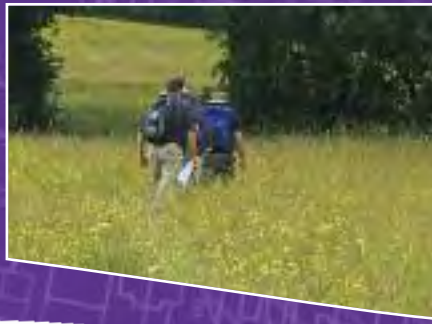


# North Somerset Council

## Core Strategy



## January 2017



## North Somerset Core Strategy

Following an examination conducted by an independent Inspector, the North Somerset Core Strategy was found sound and was formally adopted in April 2012. Plan adoption is followed by a prescribed period during which an aggrieved party can lodge a legal challenge. The legal challenge is not about the merits of the case, but whether the correct statutory processes have been complied with.

The adoption of the Core Strategy was challenged. The High Court Judgment found that Policy CS13: Scale of new housing was unlawful by reason of the Core Strategy Inspector's failure to give 'adequate or intelligible reasons for his conclusion that the figure made sufficient allowance for latent demand, ie demand unrelated to the creation of new jobs'. As a result Policy CS13, along with other policies that could require consequential changes if the housing requirement increased, were remitted back to the Planning Inspectorate for re-examination. The policies that were remitted were:

- CS13: Scale of new housing
- CS6: North Somerset's Green Belt
- CS14: Distribution of new housing
- CS19: Strategic gaps
- CS28: Weston-super-Mare
- CS30: Weston Villages
- CS31: Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead
- CS32: Service villages
- CS33: Infill villages, smaller settlements and countryside

The re-examination took place in two stages. Policy CS13 was re-examined first, followed by the remaining remitted policies.

Policy CS13 was re-adopted as a result of the Secretary of State's letter dated 18 September 2015.

The second stage of the re-examination assessed whether any consequential changes were needed to the other remitted policies as a result of the increase to the housing requirement. The Inspector's Report dated 8 November 2016 concluded that policies CS6 and CS19 remained sound without change, and that policies CS14, CS28, CS30, CS31, CS32 and CS33 could be found sound with modifications.

The fully re-adopted Core Strategy incorporating the changes recommended to the remitted policies was approved on 10 January 2017.

You can view the Core Strategy and get information about the council's other planning policy documents on our website  
**[www.n-somerset.gov.uk](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk)**

**Contact us:**

Email: [planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk)

Tel: 01934 426 177

Post: Planning Policy and Research  
Development and Environment  
North Somerset Council  
Town Hall  
Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ

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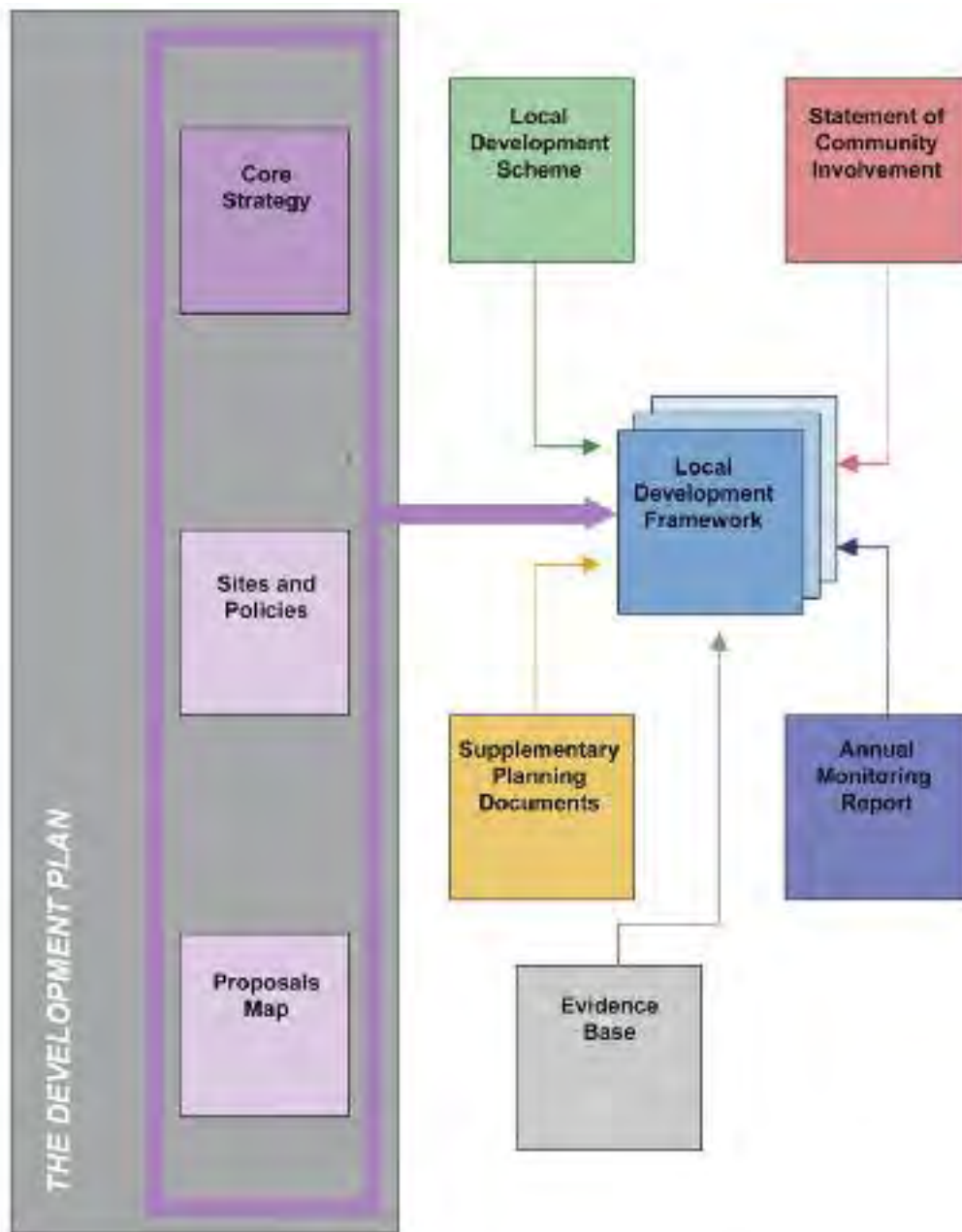
# CHAPTER 1: Introduction

## **What is the Core Strategy?**

- 1.1 The Core Strategy sets 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 includes 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 Sites and Policies Development Plan Document).
- 1.3 The Core Strategy supersedes part, but not all, of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2007). A table of superseded Policies is attached at Appendix A.

## **Relationship to the Sustainable Community Strategy**

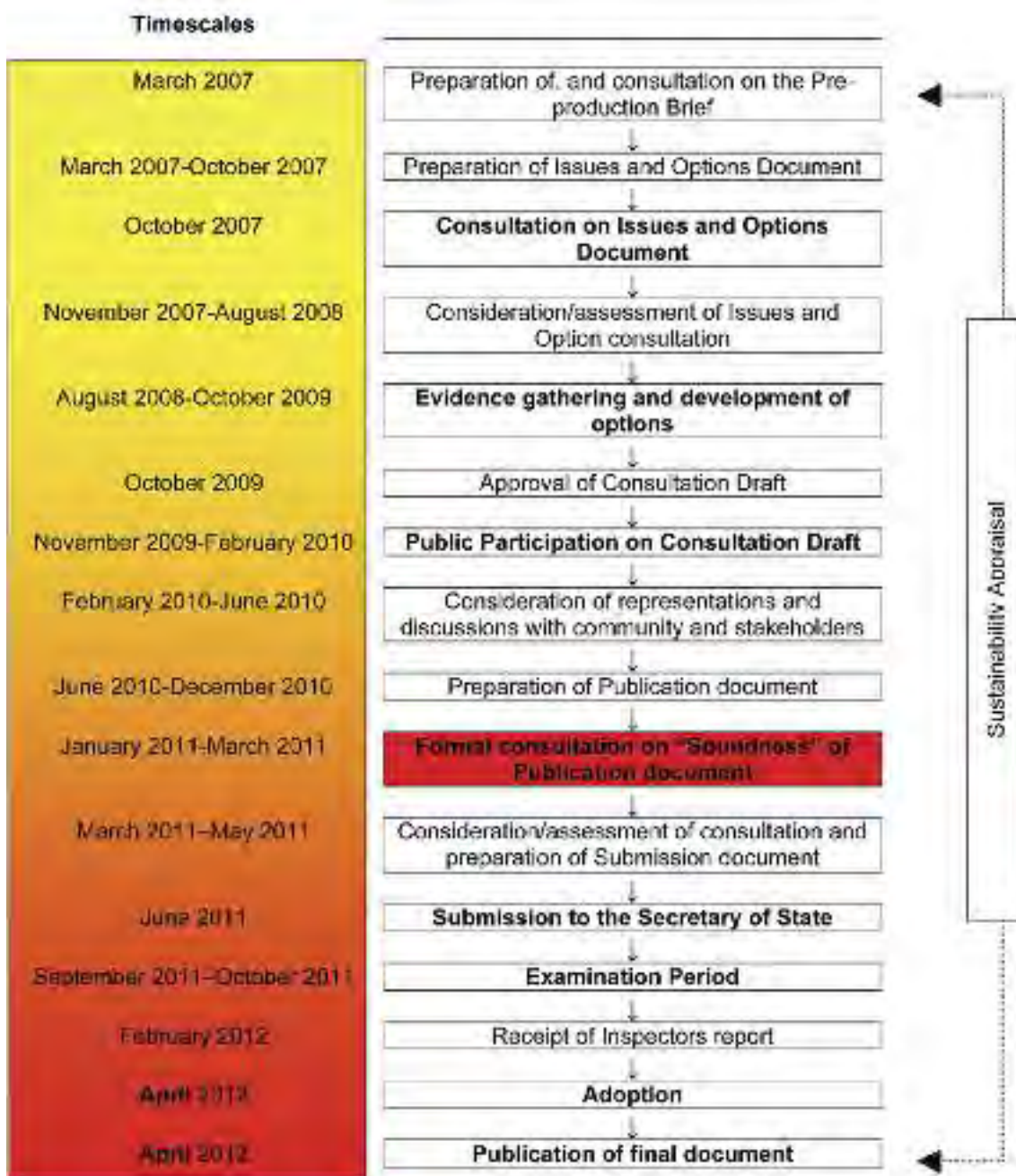
- 1.4 The Core Strategy responds to and is informed by ‘Improving Our Communities Together’, North Somerset Partnership’s Sustainable Community Strategy 2008–2026. It addresses issues identified, provides their land use expression, and seeks to deliver actions across a range of spatial issues. This close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



**Figure 1:** Core Strategy within the Development Plan and Local Development Framework structure

**Strategic guidance**

- 1.5 Legislation requires that the Core Strategy must be consistent with national policy. The housing requirement for North Somerset is based on independent advice commissioned by the council and produced in September 2013.



**Figure 2:** Core Strategy programme

**Evidence base**

1.6 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**

- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 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 Publication document has been assessed against these sustainability criteria to find the 'best fit' and the results made available in the SA report to ensure that the final proposals are those that perform most satisfactorily when evaluated against reasonable alternatives.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 1.9 The Core Strategy has been subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening to assess whether there would be likely significant effects on sites of international importance for wildlife (European Sites). Where a land use plan is likely to have a significant effect on such sites, an appropriate assessment must be carried out of the implications in respect of its conservation objectives.
- 1.10 The screening exercise has considered potential effects on the four European Sites within North Somerset. It concluded that with the avoidance/mitigation measures identified in the Screening Document, no likely significant effects on the European Sites are predicted from the Core Strategy, and therefore appropriate assessment is not necessary. However, it is important that any identified avoidance/mitigation measures are delivered in an effective and timely way to achieve their purpose.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 1.11 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.
- 1.12 As part of the Local Development Framework, the council is required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). One of the key functions of the AMR is to monitor policies contained within local development documents and to report on their performance.
- 1.13 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. In addition to annual monitoring a review of the level of new homes required will take place by 2018.

### **Characteristics of North Somerset**

- 1.14 North Somerset covers an area of around 37,500 hectares (145 square miles) with a population of 209,100 (Office of National Statistics Mid Year Population Estimate 2009). 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 such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.15 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 on the outer edge of the Green Belt approximately seven miles from Bristol.
- 1.16 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 in 2009, Office of National Statistic Mid Year Population Estimate), 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.
- 1.17 Weston-super-Mare has amongst the lowest self-containment level of other principal towns 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.
- 1.18 North Somerset contains two regionally important facilities: Bristol Airport located on the A38 some 4.5 miles from the edge of Bristol, but which would benefit from measures to further improve accessibility from Bristol and Weston, and the deep sea port of Royal Portbury Dock located at the mouth of the River Avon.



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**Core Strategy scope and structure**

1.19 Chapter 2 sets out the spatial **visions** for the district and the **priority objectives** required to deliver the vision.

1.20 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**

1.21 Separate **area policies** (chapter 4) set out the overall approach for specific locations while implementation is addressed by the **delivery** policy (chapter 5).

**Area policies**

**Delivery**

1.22 The key spatial implications of the Core Strategy are summarised diagrammatically on the **key diagram**. A detailed inset is provided for both Weston Town Centre and the strategic growth area at Weston Villages, and these follow the relevant area policies CS29 and CS30 respectively.

