 2010.

**(All comments that you make about the document
have to be made publicly available)**

Contact us

To contact us about the Core Strategy:

Tel **01934 426 775** or

email **planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk**

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