# 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 incorporate important aspects of local distinctiveness and key local issues. They are aspirational, yet realistic and deliverable and 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**

### **Vision 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, the move to more sustainable energy use 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 catering for the employment, retail, social and leisure needs of its population whilst attracting visitors to support this role. New development areas will be established, creating mixed-use communities with a distinct sense of place valued for their high standards of sustainability, quality of life and inspired design.*

*Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead will increasingly support their populations and play less of a dormitory role. The 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 Airport will be guided by the need to balance the advantages of economic growth with the need to control the impacts on those who live nearby and on the natural environment.*

### **Vision 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.*

*Brownfield land will be the focus of the delivery of two new sustainable communities developed in accordance with the principles of community development and place making.*

*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.*

### **Vision 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 attractive 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.*

#### **Vision 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 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 through new businesses or 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.*

#### **Vision 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, reducing an overreliance on 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.*

### **Vision 6 Service Villages Vision**

*By 2026 the 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, whilst protecting their individual character.*

The settlements as defined in the Core Strategy as Service Villages are:

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

### **Vision 7 Infill Villages 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 infill villages will have maintained or enhanced their individual character, identity and sense of community. Accessibility will be improved to facilities and services not locally available within nearby larger settlements. 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.*

The settlements as defined in the Core Strategy as infill villages are:

- Bleadon
- Claverham
- Cleeve
- Dundry
- Felton
- Flax Bourton
- Hutton
- Kenn
- Kewstoke
- Locking
- Sandford
- Uphill
- Winford.

## **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.

### **Priority objectives**

1. Deliver sustainable housing development across North Somerset to meet housing needs, through the provision of a minimum of 20,985 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 flood mitigation, healthcare facilities, M5 junction 21 improvements at Weston-super-Mare, junction 19 improvements at Portishead and access improvements to Bristol 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, brownfield opportunities in Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead are maximised, and that small and medium enterprises are supported. Support and promote major employers in North Somerset, such as Bristol Airport and Royal Portbury Dock, to ensure continued employment security and economic prosperity.
4. Make provision for the needs of an ageing population, prioritising supported living as opposed to residential care.
5. 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. To support regeneration within communities elsewhere in the town, particularly in the South and Central Wards.
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 gaps between settlements and characteristic green spaces and areas will be protected and enhanced.
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, and the number of drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres 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?*

**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 (chapter 5) 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 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 accordance with the settlement strategy set out in the Area Policies;
- 2) developers are encouraged to incorporate site-wide renewable energy solutions to be delivered in a phased and co-ordinated way with the proposed development;
- 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;
- 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, cycling and use of public transport should be maximised through new development and in existing areas emphasising the aim to provide opportunities that encourage and facilitate modal shift towards more sustainable transport modes;
- 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 including the potential to relate to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This would include not only green spaces but also the creation and enhancement of woodland areas;
- 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 and enhance species and habitats as well as the reduction or preferably elimination of any adverse impacts through sensitive design and layout and construction of developments;
- 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 in the Weston villages;
- 8) the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings in preference to the loss of green field sites;



- 9) opportunities for local food production and farming will be encouraged to reduce the district's contribution to food miles,
- 10) areas will be enhanced to be resilient to the impacts of climate change including flood defence and public realm enhancements including the integration of effective shading through, for example, tree planting; and,
- 11) developments should demonstrate water efficiency measures to reduce demand on water resources, including through the use of efficient appliances and exploration of the potential for rainwater recycling.

### **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 Poverty 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.

### **The Core Strategy approach**

- 3.8 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, and,
  - Planning for a sustainable distribution of land uses.
- 3.9 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.

- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 Policy CS1 includes a provision to encourage local food production and examples of this include the provision of allotments as part of large scale new developments, adequately sized gardens, and support for agricultural activity and local produce.

#### **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 with sustainability as an underlying principle, allocating sites and setting out policies through the Local Development Framework so as 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.

**Monitoring and review**

- 3.18 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, CO<sub>2</sub> 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 Villages 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 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 500m<sup>2</sup> and 15% for 1000m<sup>2</sup> and above;
- 3) require as a minimum Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 for all new dwellings from October 2010, Level 4 from 2013, rising to Level 6 by 2016. Higher standards will be encouraged ahead of this trajectory where scheme viability specifically supports this. BREEAM 'Very Good' will be required on all non-residential developments over 500m<sup>2</sup> and 'Excellent' over 1000m<sup>2</sup>;
- 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.
- 5) require the application of best practice in Sustainable Drainage Systems to reduce the impact of additional surface water run-off from new development. Such environmental infrastructure should be integrated into the design of the scheme and into landscaping features, and be easily maintained.

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

### **Background**

- 3.19 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.
- 3.20 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.
- 3.21 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions element.

### **Lifetime Homes**

- 3.22 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 2026 (Figures from ONS sub-national population projections 2008), the council considers it appropriate to require a proportion of housing within new developments to meet Lifetime Homes Standards.
- 3.23 The Lifetime Homes standard is a requirement through the Code for Sustainable Homes so achieving Lifetime Homes standard provides credits towards achieving a Code Standard.

### **The Core Strategy approach**

- 3.24 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.
- 3.25 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.
- 3.26 The Core Strategy requires all new homes to meet as a minimum code Level 3 in line with recent amendments to the Building Regulations with regard to energy conservation. Higher code levels will be encouraged particularly at the Weston Villages 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, however, schemes are encouraged to seek higher standards ahead of the trajectory in this policy where viability allows.
- 3.27 This policy aspect will be monitored closely and potentially reviewed in light of national policy and ongoing economic conditions with the underlying objective of ensuring as high a standard as possible is achieved. The Core Strategy follows the current national timetable for the delivery of sustainable design standards; the detailed requirements as set out in Policy CS2 may need to be reviewed should these be revised in the future.
- 3.28 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**

- 3.29 By implication the implementation of this policy will be linked to the broad distribution of development, but exemplar standards are expected at the Weston Villages 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.
- 3.30 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**

3.31 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% under 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.

3.32 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*

3.33 On large developments (10 or more dwellings) district heating 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).

- 3.34 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.
- 3.35 Further detail on implementing this policy will be set out in the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

**Monitoring and review**

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





## Living within environmental limits

### CS3: Environmental impacts and flood risk assessment

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 would 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 it is demonstrated that it complies with the sequential test set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and associated technical guidance and, where applicable, the Exception Test, unless it is:

- development of a category for which **National Planning Policy Framework and associated technical guidance** makes specific alternative provision; or
- development of the same or a similar character and scale as that for which the site is allocated, 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-wide unless:
  - It can be demonstrated with evidence that there is a specific need within a specific area; or
  - The site is located within the settlement boundaries of Weston (including the new development areas), Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead, where 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 publicly-owned land that has been formally declared to be surplus and available for purchase by private treaty.

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.

## Background

3.37 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

3.38 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).

3.39 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*

3.40 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.

3.41 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.

*Noise*

3.42 The National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 123 and Noise Policy Statement for England (Defra March 2010) set the planning policy context for sensitive/noise/related developments. Housing, hospitals and schools as well as other uses such as libraries and some other community facilities may 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.

3.43 The National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 123 and Noise Policy Statement for England (Defra March 2010) set the planning policy context for noise sensitive/related developments. Housing, hospitals and schools as well as 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.

*Flood risk*

3.44 Because much of North Somerset is low-lying, flood risk is a very important matter. National Planning Policy Framework and associated technical guidance identifies four flood zone categories with the risk of flooding associated with each flood zone set out at Table 1 of the Technical Guidance. 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.



- 3.45 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 management purposes, the Environment Agency Flood Map extents will continue to apply, with the technical breakdown of the current zone 3 into 3a and 3b provided by the SFRA.
- 3.46 The Technical Guide to the National Planning Policy Framework 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 2 of the Technical Guide.
- 3.47 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.



- 3.48 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 the Technical Guide to the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 3.49 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 3 of the Technical Guide to the National Planning Policy Framework).
- 3.50 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 the National Planning Policy Framework and accompanying Technical Guidance and the Environment Agency's Policy and Practice for the Protection of Flood Plains. Information contained in the North Somerset SFRA should be the starting point for all site-specific FRAs.

#### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.51 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.
- 3.52 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.
- 3.53 The council will liaise closely with environmental protection agencies as well as using its own resources and staff.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- 3.54 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, 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 and national Biodiversity Action Plan targets 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, and a net gain achieved where possible;
- 3) seeking to protect, connect 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;
- 5) promoting native tree planting and well targeted woodland creation, and encouraging retention of trees, with a view to enhancing biodiversity.

### Background

- 3.55 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.
- 3.56 North Somerset has a particularly rich biodiversity and variety of habitats. 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.
- 3.57 Internationally Important European Sites or Natura 2000 sites include the Severn Estuary SSSI, a Ramsar site, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), 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.



- 3.58 Natura 2000 sites are statutorily protected under the Habitats Regulations. 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.
- 3.59 North Somerset also includes 39 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) of national importance, and two National Nature Reserves (Leigh Woods and part of the Gordano Valley).
- 3.60 205 sites in North Somerset have been designated as Wildlife Sites in the adopted Replacement Local Plan as 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 interconnected networks of such habitats exist throughout an area to allow dispersal and interbreeding between different populations.
- 3.61 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.

- 3.62 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. The district also contains UK priority grassland habitats, including lowland calcareous grassland, lowland meadows and lowland dry acid grassland.
- 3.63 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.
- 3.64 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. Trees are very important for wildlife, providing food and shelter, nesting and roosting sites for birds and bats and habitats for invertebrates.

#### **The Core Strategy approach**

- 3.65 The policy reflects the importance of meeting regional biodiversity targets. It also emphasises the need to design development to maximise benefits to biodiversity, incorporating and enhancing natural habitats and features, particularly networks of habitats, which are very important as wildlife corridors. It stresses that development should not result in net loss of biodiversity interest, and promotes achievement of a net gain where possible.
- 3.66 The policy sets out the requirement to protect and enhance biodiversity in broad terms, although more detailed guidance will be provided within the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.
- 3.67 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.
- 3.68 The policy reflects the importance of trees for biodiversity, and regard must be had 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**

- 3.60 Policy CS4 recognises the importance of locations supporting priority habitats, 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. The policy is consistent with the aims of South West Nature Map – A Planner’s Guide by Biodiversity South West (February 2007), which refers to Strategic Nature Areas that represent the best areas to maintain and expand wildlife habitats through their management, restoration and/or re-creation.
- 3.70 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.
- 3.71 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.
- 3.72 Planning applications which have the potential to impact on biodiversity 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.
- 3.73 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.
- 3.74 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.

**Monitoring and review**

- 3.75 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, and where possible net gain, as a result of development is being 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 conserve the historic environment of North Somerset, having regard to the significance of heritage 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.

### Background

#### *Landscape*

- 3.76 Policy CS5 recognises the importance of North Somerset's landscape, and the need to protect and enhance its diversity, distinctiveness and quality.
- 3.77 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).
- 3.78 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 (AONB), for which the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan has been produced.

- 3.79 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 the following 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.
- 3.80 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*

- 3.81 Policy CS5 also reflects the importance of North Somerset's historic environment, and the need to conserve it in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 126-141.
- 3.82 There are 34 Conservation Areas in North Somerset, plus a proposed Conservation Area at Barrow Gurney, 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.
- 3.83 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 at Ashton Court (Grade 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.
- 3.84 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.

- 3.85 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**

- 3.86 Policy CS5 sets out a broad policy framework for protection and enhancement of the landscape and historic environment, which will be reinforced by detailed development management policies in the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.87 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.
- 3.88 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 Site and Development Plan Document.
- 3.89 Effective delivery will require close liaison with landscape, conservation and archaeology experts and consultation with bodies such as English Heritage and the Mendip Hills AONB Unit.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 3.90 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.

Further amendments to the Green Belt at Bristol 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**

3.91 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.

3.92 The Joint Replacement Structure Plan (2002) set out the general extent of the Bristol – Bath Green Belt, with the detailed boundaries defined through the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2007).

3.93 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**

3.94 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 absence of any need for large scale further revisions to either the general extent or detailed boundaries of the Green Belt, no changes to the Green Belt are proposed in the Core Strategy.

3.95 There are two existing strategic developments which are constrained by Green Belt within North Somerset:

*Bristol Airport*

3.96 The Replacement Local Plan created an inset in the Green Belt to accommodate the medium term expansion requirements of Bristol Airport. 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*

3.97 The issue of port expansion 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**

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

**Monitoring and review**

3.99 Performance will be monitored by the assessment of planning applications, and developments within the Green Belt.



## Living within environmental limits

### CS7: Planning for waste

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 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 management policies to be established in the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

### Background

- 3.100 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

- 3.101 The four Unitary Authorities (UAs) in the West of England have produced 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. The JWCS will sit alongside the emerging Core Strategies of the West of England authorities, removing the need to produce separate Waste Site Allocation DPDs.
- 3.102 The JWCS provides a policy framework for all waste streams (except radioactive waste) including municipal, commercial and industrial, 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 West of England area.
- 3.103 The JWCS includes criteria-based policies on non-residual waste treatment facilities such as those for recycling and composting of waste.

- 3.104 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 not technology-specific, and does not specify which method would be used in the identified locations.
- 3.105 The JWCS refers to an indicative recovery (excluding recycling and composting) capacity requirement of 800,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) to 2020. The JWCS includes a spatial strategy for meeting this required residual waste treatment capacity, which includes an indicative capacity of 100,000 tpa for a south west zone of the West of England including Weston-super-Mare.
- 3.106 In North Somerset the JWCS identifies two areas at Weston as potentially being suitable for the location of residual waste treatment facilities:
- 1) The existing Towens Waste Management Facility, Warne Road, Weston-super-Mare.
  - 2) A broad strategic area on the south-eastern side of Weston-super-Mare, within which sites may come forward.
- 3.107 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 landraise.







- 3.108 The JWCS also includes development management policies to be used in conjunction with those in the unitary authorities' other development plan documents, in assessing proposals for waste management facilities. They refer to Natura 2000 sites and will help ensure that any energy from waste plants are of appropriate design to prevent unacceptable impacts from emissions on such sites of international biodiversity importance.

**How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.109 The 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 criteria-based policies and development management policies in the JWCS and Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.
- 3.110 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.

**Monitoring and review**

- 3.111 Monitoring will assess the amounts of the different waste streams (eg municipal, commercial and industrial) which arise, and the proportions which are recycled.

## Living within environmental limits

### CS8: Minerals planning

Provision will be made for North Somerset to contribute towards approximately 40% of the West of England's crushed rock aggregate sub regional apportionment for 2005–2020 rolled forward to 2026 on a pro rata basis, with a deduction to take account of extraction since the start of that period, consistent with national policy, subject to the principles of sustainable development, provided that local testing of that apportionment, through preparation of the Local Development Framework, shows that it is deliverable and environmentally acceptable. Based on the sub regional apportionment for the West of England that was submitted by the South West regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP) to the Department of Communities and Local Government in September 2010, the Council have calculated that apportionment for North Somerset to be approximately 36.9 million tonnes.

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 Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

Detailed development management policies on minerals development will be established through the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

### Background

3.112 Government guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 142 states that minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and our 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

3.113 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 asphalt, concrete and concrete products.

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

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

*Requirement for supply of primary aggregates:*

3.115 The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) published national and regional guidelines for aggregates provision in England 2005–2020 on 29 June 2009. It includes a regional guideline that the South



West region provides 412 million tonnes (mt) of crushed rock and 85 mt of sand and gravel over the period 2005–2020.

- 3.116 This 2009 regional guideline is less than the previous one issued in 2003, which stipulated 453mt of crushed rock and 106mt of sand and gravel for the period 2001–2016 (the fall reflects changes in predicted demand for construction aggregates in the UK as a whole and changing needs for inter-regional flows of aggregates).
- 3.117 The 2003 regional guideline figure prepared in the context of the draft RSS was subject to sub-regional apportionment based on a 'status quo' scenario developed by the South West Regional Aggregate Working Party (RAWP), which continued to apportion requirements to sub-regional areas on the basis of their recent production of aggregates.
- 3.118 With the anticipated abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies the Government has issued advice stating that mineral planning authorities should continue to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals, and that current work in sub-apportioning the CLG guidelines for 2005–2020 to planning authority level will assist with this.
- 3.119 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities to take account of such guidelines and make provision for aggregates in their mineral plans taking account of advice of the Aggregate Working Party as appropriate.

- 3.120 Technical work on possible sub regional apportionment on the basis of Mineral Planning Authorities, led initially by South West Councils, commenced in Autumn 2009, and was taken forward by the South West RAWP. It reached the stage at which, in September 2010, the SWRAWP members agreed an approach to sub regional apportionment: that it should be to Mineral Planning Authorities (MPAs), as calculated from historic proportional contributions to production over the period 2004 – 2008. MPAs would test their sub regional apportionments at the local level through the Local Development Framework (LDF) process.
- 3.121 This technical advice has been submitted to national government (CLG). If it is approved the resulting sub regional apportionments will be passed down to the Mineral Planning Authorities (MPAs) for ‘testing’ at the local level through preparation of LDFs.
- 3.122 If the technical advice submitted to CLG is approved, there will be a resulting sub-regional apportionment for the West of England area, and it will need to be split between the relevant districts. Currently the adopted Joint Replacement Structure Plan covering the West of England area is still relevant. This suggests (in Policy 26) that beyond 2006 the appropriate contribution to crushed rock aggregate supply (in the Structure Plan area) will be determined through minerals local plans, 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% (the Structure Plan states that Bristol, and Bath and North East Somerset provide a negligible contribution). Recent data demonstrates that this proportion remains broadly the same and this ratio is reflected in Policy CS8.
- 3.123 Policy CS8 indicates that the resulting 40% sub regional apportionment share to which mineral resources within North Somerset would contribute would need to be tested regarding practicality and environmental acceptability through preparation of the LDF. That would largely be undertaken in preparing the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document. The Council has calculated that, assuming that the SWRAWP technical advice goes forward, and that the apportionment for West of England is rolled forward to 2026 on a pro rata basis, and allowance is made for extraction between 2005-2008 inclusive, the apportionment for North Somerset for 2009-2026 inclusive, based on a 40% share, would be about 36.9 million tonnes.
- 3.124 The National Planning Policy Framework requires authorities to provide for the maintenance of land banks (appropriate levels of permitted reserves for aggregates extraction), and indicates that the land bank indicator for crushed rock is at least 10 years. Again this is reflected in Policy CS8.
- 3.125 Detailed considerations, such as identification of any areas where minerals resources should be safeguarded through designating Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) will appropriately be addressed in preparing the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

*Recycled or secondary aggregates:*

- 3.126 The National Planning Policy Framework encourages so far as practicable the use of alternatives to primary aggregates.
- 3.127 The West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy (JWCS) includes a policy which allows proposals for recycling of construction, demolition and excavation waste (a key source of recycled aggregate) at mineral sites, subject to development management policies, provided that the proposed development is for a temporary time period commensurate with the operational life of the mineral site.
- 3.128 Any need for further detailed policies concerning facilities producing secondary and recycled aggregates will appropriately be addressed in preparing the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

*Coal*

- 3.129 The Coal Authority has mapped 'North Somerset Surface Mining Coal Resource Areas' which they believe comprise coal resources that may be capable of being mined from the surface.

*Potential impacts of mineral working*

- 3.130 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.
- 3.131 These issues will appropriately be addressed in preparing the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

**How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.132 Most opportunities for minerals development are in the carboniferous limestone areas in the north part of North Somerset, which contains the three active quarries. Testing of the sub regional apportionment share for North Somerset will largely be through preparation of the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document. Deliverability of the policy will partly depend on production of crushed rock in North Somerset being carried out sustainably in accordance with development management policies. Policies on mineral working and the consideration of whether and in what locations identification of Minerals Safeguarding Areas may be appropriate will be undertaken through the Sites and Policies DPD.

**Monitoring and review**

- 3.133 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, linking in to existing provision where appropriate, 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:

- the protection and enhancement of the formal parks and gardens originating from the Victorian era;
- the protection and planting of trees in woodlands and urban areas, particularly native trees, for public amenity and climate change mitigation and benefits to biodiversity, health and recreation;
- the promotion of the north slopes of the Mendip Hills AONB as sub-regional corridors for biodiversity, recreation and landscape retention;
- the promotion of the Congresbury Yeo, River Banwell, North Somerset Levels and Moors, and Grumblepill Rhyne as local corridors for biodiversity and landscape enhancement;
- the protection and enhancement of biodiversity;
- the connection of disjointed woodlands, particularly ancient and semi-natural woodland, such as those around the Wraxall/Failand ridge;
- the continued development of a network of green spaces, water bodies, paths and cycleways and bridleways in and around the urban areas, recognising the value of sustainable drainage systems for green infrastructure;
- the management, maintenance, upgrading and extension of the public rights of way network including improved connectivity to areas of green infrastructure within and outside North Somerset;
- the provision of strategically significant green spaces in association with all areas of development.

**Background**

- 3.134 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.
- 3.135 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 such as disused railway lines 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.
- 3.136 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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.
- 3.137 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. Some large water bodies may be of operational value, for example the Barrow tanks are important for the water supply.



- 3.138 Green infrastructure is important not only in urban areas, but also in rural areas and on the urban-rural fringe, particularly where it supports a vibrant rural economy and enhances facilities available to villages for recreation, walking and cycling.

### **The Core Strategy approach**

- 3.139 Policy CS9 reflects the importance of green infrastructure and its value for health, biodiversity, landscape and 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. Clear priorities will be established through an overarching Green Infrastructure Strategy which will incorporate local open space standards, map green infrastructure and set out principles guiding development and management of green infrastructure.

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.140 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 Weston Villages.
- 3.141 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 Sites and Policies Development Plan Document. 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.
- 3.142 North Somerset Council has a 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. The council has also produced the North Somerset Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007–2017 which indicates which bodies have responsibility for rights of way, including their management and maintenance.
- 3.143 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.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 3.144 Monitoring will include indicators based on positive conservation management, areas with Green Flag awards and Local Nature Reserve area per head of population.



## 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, rail and rapid transit 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 and contribute towards carbon reduction;
- mitigate against increased traffic congestion;
- improve connectivity within and between major towns both within and beyond North Somerset;
- support the movement of freight by rail.

The following are part of the West of England major transport schemes programme set out in the Joint Local Transport Plan published in March 2011:

- 1) Weston Package (Phase 1 low cost option).
- 2) Ashton Vale to Temple Meads and Bristol City Centre Rapid Transit.
- 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 Bypass.
- 9) Barrow Gurney Bypass.
- 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 rail station with improved pedestrian access.
- 14) Expansion of the Park and Ride at Long Ashton

- 15) New Park and Ride site at Weston-super-Mare.
- 16) Investigation of bus rapid transit for Weston.
- 17) Airfield Bridge Link between Weston Airfield and Winterstoke Road.
- 18) Weston Southern Rail Chord (a link between the main line and the loop line, south of Bournville).

*This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 2 and 9.*

### **Background**

3.145 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.

3.146 The promotion and justification for major schemes are set out in the Joint Local Transport Plan 3 which covers the period 2011 to 2026. The final version of the Joint Local Transport Plan 3 came into effect from 1 April 2011. The Joint Local Transport Plan is prepared by the four unitary authorities of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils and sets out the transport strategy for the next fifteen years and includes a Delivery Plan setting out priorities and spending plans on a 3 year rolling programme.

3.147 The fundamental aim of the Joint Local Transport Plan 3 is in line with the Core Strategy – namely to provide attractive travel choices and a greater focus on sustainable transport modes to improve quality of life 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. Where appropriate, the general location of these schemes is identified on the Key Diagram.

3.148 The Joint Local Transport Plan 3 identifies that the Port of Bristol (Avonmouth and Portbury) provides an international gateway for freight and is one of the most productive and technically advanced ports in Europe. As part of the goal to support economic development, the Joint Local Transport Plan 3 recognises the local importance of freight and the need to work with the industry on achieving more efficient distribution, including freight consolidation and greater use of rail.

3.149 Funding for major transport schemes is no longer prioritised by the regional assemblies which were abolished on 31 March 2010. Transport schemes

previously identified within what used to be called the Regional Funding Allocation are now in a bidding process co-ordinated centrally by the DfT.

### **The Core Strategy approach**

3.150 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. While it is recognised that car use will remain a convenient, attractive and in many areas, essential mode of travel, the approach seeks ways to minimise harm to the environment through good quality design and to encourage alternatives to single occupancy car commuting.

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

3.151 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 Villages. However the policy approach is applicable throughout the district and innovative public transport schemes will be explored for rural areas and villages. The improvement of public transport hubs such as rail stations will be supported such as through the identification of land for parking and other facilities. Through the development management process planning applications will need to address how they can deliver a choice of transport modes which could provide a realistic alternative to the car.





- 3.152 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.
- 3.153 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.
- 3.154 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.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- 3.155 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.

## 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, residential amenity and promoting town centre attractiveness and vitality.

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 Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

*This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 10.*

### Background

3.156 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**

- 3.157 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.
- 3.158 The quality and quantity of town centre parking is vital to maintaining and increasing the attractiveness of our town centres. Redevelopment of sites within town centres must ensure that sufficient parking is both retained during construction and provided for the needs of the new development. In Weston-super-Mare a balance must be struck between significantly increasing the amount of retail, leisure facilities, employment and housing within the town centre through the redevelopment of identified sites, providing the appropriate level of parking to serve all these uses and encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport, such as bus (including future park and ride proposals), train, walking and cycling to reduce the need to use the private car.
- 3.159 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 Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.160 Data has been collected in respect of 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.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 3.161 Monitoring of parking standards and their effectiveness.

## 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 seek to improve the image of the area. 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 and 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.

In particular the following aspects of North Somerset's character should be maintained and enhanced in addition to the heritage aspects identified through Policy CS5.

- The historic built environment, for example the Victorian residential areas located throughout the district but focussed in the main towns;
- Coastal areas including key buildings and public spaces that contribute to the character and experience of the place;
- The historic rural settlements, particularly those in the Green Belt.

Design priorities include supporting town centre regeneration at Weston-super-Mare and the approaches into the town, delivering high quality new communities that exhibit best practice in place-making, and consolidating the individual character of settlements across the district informed by site/settlement character appraisals.

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. Achieving Secured by Design certification will help to demonstrate how designing out crime has been taken into account.

Further detail will be set out in other Development Plan Documents alongside this strategic policy direction to guide development proposals and decision making. 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.

CS12

## Background

- 3.162 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 where it is acknowledged that quality design must be accorded priority if places are to be shaped as sustainable, and socially, economically and environmentally responsive.
- 3.163 High quality design 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. The success of regeneration strategies and comprehensive employment-led development as part of the Weston Villages is reliant upon good design.
- 3.164 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.
- 3.165 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 building materials.
- 3.166 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.



### **The Core Strategy approach**

- 3.167 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 compliments specific area-based policies at Weston Town Centre and Weston Villages 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.
- 3.168 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.
- 3.169 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. New developments are encouraged to achieve Secured by Design accreditation, or demonstrate that the key principles have been taken into account in the design of the development. New development areas will minimise the fear of crime, leading to safer communities.
- 3.170 In respect of Building for Life, this standard can 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. Whilst the council is not formally requesting that proposals meet certain standards, the criteria within the standard will form part of a development management policy (set out in the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document) and potentially in the form of design guidance, and as such proposals will be assessed against these.

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.171 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 Villages and development at Weston Town Centre will demonstrate exemplar standards.
- 3.172 At Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead and other settlements throughout North Somerset, development should respond to the local context and enhance the distinct identity. 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.

- 3.173 The character of an area is created through its landscape, geology, 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 to creating environments that provide people with a connection to history and support a social identity.
- 3.174 Proposals for all development other than small scale or change of use proposals 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.

### **Urban design**

- 3.175 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.
- 3.176 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.
- 3.177 The Supplementary Planning Document to be prepared for the Weston Villages 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.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 3.178 The number and proportion of total new build completions on housing sites of at least 10 dwellings reaching different levels of the Building for Life standards will be monitored.

## Delivering strong and inclusive communities

### **CS13: Scale of new housing**

A supply of deliverable and developable land will be identified to secure the delivery of a minimum of 20,985 dwellings within North Somerset 2006–2026. The appropriate level of new homes will be reviewed by 2018.

*This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 1.*

**CS13**

### **Background**

- 3.179 Plan preparation and the determination of the appropriate level for the district housing requirement took place against an uncertain planning context in terms of regional planning, the localism agenda, and the introduction of the NPPF, as well as a severe economic downturn which raised doubts about the robustness of trend-based projections and economic growth assumptions.
- 3.180 The North Somerset housing requirement as set out in the April 2012 adopted Core Strategy was challenged in the courts and remitted back to the Planning Inspectorate for re-examination. As part of the reassessment of the housing requirement the Council undertook a fresh assessment of housing needs within the district.
- 3.181 A new joint Strategic Housing Market Area assessment for the wider housing market area was being carried out at the time that Policy CS13 was being examined. Until this work is completed the Council cannot move forward on the basis of a full objective assessment of housing need as required by the NPPF.
- 3.182 The provisions of this policy should therefore be seen as an interim position pending a review of housing requirements and provision which will be based on the findings of the new SHMA. The policy includes a specific reference to this review.
- 3.183 Other local authorities in the West of England are already committed to a similar approach. To reach a co-ordinated position between the West of England authorities based on the duty to co-operate, it is intended that the new SHMA will be published in June 2015. The processes are already in train to produce a Joint Strategic Planning Strategy by early 2017. This will be a formal development plan document and will, amongst other things, allocate housing provision between the West of England authorities. By early 2017 therefore the Council will be able to plan for a fully NPPF compliant and West of England agreed housing provision. Policy CS13 will be applied on the basis of that revised figure once it has been adopted. The Council will then need to review and have adopted a replacement plan, whether this be a Local Plan or a review of this Core Strategy, in order to put the requirements of the adopted JSPS into local effect.
- 3.184 If for any reason the JSPS has not been finalised the Council will move ahead with a review of the document on the basis of the best information available to

it (including the NPPF compliant SHMA). In either case the review will be completed by the end of 2018 with a replacement for this policy being adopted by that time.

### **The Core Strategy approach**

3.185 Within North Somerset over the plan period the Core Strategy seeks to create a better, more sustainable balance between housing and employment whilst making appropriate provision to meet housing needs. North Somerset has historically experienced relatively high levels of housing demand but low levels of economic growth. The Core Strategy approach is to ensure that housing growth is better related to employment growth (employment-led) than in the past, and which will support a relative improvement in self-containment and overall benefits in terms of Weston-super Mare regeneration.

3.186 The primary evidence base for the revised housing requirement was the Edge Analytics 'Demographic Analysis and Forecasts' September 2013. This recommended a range of 'current growth scenarios' as the basis for the review of future housing provision from 17,130–20,220 dwellings. The recommended requirement of 20,985 dwellings 2006–2026 comprises the maximum forecast of objectively assessed needs for North Somerset identified in the Edge Analytics report plus a further allowance of 5% to boost housing supply and provide a contingency to support the employment-led objective. The housing target is consistent with both meeting objectively assessed needs and the wider plan objective of securing a better balance between homes and jobs, particularly at Weston-super-Mare.

3.187 Between 2006 and 2026 provision will be made for 20,985 new dwellings. As at April 2014 6,752 dwellings had been completed leaving 14,233 dwellings to be delivered 2014–2026. To comply with the requirements of the NPPF the Council will identify sufficient sites to provide five years worth of housing with an additional buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Any underprovision in delivery arising at the time of plan review will be taken into account to ensure that any backlog that has arisen is addressed.

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

3.188 The Core Strategy will identify the policy context for the delivery of the residual housing requirement over the remainder of the plan period through Policy CS14.

3.189 This 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.

### **Monitoring and review**

3.190 Housing supply is monitored annually in order to ensure that there remains a flexible supply of deliverable and developable land for housing. Policy CS13 is an interim position which will be reviewed through the duty to co-operate by the production of a joint development plan, the JSPS, by the West of England authorities and with a replacement policy adopted by the end of 2018.

## Delivering strong and inclusive communities

### CS14: Distribution of new housing

New housing development 2006–2026 will be accommodated in accordance with the following hierarchy:

**Weston-super-Mare** will be the focus for new residential development within North Somerset, including the strategic allocation at Weston Villages. Development at Weston will be employment-led.

Outside Weston, most additional development will take place at the towns of **Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead** on sites within or abutting settlement boundaries, but outside the Green Belt.

At service villages there will be opportunities for small-scale development of an appropriate scale either within or abutting settlement boundaries or through site allocations. Elsewhere development will be more strictly controlled although appropriate development will be acceptable within the settlement boundaries of infill villages.

Settlement boundaries define the area within which residential development is acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with other policies in the plan. Development outside the settlement boundaries will only be acceptable where a site is allocated in a Local Plan or where it comprises sustainable development which accords with the criteria set out in the relevant settlement policies (CS28, CS31, CS32 and CS33).

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.

Residential density will be determined primarily by local character and good quality design. The target net density across North Somerset is 40 dwellings per hectare, although this may be higher at highly accessible locations, and less in sensitive areas or where lower density development is positively encouraged.

The broad distribution of new dwellings will be a minimum of:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Net additional dwellings</b>
	-

CS14

### **Background**

3.191 The distribution of new residential development in the Core Strategy reflects a broad settlement hierarchy based on well-established national, sub-regional and sustainability principles. It seeks to steer development to those locations where there are most opportunities for employment, services and transport accessibility.

### **The Core Strategy approach**

3.192 Weston-super-Mare is the principal town within North Somerset and because of its size and range of functions and services, has the potential to be the most sustainable location for new residential development. Weston is therefore the focus for development within the district, provided that development is employment-led to secure regeneration and greater self-containment.

3.193 A significant proportion of the overall requirement will be met at the Weston Villages strategic allocation (see Policy CS30). Its detailed implementation is being guided by the Weston Villages Supplementary Planning Document.

3.194 Elsewhere in the Weston urban area the majority of new residential development over and above existing commitments is likely to be delivered through town centre/gateway regeneration opportunities. Development at Weston will be employment-led in order to secure improved self-containment and reduced out-commuting.

3.195 Elsewhere in North Somerset the scope for significant development is more 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 three towns of Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead act as service centres for their surrounding areas and will be the focal points for locally significant scales of development, including provision for the majority of district housing provision outside of Weston. 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.

3.196 In the three towns most of the growth is or has taken place at Portishead. Flexibility is introduced into the policy approach to support a suitable scale of development being delivered adjoining settlement boundaries of these towns. Clevedon and Portishead are both highly constrained by Green Belt and flood constraints, although there may be opportunities at Nailsea outside the Green Belt.

3.197 In the rural areas the Core Strategy approach is to support an appropriate level of small scale growth which reflects the function and character of individual villages. Nine of the larger villages which support a wider range of facilities and act as a hub for surrounding areas are identified as Service Villages. Within and adjoining the settlement boundaries of the Service Villages small scale development may be appropriate subject to the criteria set out in Policy CS32. Proposals of a larger scale outside settlement boundaries must come forward as part of a formal site allocation with revision to the settlement boundary through the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Development Plan.

- 3.198 In those other villages with a settlement boundary, development of an appropriate scale and character within settlement boundaries will be acceptable. Elsewhere, in order to reduce unsustainable sporadic or piecemeal development, new housing will be very strictly controlled.
- 3.199 Settlement boundaries for Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead, the service villages and infilling villages will remain as defined in the Replacement Local Plan pending any alterations as part of any future Local Plan or Neighbourhood Development Plan. All other settlement boundaries will be deleted.

CS14



CS14



**How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.200 There are existing site allocations in the Replacement Local Plan and these will be supplemented by additional sites in detailed Local Plans or Neighbourhood Development Plans as appropriate.
- 3.201 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, the Service Villages and the Infill Villages have been deleted. Amendments to settlement boundaries will be addressed through detailed Local Plans or Neighbourhood Development Plans.
- 3.202 New housing will be primarily delivered by the private sector, but with a significant role from the Registered Providers in respect of affordable housing, and the Homes and Communities Agency and other organisations in the case of regeneration and redevelopment proposals in Weston-super-Mare. 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.

**Monitoring and review**

- 3.203 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, across the district.



## 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:

- a) 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;
- b) 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, contribute to an improved local environment and support greater community cohesion;
- c) Contribute to creating an accessible, inclusive and safe community with easy access to a range of services.

*This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8.*

**CS15**

### **Background**

3.204 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 such as older people.

3.205 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 Villages.

3.206 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;
- Encouraging 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;
- Reducing the social isolation of a particular age group, such as older people or the young;
- Creating a more diverse and inclusive community than the one dominated by a single accommodation type;
- Encouraging a range of accommodation choices to meet the needs of an ageing population through promoting independent living whilst minimising the need for residential care.

CS15



- 3.207 Within North Somerset in 2010 there were approximately 92,171 dwellings, of which about 79% were houses (mainly detached and semi-detached) and 21% were flats. The 2001 census showed that in North Somerset 78.6% of houses were owner occupied, and of these 35.4% of homes were owned out right. 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.
- 3.208 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**

- 3.209 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, increasing equality of opportunity to live in certain areas and facilitating the creation of mixed and balanced communities.

Concentration of one housing type:

- 3.210 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%.
- 3.211 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 11<sup>th</sup> biggest equality gap in the country and it is one of the Core Strategy objectives to reduce inequalities between areas.
- 3.212 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 those 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**

- 3.213 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. Sites and Policies Development Plan Document will identify more detailed area based approaches where a predominance of one particular type or tenure is causing social issues.
- 3.214 Effective delivery requires close working with housing and community development professionals, police and health experts.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- 3.215 Monitoring will identify the mix of housing types (eg one/two/three/four bed flats/houses) and tenures (private rented/social rented/affordable/market) 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, affordable 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 10 dwellings or more (or on sites of 0.3 hectare or above). On sites of 5–9 dwellings the council will seek to negotiate either on-site provision or a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing.

Within North Somerset the target for the provision of affordable housing is at least 150 dwellings per annum. To reflect identified needs this will be provided as 82% social rented housing and 18% intermediate housing. This proportion will be reviewed in relation to affordable rent and clarified in the revised Affordable Housing SPD.

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. A local lettings approach will ensure that priority is given to local people. 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 and can vary between housing type, size and tenure. The policy refers to currently 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.

### Background

3.216 The national definition of affordable housing as set out in National Planning Policy Framework Annex 2:

*'Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.'*

- 3.217 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. Policies should specify targets for and proportions of affordable housing, and an appropriate division of affordable housing between social rented, affordable 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.
- 3.218 Local planning authorities should 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.
- 3.219 Within North Somerset the Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified a significant shortfall of affordable housing in relation to needs.

**CS16**



### **The Core Strategy approach**

3.220 The Core Strategy seeks to set out a realistic and viable approach to the delivery of affordable housing and will retain the existing Replacement Local Plan target of 30% affordable housing as a benchmark against which schemes will be assessed. On-site affordable housing provision will be sought on all sites of 10 or more dwellings (0.3 ha), and for sites of 5–9 dwellings the council will seek to negotiate either on-site provision or an off-site contribution to meet local needs. In all cases this will be subject to the viability testing of schemes. Where appropriate the council will consider the introduction of market recovery mechanisms where viability is constrained by current market conditions. The proposed tenure split between social rented and intermediate housing is based on the evidence contained in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This will be reviewed and amended to take account of affordable rented housing through the revised Affordable Housing SPD.

CS16

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

3.221 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 Weston Villages 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 Providers.

3.222 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. In the event that a scheme is proven not to be deliverable on viability grounds then the Council will consider as part of the viability assessment process if the following can make the scheme deliverable:

- 1) Establish the availability of public subsidy.
- 2) Consider varying the tenure split of the affordable housing whilst ensuring that priority needs are met.
- 3) Consider a reduction in the amount of affordable housing.

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

### **Monitoring and review**

3.224 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.

3.225 The council target is for 150 affordable houses to be provided per annum.

## Delivering strong and inclusive communities

### **CS17: Rural exceptions schemes**

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

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

Rural exceptions schemes will be acceptable adjacent to the settlement boundaries of Service Villages and Infill Villages and elsewhere adjacent to the main body of the settlement, but not in the Green Belt unless justified by very special circumstances.

*This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 8.*

**CS17**

### **Background**

3.226 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 rural exceptions schemes for affordable housing could be delivered.



### **The Core Strategy approach**

- 3.227 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.
- 3.228 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. Rural exceptions sites will be acceptable adjacent to settlement boundaries of Service Villages and Infill Villages, and elsewhere adjacent to the main body of the settlement. In all cases, development of locally sensitive sites will not be acceptable.
- 3.229 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 rural exceptions sites will not be acceptable in the Green Belt unless justified by very special circumstances.

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.230 New affordable housing will be specifically targeted to meet the needs of local communities.
- 3.231 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.
- 3.232 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 Providers, landowners and the local communities.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 3.233 Assessment of permissions, allocations and completions of affordable housing.



## Delivering strong and inclusive communities

### **CS18: Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

Suitable sites will be identified to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling showpeople as set out in the West of England Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment and any subsequent reviews.

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

- Proximity of the site to local services and facilities;
- Screening of the site, visual and landscape impact;
- Impact on the character and amenities of adjacent property and the local area;
- Provision of appropriate services and infrastructure;
- Safe pedestrian and vehicular access into and out of the site;
- Adequate provision for parking, turning and servicing;
- Adequate provision for storage and maintenance where needed for Travelling Show people;
- Easy access to the major road network, particularly accessibility to M5 junctions for transit sites;
- Preference given to brownfield sites;
- Sites are inappropriate in the Green Belt.

*This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 8.*

**CS18**

### **Background**

- 3.234 Government guidance requires local authorities to consider the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The West of England Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) identified the need for 36 additional residential pitches and 10 transit pitches within North Somerset 2006–2011, with provision for a 3% compound growth in requirements per annum beyond 2011.



### **The Core Strategy approach**

- 3.235 While Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are different, their site requirements raise similar issues, so the locational requirements are addressed in the same policy. The criteria set out in the policy will be used to guide the more detailed criteria-based approach and the identification of sites through the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.
- 3.236 The priority in North Somerset is the identification of transit sites for Gypsies and Travellers to ensure that there is suitable alternative provision when addressing unauthorised encampments. Such a transit site should be easily accessible to and from the M5 corridor.
- 3.237 The GTAA identified the need for additional residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. These will either be identified as specific site allocations or be guided by criteria-based policies, and may take the form of either extensions to existing, or new sites.

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.238 The policy will apply throughout the district and planning applications from the Gypsy community will be encouraged. Future needs for Gypsies and Travelling Showpeople will be assessed through need assessments and will be used to justify future provision. If sufficient finances are available and suitable sites available the council will seek to provide pitches with a particular emphasis on a transit site.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 3.239 Gypsy and Traveller residential and transit pitches permitted and implemented will be assessed, as well as unauthorised encampments.



## Delivering strong and inclusive communities

### CS19: Strategic gaps

The council will protect 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

- 3.240 In many locations strategic gaps between particular settlements or distinct parts of settlements play an important role in maintaining local character and distinctiveness. The identification of these gaps will help to prevent their erosion by incremental development which would be detrimental to the settlements' separate identities, individual character and/or landscape setting. Such protection is particularly important where such erosion could potentially cause coalescence of the settlements.
- 3.241 Reliance on countryside policies alone would be unlikely to provide sufficient protection against the reduction or loss of the important gaps to development, particularly in the long term. Without the added protection of strategic gap designation, it is likely that incremental development would eventually erode the gaps with the detrimental effects identified above.

### The Core Strategy approach

- 3.242 Strategic gaps are defined as important open areas between settlements or parts of settlements and will be identified, and their boundaries defined in detail, in the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document. In appropriate cases such as at Weston, strategic gaps could be incorporated into the masterplanning process. At this stage the following locations have been identified as appropriate for investigation for possible designation as strategic gaps:
- 3.243 Between:
- Weston-super-Mare and Hutton;
  - Weston-super- Mare and Locking;
  - Weston-super-Mare and Uphill;
  - Weston-super-Mare and St Georges;
  - Locking and Hutton;
  - Congresbury and Yatton;
  - Nailsea and Backwell.

This list is not exhaustive and other areas might be designated through more detailed planning policy documents.

### How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.244 Strategic gaps will be identified and a policy to guide assessment of development proposals affecting strategic gaps will be set out in the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

### Monitoring and review

- 3.245 The policy's effectiveness will be monitored by identifying to what extent identified strategic gaps have been maintained over time.

## Delivering a prosperous economy

### **CS20: Supporting a successful economy**

The Core Strategy seeks to provide at least 10,100 additional employment opportunities 2006 - 2026, including around 114 hectares of land for B1, B2 and B8 uses (business, general industrial and storage and distribution), and to address the existing imbalance at Weston-super-Mare.

The overall approach is employment-led in order to achieve a more sustainable alignment between jobs and the economically active population across towns and villages in North Somerset. This seeks to increase their sustainability, self containment, decrease out-commuting, provide for a range of local jobs and reduce carbon emissions from unsustainable car use. Priority will be given to the reuse of previously developed land and the safeguarding of sites in existing economic use.

#### **Weston-super-Mare**

The focus of employment development will be at Weston-super-Mare primarily through town centre and gateway regeneration and the new development at Weston Villages, where new residential development will be provided in step with employment opportunities and with an emphasis on new B1(a) office employment. Within the gateway area office provision will be focussed on a limited number of key sites in addition to any specific redevelopment opportunities that contribute to the regeneration of the town centre.

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

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

#### **Clevedon, Nailsea, and Portishead**

Within Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead new employment development will be supported primarily on allocated land with a key objective of improving self containment, and reducing out-commuting.

#### **Remainder of North Somerset**

Elsewhere, economic activity appropriate to the scale of the settlement will be approved within settlement boundaries where this leads to greater self containment, is compatible with the character of the area and meets locally identified needs.

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

## **Background**

- 3.246 The buoyancy of the local economy, job growth and increase in prosperity is 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.
- 3.247 The economic functioning of North Somerset is largely influenced by its geographic position in addition to local workforce, infrastructure capacity including transport and commercial attractiveness. Its proximity to Bristol and 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 elsewhere.
- 3.248 Economic development is a high priority for North Somerset as it has suffered from low levels of economic activity in recent years compared to high levels of residential development. This has led to high levels of out-commuting, and unsustainable development and a key objective of the Core Strategy is to address this trend.
- 3.249 It is against this context that there is an aspiration to create more sustainable places, both existing and new, by increasing the range of jobs and local prosperity in North Somerset. However at the same time the influence of Bristol must be recognised as a major economic centre, and the choice, and mobility of residents and the labour force within the West of England sub-region.

## **The Core Strategy approach**

- 3.250 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. The Core Strategy seeks to better align job growth with residential development.
- 3.251 The report into the new North Somerset-wide housing requirement addressed the issue of the interrelationship between jobs and housing and recommended a target of 10,100 jobs 2006 – 2026. This does not address the existing imbalance between homes (or the economically active population) and employment opportunities which is a fundamental policy objective. Evidence indicates that there is an existing backlog of jobs in relation to housing which needs to be addressed over and above the 10,100 jobs target for the district as a whole if self-containment is to be improved. In the 2001 Census figures indicate that for Weston the shortfall between out-commuting and in-commuting was 3,388 jobs. Since then the situation has deteriorated given the amount of housing delivered and the weakness of the local economy. In addition, at Weston the employment opportunities are poor in respect of B class jobs (particularly offices and general industrial). The overall jobs target for North Somerset is therefore a minimum of 10,100 plus backlog at Weston which equates to about 14,000 jobs.

### **Distribution of employment**

3.252 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 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.

3.253 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 the role of existing permitted sites and allocations providing for future growth in addition to new allocations.

#### *Weston-super-Mare*

3.254 The strategic policy approach at Weston has for many years sought to achieve a greater alignment between jobs and homes. The Core Strategy seeks to reinforce this principle through ensuring that new housing is provided in step with job growth, that the existing backlog is addressed over the plan period and key under-represented sectors (particularly offices) are supported.

3.255 This will be addressed by:

- delivery of 1.5 jobs per home at Weston Villages and sites of 10 or more dwellings elsewhere;
- balancing between housing and all jobs across the Weston urban area as a whole;
- employment-led regeneration within Weston Town Centre, including the gateway area.

3.256 The policy aspiration at Weston-super-Mare is to secure significant employment growth and to deliver additional employment than has been forecast up to 2026. This is largely in an attempt to rebalance employment and homes in the town by 2026 and to reduce out-commuting. It is recognised (for example in the Replacement Local Plan Inspector's Report) that without this the gap between jobs and homes is likely to widen with further unsustainable impacts.

3.257 Significant emphasis is therefore being placed on achieving a step change in economic activity within the town supported through various measures including regeneration. Therefore whilst baseline projections have the effect of projecting historic circumstances, this policy reflects wider aspirations for more sustainable development in the town. For further detail on how the employment-led strategy will be delivered at Weston Villages, see the employment section of the reasoned justification of Policy CS30.

#### *Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead*

3.258 At Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead the approach seeks to support greater self containment through the provision of a range of employment opportunities. Such opportunities are likely to take the form of either small scale development or regeneration on existing employment sites or allocated land.

Indicative employment land allocations (hectares)	
Weston urban area	43.82
Weston Villages – at least	37.70
Clevedon (West of Kenn Road)	8.95
Nailsea	1.40
Portishead	3.17
Remainder of district	<u>18.87</u>
Total (at least)	113.91

- 3.259 The land areas (except Weston Villages) are based on remaining allocations in the Replacement Local Plan that are envisaged to be rolled forward subject to a review process. The land areas in the remainder of the district are primarily located at Yatton and Backwell with some small scale additional allocation elsewhere.
- 3.260 This will provide significant business, industrial and warehousing employment opportunities (although there is significant potential for variation dependant on employment densities and plot ratios) and is more than enough to meet forecast future growth. It is considered that opportunities should be provided to allow the economy of North Somerset to grow and provide choice to the commercial market balanced with the desire in specific areas not to saturate the market and adversely affect development potential.
- 3.261 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. Further sites may be allocated in addition to the quantum above as a result of further analysis as part of the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

**How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.262 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 Villages alongside the allocation of mixed use sites at Weston Town Centre to support regeneration. At the Weston Villages employment allocations will be phased with residential and other infrastructure to deliver comprehensive development.
- 3.263 Consideration should be given to mechanisms for stimulating and promoting economic development. It is anticipated that development contributions will be sought towards supporting employment development, skills enhancement, local labour agreements, marketing activity and business support.

CS20

- 3.264 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.



CS20

**Monitoring and review**

- 3.265 Monitoring will assess employment land take-up monitored through the Employment Land Survey, and indicators such as unemployment rates, and Jobseekers Allowance claimants as well as indicators of the level of self containment.
- 3.266 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 focus for future retail development within North Somerset will be Weston-super-Mare through the redevelopment and regeneration of town centre sites to improve the quantity and quality of provision. Further out of town centre retail development along the A370 corridor at Weston will be resisted. At Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead town centre regeneration will be supported to improve the quality of retailing at these centres.

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

1. Sub-regional centre

- Weston-super-Mare town centre

2. Town centres

- Clevedon (Triangle)
- Nailsea
- Portishead

3. District centres

- Clevedon (Hill Road)
- Locking Castle, 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)
- Parklands Village (proposed)
- Locking Road
- Milton Hill
- Milton Road
- Oldmixon (Aller Parade)
- Winterstoke Village (proposed)
- Whitecross Road

b) outside Weston-super-Mare

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proposals for new or extended town centre uses outside these centres will need to demonstrate that:

CS21

- the uses could not be located within or on the edge of an existing centre in accordance with the sequential approach to site selection;
- they would have no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of these centres

The Sites and Policies 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 5, 6 and 10.*

## Background

3.267 The policy reflects the National Planning Policy Framework which indicates that local authorities should plan positively for the growth and development of town centres:

- Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;
- Define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;
- Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;
- Promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres;
- Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive;
- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability. Local planning authorities should therefore undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable sites;
- Allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, set policies for meeting the identified needs in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre;
- Set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres;

- Recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites; and
- Where town centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.

3.268 The National Planning Policy Framework advocates a concentrated retail strategy, where most new town centre uses are located in major centres. The flexibility allowed to the Core Strategy mainly concerns the classification of the different type of centres, identification of their boundaries and interpretation to reflect local circumstances.

3.269 In the context of Policy CS21, 'town centre uses' include retail, leisure, entertainment, offices, arts, culture and tourism facilities. 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 <sup>2</sup>
Local centres: existing	300m <sup>2</sup>
District/local centres: proposed (Weston Villages )	The Weston Villages policy sets out specific requirements

CS21

### The Core Strategy approach

3.270 The North Somerset Retail Study (2011) assessed the need and demand for additional retail and leisure facilities throughout North Somerset up to 2026. It found that the four town centres (Weston, Clevedon, Portishead and Nailsea) were performing reasonably well. After analysing future population levels, expenditure patterns, shifts in market share and improvements in retail sales density, it identified a strategic requirement for additional retail floorspace in Weston, and to meet the demand from the increased local population and to secure a greater market share for Portishead. Additional requirements elsewhere will be met by small scale retail development possibly involving extensions to or the improvement of existing stores and redevelopment opportunities to improve the quality of retail provision.

The study identified the following requirements for Weston:

	2011	By 2016	By 2021	By 2026
Convenience goods (m <sup>2</sup> net)	2,110	4,075	5,440	6,872
Comparison goods (m <sup>2</sup> net)	–	3,104	11,932	25,656

Source: North Somerset Retail Study (2011). These floorspace capacity requirements are based upon indicative retail floorspace sales densities and reference should also be made to the content of the 2011 Retail Study for surplus expenditure capacity levels.

3.271 Although this retail assessment will need to be reviewed, it is sound policy at this moment in time just to plan for major retail expansion in Weston-super-Mare. This is logical given that Weston will be accommodating the majority of residential and commercial development planned for North Somerset.

- 3.272 The approach in Weston is to concentrate retail development in the town centre. It has recently benefited from significant and on-going environmental enhancements through the Civic Pride programme. In retail terms its strengths are its compact, pedestrianised retail core and its attractive seaside location. Its principal weakness is the lack of large modern quality units capable of meeting the long term requirements of existing and new retailers and the poor quality of the existing retail offer.
- 3.273 It is important that Weston town centre is able to expand and increase the range and quality of shops on offer, including potentially attracting a major department store, in order to meet existing needs, attract additional investment to the town and provide for the needs of an expanding population.
- 3.274 The Core Strategy's aim is to promote and improve Weston town centre, taking re-development opportunities to extend and improve the quality of the retail offer. Key potential retail sites will be allocated through the Sites and Policies Development Plan. The focus in the short to medium term will be to provide additional retail floorspace in a redeveloped Dolphin Square and the redevelopment of the existing Tesco site, with the NCP Car Park and possibly Victoria Square providing extra retail opportunities towards the end of the plan period.
- 3.275 Weston retail parks located in the gateway and corridor area have evolved over the years into an outer commercial area which provides a considerably large retail offer, principally due to a lack of large units within the town centre area. This is an unsustainable trend which prejudices the viability of the town centre retail core and future investment in the town centre. They are not identified as district centres and further expansion with uses that could be located in the town centre will be resisted.
- 3.276 At Weston-super-Mare it is also envisaged that two new local centres will be required to meet the day to day needs of the Weston Villages. Although they will take up some of the demand for convenience and comparison floorspace in Weston, their impact must not harm the vitality and viability of any centre listed in Policy CS21.

#### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.277 The Sites and Policies Development Plan Document and the Weston Villages Supplementary Planning Document will identify site-specific opportunities. Policy CS21 in combination with the NPPF gives sufficient guidance to determine planning applications. More detailed policies will be incorporated into the emerging Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.
- 3.278 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.

### **Monitoring and review**

3.279 Key performance targets will be the proportion of vacant shops in all centres, and the number of all retail and other uses in town and district centres.

## **Delivering a prosperous economy**

### **CS22: Tourism strategy**

#### **North Somerset:**

New, improved and replacement visitor and tourist 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) maximise, where possible, any opportunities for access by means other than the car;
- 3) support conservation and economic development objectives;
- 4) have 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 with a broad appeal. This will be achieved through:

- 1) diversifying the range and improving the quality of existing and proposed visitor 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 and/or compliment the regeneration of the town centre;
  - d) improve the range of year-round attractions;
  - e) offer a high quality visitor experience.
- 2) improving the range and quality of accommodation including hotels, giving priority to locations within the seafront area. All visitor accommodation will be encouraged to obtain national quality accreditation and to adopt sustainable tourism principles.

*This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objectives 3 and 5.*

**CS22**

## Background

- 3.280 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.
- 3.281 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"*.
- 3.282 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.

## The Core Strategy approach

North Somerset

- 3.283 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, protect existing visitor facilities, capitalise on its outstanding natural environment through the sustainable promotion of outdoor activities and pursuits and emphasise its' excellent location as a base for exploring the other attractions within the sub-region.



Weston-super-Mare

- 3.284 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 are excellent for holding events as demonstrated through existing successful events in the town such as 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.
- 3.285 Equally, attractions need to be provided which reduce seasonality through providing year-round, all weather family attractions and developing activities which are not weather dependant.
- 3.286 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.



- 3.287 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**

- 3.288 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, or lead to other adverse impacts such as through an inappropriate over-concentration of holiday accommodation in small rural communities, then an increase in tourism will be supported throughout the district.

- 3.289 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.

- 3.290 Working together with tourism professionals, local businesses and other partners, a co-ordinated approach to promoting tourism whilst protecting the environment of the district will be undertaken.

#### **Monitoring and review**

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





## Delivering a prosperous economy

### **CS23: Bristol Airport**

Proposals for the development of Bristol 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 3.*

### **Background**

3.292 The 2003 Air Transport White Paper supports the development of Bristol Airport to accommodate up to 12 million passengers per annum (mppa) by 2030. This reflects the government's general support for regional airports to minimise surface journeys and leakage to other airports outside the South West. The Government has indicated its intention to replace the 2003 White Paper, placing additional weight on climate change and the impact of aviation on local communities, while still enabling aviation to grow.

### **The Core Strategy approach**

3.293 Development requiring consent up to 2011 is provided for by Policy T/12 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan and was the subject of a recent planning application. Additional development requiring consent beyond 2011 is expected to form the subject of an Area Action Plan (AAP) or other development plan document, such as a subject-based plan for aviation, refining detailed criteria inappropriate at Core Strategy scale. This is not supported by Bristol Airport but it remains the council's preference because it will enable community expectations to guide the planning process from an early stage pending adoption of an AAP, the intention is that the approach as set out in the Replacement Local Plan Policy T/12 should continue in place.

3.294 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.

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

3.295 The policy relates to the development of Bristol Airport only. Off-site car parking is regulated separately (Replacement Local Plan Policy T/12) and the Core Strategy proposes no change to this approach.

3.296 Development of the Airport is led by its owners, whose responsibility it is to ensure that the environmental impacts of growth are addressed to the satisfaction of the council or other relevant decision-maker.

3.297 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.

### **Monitoring and review**

3.298 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 Sites and Development Plan Document. Further expansion of the Port within North Somerset is not supported.

*This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 3.*

### **Background**

3.299 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**

3.300 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**

3.301 Development of the Port is led by its owners, whose responsibility it is to ensure that the environmental impacts of growth are addressed to the satisfaction of the council or other relevant decision-maker. The council will seek the preparation of a Port Masterplan covering the whole of the Port of Bristol.

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

### **Monitoring and review**

3.303 Monitoring of planning applications.

## 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 (for example, schools, pre-schools, children's centres, childminding provision, youth provisions) 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**

- 3.304 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.
- 3.305 This is particularly true in the case of the expansion of Weston. Here up to four new primary schools (with possible co-located community facilities such as Children's Centres, pre-schools etc) and one new secondary school may be required. Consideration may also be given to the possible relocation and/or expansion of other existing schools which will be required to serve the new developments.
- 3.306 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 aims 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.

CS25

- 3.307 Weston College also plays an important role in Weston-super-Mare in terms of further and 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, further and higher education.
- 3.308 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 student's halls of residence.



CS25

### **The Core Strategy approach**

- 3.309 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 early years/pre-schools, youth centres, play needs and children's centres and ICT costs. As well as built accommodation contributions towards improving safe routes to school or home to school transport may be required.
- 3.310 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, collaborations and federations where they contribute to academic achievement, improve standards and give greater financial sustainability.
- To progress capital projects where funding permits.
- To monitor the provision of school places across the district to ensure that the supply and availability of school places reflects the needs of its local communities; especially in areas of residential growth.
- 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.

3.311 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**

3.312 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

3.313 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.

3.314 There will be effective co-ordination with the Council’s Children and Young People’s Services Directorate and local community groups to ensure that local needs are clearly identified and implemented.

#### **Monitoring and review**

3.315 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 that assess how the development will contribute to improving the health and well being of the local population;
- 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. Existing health services will be protected and maintained and where provision of 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;
- 8) Making provision for the needs of an ageing population by promoting a range of development which supports independent living and avoiding the need for residential care;
- 9) Resisting new developments which are likely to have an adverse impact on the wider community such as drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities which do not support the needs of existing residents.

*This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 4 and 8.*

## Background

- 3.316 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.
- 3.317 There is significant evidence that the quality of the environment people live in greatly influences peoples 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 peoples health and well-being and can all be influenced through planning policy.
- 3.318 North Somerset is facing an increasingly ageing population. Currently 20% of the population is aged over 65; by 2030 this is estimated to increase to 26% of the total population. 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.
- 3.319 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 females (North Somerset Health Profile 2007). 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.



### **The Core Strategy approach**

- 3.320 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.
- 3.321 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 uses developments and the importance of urban design on creating attractive, safe and inviting places and spaces.
- 3.322 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.
- 3.323 Community supported agriculture systems also 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.
- 3.324 An ageing population presents its own challenges in terms of the design of buildings and spaces, the location of facilities, accessibility issues and appropriate accommodation. The Core Strategy approach is to ensure that a range of accommodation choices are provided to meet local needs with a variety of support which will maximise independent living and minimise the need for residential care. While some care homes may be required over the plan period, particularly for specialist care such as dementia, speculative new care homes which are likely to attract in-migrants will be discouraged.
- 3.325 In respect of drug and alcohol rehabilitation, there is currently an overprovision of care spaces in relation to needs generated by the existing population. Such facilities have created an actual or perceived adverse impact on existing communities, contrary to the Core Strategy objectives of seeking to address inequalities and create mixed and balanced communities. The Core Strategy approach is to resist any further proliferation of residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation services in North Somerset on the basis that there is more than enough of these services to meet the needs of the existing population.



**How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 3.326 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. The Sites and Policies Development Plan Document will set out the detailed policy approach to assessing new proposals for health facilities, and in particular, older person's accommodation, care homes and rehabilitation facilities. Where appropriate, sites will also be identified through the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.
- 3.327 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 management 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.

**Monitoring and review**

- 3.328 The number of new facilities delivered and extensions to existing facilities will be monitored. Care home bed spaces across the district will also 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 are 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**

3.329 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. Community facilities are facilities that provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. 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 of their immediate area and the opportunity for a thriving and vibrant community will be lost.

### **Core Strategy approach**

3.330 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.

3.331 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.

3.332 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. There is a strong need to support the improvement of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network and to link facilities to the existing network.



- 3.333 These facilities are key infrastructure requirements and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework North Somerset Council are 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.
- 3.334 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**

- 3.335 Delivery of facilities will take place across the district. North Somerset Council 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.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- 3.336 The provision of new facilities and extensions of existing services will be assessed.

# 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 Villages**

**CS31 Clevedon, Portishead and Nailsea**

**CS32 Service villages**

**CS33 Smaller settlements and countryside**

## Area policies

### **CS28: Weston-super-Mare**

Weston-super-Mare will be the primary focus for development within North Somerset. A minimum of 12,800 dwellings will be delivered over the plan period at Weston-super-Mare and the sustainable new communities, together with approximately 10,500 jobs as part of an employment-led strategy to deliver improved self-containment and reduced out-commuting during the plan period.

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

- Town centre and gateway where the emphasis is on the regeneration of a range of key sites to stimulate investment, and will include residential, retail, employment and leisure opportunities (see Policy CS29).
- Weston Villages where the emphasis is on comprehensive development to create two sustainable new communities linked to the delivery of employment (see Policy CS30).

Residential development will be delivered in accordance with the employment-led strategy (see policies CS20 and CS30 for more detail).

No strategic development will be permitted to the east of the M5 motorway. The settlement boundary of Weston-super-Mare will be amended to incorporate the new Weston Villages.

New development proposals at Weston-super-Mare within or adjoining the settlement boundary should take into account the following objectives:

- support the focus of the town centre as the location for higher order facilities and services, including retail, tourism and leisure opportunities;
- support existing community hubs of local retailing and other services located within the town;
- respect the characteristic heritage of Weston-super-Mare;
- provide high quality design;
- support the enhancement of its green infrastructure and biodiversity, including the ridges and hinterland to the north and south, the woodland areas, the rhyes network, and the seafront;
- 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 sea front and do not lead to significant adverse impacts on the transport network; and
- ensure that services and infrastructure are adequate to support the development.

Housing sites outside the settlement boundary in excess of about 75 dwellings must be brought forward as allocations through Local Plans or Neighbourhood Development Plans.

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

**CS28**

## **Background**

- 4.3 Weston-super-Mare will continue to 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**

- 4.4 The purpose of this policy is to provide a set of objectives for all development at Weston-super-Mare to take into account and to ensure a comprehensive approach to development which results in a co-ordinated process of town-wide regeneration.
- 4.5 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 sustainable new urban development 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 a less sustainable location effectively dispersing the development of the town further along the A370, potentially resulting in more car trips and increased congestion.
- 4.6 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. The primary objective of this policy approach is to rebalance the jobs to homes ratio in the town by strengthening the B use class employment sectors, in addition to employment that will be provided from non B use classes.
- 4.7 The delivery of jobs in the town will be subject to a 'plan, monitor and manage' approach particularly given the uncertainty of future economic activity and economic growth, with the potential for review of the specific delivery mechanisms in the future.
- 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 (from the train station extending along the A370 to just beyond Winterstoke Road roundabout). The focus will be on providing a significant increase in the town's retail offer over the next twenty years focused on redevelopment opportunities within the retail core; creating an office quarter close to the railway station on vacant or under used sites; 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 At Weston-super-Mare, to ensure a sustainable approach to development, the priority for housing development will be on previously developed land. This includes the phasing for the new development area at Weston Villages 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 Villages, it is important to support existing communities and local centres as the town grows and develops up to 2026 and beyond. 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 up to 2026 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 there exists 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 At Weston-super-Mare the main approaches to the town centre and seafront create a boulevard effect of direct routes, rather than through routes or ring 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 In assessing the suitability of development proposals the Council will assess the economic, social and environmental dimensions. The policy applies to development within and adjoining the settlement boundary of Weston-super-Mare. Flexibility is introduced to permit new sustainable development of up to around 75 units on sites adjacent to the settlement boundary of Weston-super-Mare. Sites of up to about 75 dwellings will generally be able to be assimilated into the existing urban framework and are unlikely to result in the infrastructure and environmental impacts generated by larger developments which need to be properly assessed through a development plan. Larger sites must come forward as allocations so that they can be consulted upon as part of the plan process, their impacts can be assessed in advance and any necessary mitigation measures identified at the outset.

- 4.17 Further planning policy guidance including a master plan framework and delivery plan for Weston Villages, and Local Plans 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 Homes and Communities Agency, the main service providers, the local community and other key stakeholders to deliver this strategy.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 4.19 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.
  - Jobs to homes ratio in the town as a whole.



## Area policies

### **CS29: Weston-super-Mare town centre**

The Weston-super-Mare town centre, as defined on the Key Diagram Inset 1 will provide the focus for retail, leisure and entertainment facilities and commercial office development, to support town-wide regeneration and provide a prosperous, modern, vibrant centre to serve the existing and future population of Weston. Housing, along with other appropriate town centre and community uses, will be incorporated as part of mixed use schemes in these areas as follows:

#### Retail core

The regeneration of Weston-super-Mare's town centre will be achieved through the provision of land for major retail development at Dolphin Square, within the retail core. This may include other uses that are appropriate and compatible with town centre activities including leisure attractions and uses which will assist in the enhancement of the centre and the range of shops, services and facilities it has to offer.

Proposals to enhance St James Street and Victoria Square areas will also be supported, including proposals for improved connectivity between the retail core and seafront. Additional opportunities to expand and enhance comparison floor space within the town centre may be supported towards the end of the plan period at Victoria Square and NCP Car Park provided they support development at Dolphin Square.

The need for additional convenience floor space within the town centre will be met through an improved and enlarged food store on the Tesco site. Elsewhere within the town centre convenience goods retail will be restricted to small scale provision where necessary to support a wider town centre mixed use development scheme.

Retail-led development proposals will need to:

1. be of the highest quality design which makes a positive and distinct contribution to the existing built environment;
2. strengthen physical and visual connections between the retail core, the seafront and gateway area;
3. ensure that during the redevelopment of sites provision for public parking is retained in order to ensure the economy of the centre is not adversely affected.

#### 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 the Tropicana and Birnbeck Island.

Development proposals in this area should:

- 1) have consideration for the sequential approach to development based on the National Planning Policy Framework 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 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 will primarily be for commercial office development on sites closest to the town centre and train station; or mixed uses, including leisure elsewhere. Retail uses will be restricted to bulky goods within the existing retail parks and any proposals must not harm the viability or vitality of Weston's town centre or seafront.

Development in this area should:

- 1) be of a high quality design that will enhance the visual image and emphasise the importance of the gateway to the town centre;
- 2) minimise the generation of car trips by concentrating uses around the train station and improving the public transport infrastructure;
- 3) strengthen connections to the town centre through new and improved pedestrian and cycle routes.

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

### Background

4.20 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.

4.21 The planned expansion to Weston-super-Mare over the next twenty years through the development of the Weston Villages totalling 6,500 new homes balanced with significant employment growth, will see an increase in demand for shops, services and leisure facilities. 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 within the district and the sub-region.

### The Core Strategy approach

4.22 **Retail:** 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 Sites and Policies Development Plan Document, identifies Dolphin Square as the priority site within the town centre for retail development to meet the projected retail need. This will significantly contribute to achieving 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.

- 4.23 **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 relatively 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.
- 4.24 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 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.
- 4.25 **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.
- 4.26 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.
- 4.27 The town centre has lacked any good quality well located office space with few sites allocated for this use. These have been major obstacles to expanding the employment opportunities in Weston town centre.



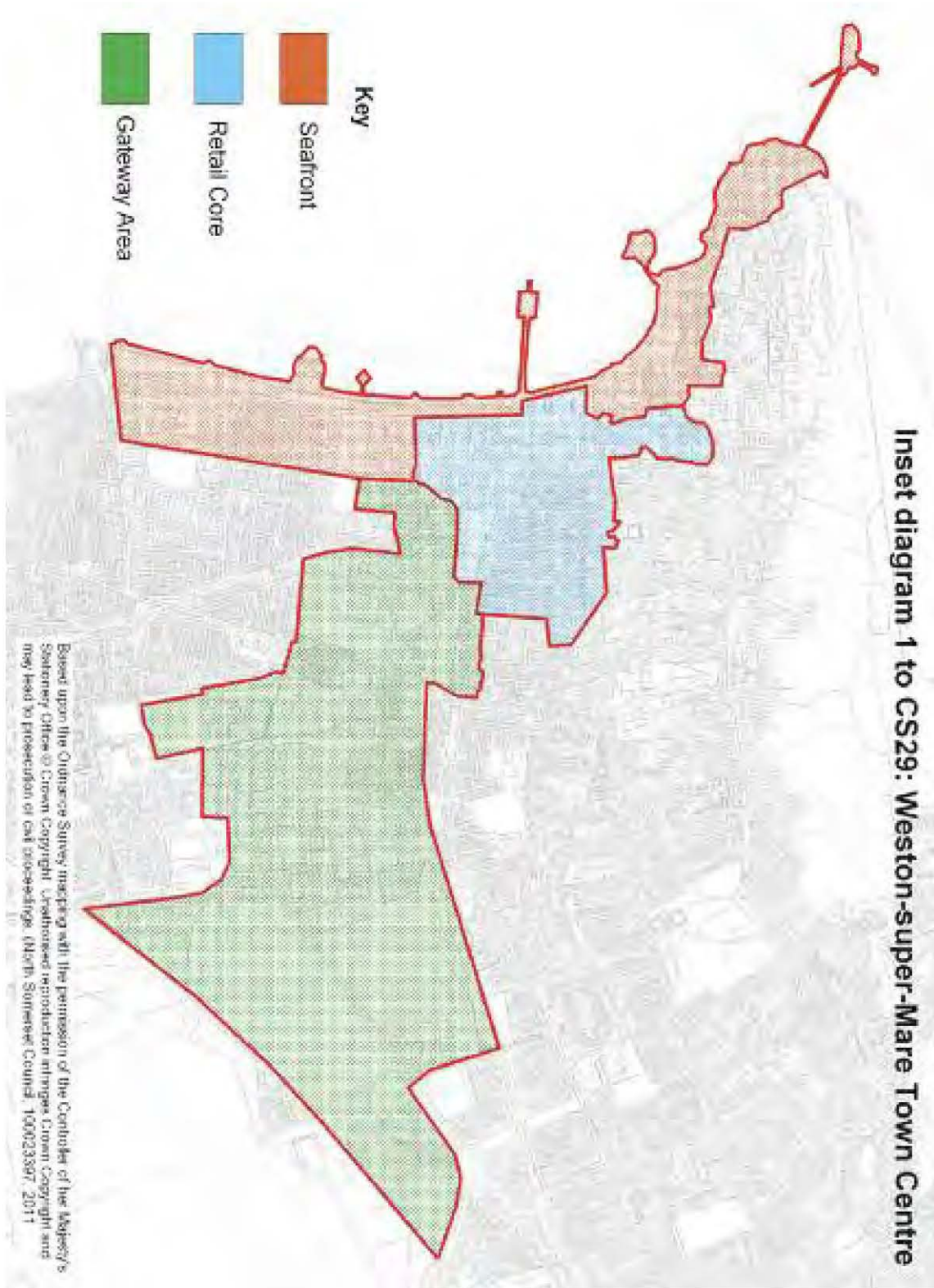
- 4.28 The town centre offers the most sustainable location for commercial office development and there is scope to provide significant new office floor space close to the railway station. Allocating centrally located sites for office development will intensify development in the gateway area creating a sense of arrival in the town centre, increase levels of activity in the gateway area and strengthen links with the town centre.
- 4.29 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.
- 4.30 **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 Core Strategy.
- 4.31 However, the council also recognises that within Weston town centre area residential development could 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 some mixed use schemes.
- 4.32 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**

- 4.33 The outcomes will be delivered within the boundary for the town centre identified in the Key Diagram (Inset 1) and through the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document. This boundary includes the seafront and extends out along the A370 incorporating a numbers of sites on the approach to the town centre. Priority sites are identified in the Core Strategy and others will be forthcoming through the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.
- 4.34 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 site can play in the regeneration of Weston town centre.
- 4.35 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.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- 4.36 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 and additional leisure floorspace in the town centre and gateway area.



**CS29**

## Area policies

### **CS30: Weston Villages**

To the south east of Weston-super-Mare two mixed-use, employment-led, socially, economically and environmentally sustainable new communities will be developed. A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) including a Masterplanning Framework and delivery plan provides the detailed guidance to support implementation. The Key Diagram Inset 2: Weston Villages sets out the indicative strategic development framework.

The development of the Weston Villages must satisfy the following key requirements:

- Development will be employment-led and should provide for 1.5 jobs per dwelling over the plan period. Detailed mechanisms for delivering employment-led development including the quantum, thresholds and phased release of land in each village will be determined through a combination of masterplanning, a Supplementary Planning Document, and through a Section 106 planning agreement that would accompany any such approval for development at each village.
- Provide about 6,500 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 40dph should be achieved across the area, with higher densities surrounding the local centres and, where appropriate, the inclusion of lower density areas.
- Provide at least 37.7 ha of B Use Class employment land located within allocated employment sites, mixed-use development areas and at local and district centres. If provision of strategic infrastructure is dependent on development on greenfield land then this will be taken into consideration as part of the phasing strategy. In addition phasing will take into account sustainability and viability issues.
- Each village will be anchored by a local centre which will provide necessary retail, health, children's services and educational and community facilities to serve local needs. The location, type and mix of such uses will be agreed through the Weston Villages SPD.
- Site(s) for on-site renewable or low carbon energy production including associated infrastructure to facilitate site-wide renewable energy solutions will be provided; such infrastructure should be planned with energy providers and developers including long term management and maintenance. Such provision could include a waste to energy plant. The Weston Villages area has been identified as being suitable for such waste treatment facilities in the West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy.
- Provision of a network of green infrastructure across the whole Weston Villages including playing fields, allotments, play areas, pocket and community parks, and green corridors. This should be linked through development allowing wildlife movement and access to open space, wetlands and water corridors linking through development, including the retention and enhancement of existing rhynes where appropriate.

- Deliver integrated strategic transport infrastructure including:
  - the Cross Airfield Link at Winterstoke Village;
  - the Airfield Bridge Link linking Winterstoke Village to land to the north across the railway line;
  - Junction 21 Relief Road or alternative;
  - 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.
- Deliver a clear hierarchy of roads (from distributor to home zones) producing discernible and distinctive neighbourhoods which are integrated and linked to existing areas.
- The delivery of the strategic flood solution plus onsite flood mitigation measures, such as sustainable drainage systems, must be delivered as part of any development proposal in addition to long term maintenance details. This is required in order to facilitate the development of the Weston Villages. Any development within the Weston Villages will be required to contribute towards these flood mitigation measures.
- Any proposed development will need to be supported by a flood risk assessment which will include a surface water drainage strategy.
- Facilitate and recognise the realignment and safeguarding of safety and noise corridors associated with the helicopter flights linked with the Helicopter Museum in line with specialist advice. Employment, open-space and uses that are least sensitive to helicopter disturbance will be located around the museum.
- Development proposals within the Weston Villages area will be expected to contribute to identified strategic infrastructure requirements in order to deliver a comprehensive and sustainable development.
- 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.
- Maintain green corridors around the Weston Villages to protect the individual characters and identities of the new development and of Hutton and Locking.
- Development must include a comprehensive approach to community building in respect of measures and facilities to support social interaction and community engagement throughout the life of the proposal.

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

## Background

4.37 It is essential for Weston-super-Mare to secure employment-led regeneration by significantly improving the employment offer of the town, reducing the impacts of car-based commuting, whilst requiring housing growth to be phased and linked directly to employment growth. It proposes two well planned, mixed use villages to the south east of Weston-super-Mare to accommodate about 6,500 new homes. The Weston Villages will be developed with an emphasis on placemaking and community building as the key determining principles in order to create two new villages, each with their own character and sense of community. In addition, the provision of at least 37.7ha of B Class employment land should be provided to accommodate employment development in the period to 2026, and to facilitate the employment-led strategy.



## The Core Strategy approach to Weston Villages

### The Site

4.38 Weston Villages includes a total of approximately 245 hectares of land surrounded 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 of two main areas:

- The disused Weston Airfield which forms the Winterstoke Village.
- 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. RAF Locking in addition to land to the north forms the Parklands Village.



- 4.39 Also within the Weston Villages 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, and the Helicopter Museum which is an important tourist attraction for the town.

### **Urban design**

- 4.40 The aim is to achieve a development that is exemplar in its design and based on key sustainability principles such as being low carbon, less reliant on the car and incorporates a full range of local services, 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. More detailed design guidance will be set out as part of the Weston Villages SPD, through masterplanning and design codes.

### **Connection to existing town**

- 4.41 While the Weston Villages will create individual distinct communities, they will function within the wider urban area and therefore need to be integrated with the existing town and other developed areas. 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, local facilities and adjacent communities. Notwithstanding this, the new development will be as self-contained as possible with key community facilities within walking distance of most dwellings.

### **Open space**

- 4.42 The main open space areas will be:
- Open space link on the line of the Hutton Moor Lane.
  - Green corridor based on the Grumblepill Rhyne north of Locking Parklands.
  - Open space focussed on the motte and bailey west of Locking Parklands.
- 4.43 Development should front onto these areas as much as possible so as to improve its setting and provide public surveillance. The green corridors around Weston Villages are defined in the Weston Villages SPD. Strategic Gaps between Weston Villages, Hutton and Locking will be defined in the Site Allocations Plan.
- 4.44 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.
- 4.45 Hedgerows, trees and important viewpoints should be retained and enhanced as central elements of the character of the area. The character and identity of the surrounding villages of Hutton and Locking should be protected by appropriate green buffers and sensitive design of the edges of new development.

## Employment

- 4.46 The delivery of an employment-led strategy to the future strategic development of Weston-super-Mare is founded on a significant body of evidence and policy. Regional Planning Guidance 10 (RPG 10) includes a policy SS10 that seeks to 'limit further housing growth (in WsM) until employment is more closely in balance with housing', and this fundamental starting point was supported through the Replacement Local Plan Inquiry (Paragraph 4.5 of the Inspectors Report).
- 4.47 The approach advocated and engrained within the Replacement Local Plan (2007) was to deliver significant employment development up to 2011 and thus achieve a better job to homes ratio, and then to allow for strategic growth of new communities balanced with employment opportunities. This approach is not solely based on sustainability but also due to concerns from the Highways Agency on impacts of further unchecked residential growth in particular on out-commuting.
- 4.48 This policy recommends a linked mechanism between housing and employment which was again supported through the Inquiry into the RLP due to the serious imbalance between jobs and homes exacerbated by recent housing growth in the town, and the failure of the market to maintain a balance of uses. The mechanism will seek to achieve 1.5 jobs per dwelling at Weston Villages over the plan period. B class employment will be prioritised as a primary driver of the local economy, a stimulus to the creation of an office market in the town, and the delivery of these types of jobs as part of the new communities.
- 4.49 To support this strategy, the following minimum land requirements are proposed within the Weston Villages.
- Class B1 Offices = 25 hectares
  - Class B2 General Industrial and B8 Distribution/Warehousing = 12.7 hectares
- 4.50 This results in a total of at least 37.7ha of land to be allocated for B Class employment uses. The employment uses will be identified as specific allocations at Winterstoke and Parklands Villages. This will be aligned to ongoing work on the Weston Villages as part of the Supplementary Planning Document.
- 4.51 It is envisaged that this could provide for around:
- 7,810 B1 use jobs.
  - 910 B2/B8 (industrial and warehousing) jobs.
- 4.52 It is recognised that achieving the 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.

4.53 In the Weston Villages the emphasis is on a comprehensive development. The mechanisms for delivering the employment-led strategy will be set out in detail within the Supplementary Planning Document and/or other planning policy documents and guidance. It will also set out a mechanism for monitoring and reviewing the employment-led strategy throughout the plan period.

4.54 In releasing residential development, employment opportunities will be:

- delivered in a phased approach with quantities and thresholds to be agreed. In all cases deliverability will be key to this but in all cases residential will need to be led by employment to ensure the principal policy objectives are met;
- planned as part of a comprehensive, masterplan-led approach guided by the Weston Villages SPD which provides the framework for bringing forward an appropriate range of employment opportunities.
- provided in addition to wider measures to stimulate employment creation.



- 4.55 In assessing the amount of employment potential from a proposal, standard employment densities will be used for given employment types.

### **Residential**

- 4.56 Capacity studies indicate that the new development will deliver about 6,500 dwellings. Each Weston Village will be planned with the objective of integrating employment and facilities so as to maximise their sustainability.
- 4.57 As part of the detailed delivery mechanisms applied through the employment-led approach, residential development will be released in 250 unit tranches with each tranche being supported with necessary employment provision. This will be subject to a review mechanism to ensure adequate employment is being provided to balance the residential and will form part of a planning condition attached to any planning approval.

### **Strategic infrastructure requirements**

- 4.58 The following categories identify the specific strategic infrastructure requirements. These are further explored as part of the Weston Villages SPD and other documents.

#### **Highways/Transportation**

In terms of essential infrastructure required within the new development area there are four main transport routes. These are:

- 1) Cross Airfield Link connecting Winterstoke Road with the A371.
- 2) A371 to Wolvershill Road/Churchland Way Link.
- 3) Airfield Bridge Link from Weston Airfield to Winterstoke Road roundabout.
- 4) Junction 21 Relief Road.
- 5) Contributions to rail and bus improvements.

- 4.59 The exact alignment of these routes will be fixed through detailed masterplanning at the two villages, in line with the Masterplan Framework set out in the Weston Villages SPD.

- 4.60 The Cross Airfield Link has a dual purpose. It not only gives access to Winterstoke Village but will improve traffic circulation around the town by giving relief to Herluin Way and Winterstoke Road. In the first instance the road will be a single carriageway but with a land reservation that can accommodate a dual carriageway if this is justified by projected traffic flows. In designing the road, regard will need to be had to its route through a residential area and the need to facilitate safe crossings by pedestrians and cyclists.

- 4.61 In addition there may be a longer term requirement for a Park and Ride facility. A site to the north of the Helicopter Museum meets all the requirements in terms of accessibility, but its detailed implementation will be subject to feasibility studies. The exact requirement for and location of a Park and Ride facility will be identified following modelling work. A flexible approach is considered appropriate at this stage to allow for such a facility if deemed necessary.

### **Flood mitigation**

4.62 As parts of Weston Villages are within the Environment Agency flood zones, the focus is on avoiding development areas most liable to flooding. The Environment Agency has confirmed that no development would be allowed in the functional floodplain (flood zone 3b) between the Weston Villages on the corner of A370 and the A371. Given the development requirements for the Weston Villages, it is clear that the majority of the remaining land is in flood zones 2 and 3a, and mitigation measures would be necessary and agreed by all parties including the Environment Agency.

4.63 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 area 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 Villages. Any proposed development will need to be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which will include a surface water drainage strategy.

### 4.64 **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 masterplanned in and delivered from the outset. Specific solutions should be negotiated between the interested parties to ensure as high a standard as possible is achieved.



4.65 **Parks/green spaces/allotments**

There is a requirement for green infrastructure within the Weston Villages. These include formal parks and gardens, community parks and neighbourhood parks as well as allotments. Detailed green infrastructure requirements will be set out in the Weston Villages SPD.

4.66 **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 it is anticipated that five 420 place primary schools, one 1500 place secondary school and one special school will be needed to serve the new population.

4.67 **Retail**

The assumptions for retail provision within the Weston Villages will be based upon the conclusions of the North Somerset Retail Study 2011. It is assumed that the majority of this need will be met in the local centres proposed in the Weston Villages.

4.68 **Community facilities**

There is a requirement for a number of community facilities within the Weston Villages to cater for a range of community use, including community halls, library provision 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.

4.69 **Sports and recreation**

The key sports and recreation requirements for the Weston Villages are currently expected to include a leisure facility at Parklands. 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 facility, primary schools, secondary schools and parks and therefore additional land would not be required. Alternative mechanisms for delivery and ongoing maintenance will be explored.

4.70 **Helicopter flights**

The policy approach makes provision for safe take-off and landing corridors to and from the Helicopter Museum. In respect of noise, land uses that are least sensitive to helicopter disturbance will be located nearest to the museum. The helicopter flights and the impact of new development on helicopter flights will be kept under review in relation to noise and safety considerations.

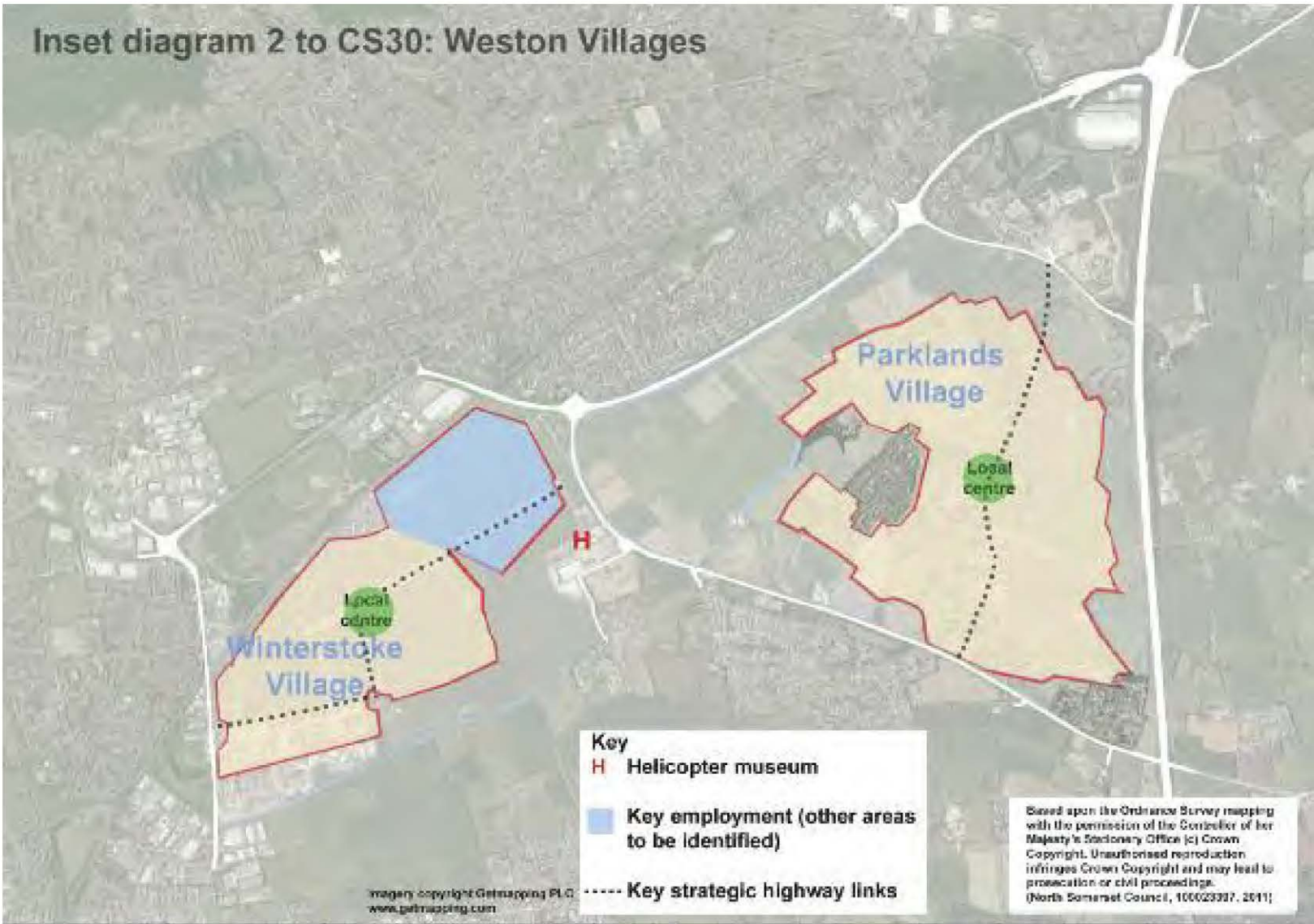
### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

- 4.71 The Weston Villages Key Diagram Inset 2 sets out the approach to development. This was refined as part of the Masterplan Framework through the Weston Villages Supplementary Planning Document. This will guide development, set out the exact requirements for social infrastructure and put forward mechanisms for the contributions to strategic infrastructure. It is then envisaged that more detailed sub-area masterplans will be created for each village by promoting land interests in collaboration with North Somerset Council, local communities and other relevant interests. It is envisaged that these will then become binding through Section 106 agreements and guide the ongoing development of the Weston Villages.
- 4.72 The Weston Villages is a strategic requirement and North Somerset 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, Homes and Communities Agency, as well as other local stakeholders.
- 4.73 Land adjacent to the Weston Villages may also be required for strategic infrastructure. In particular land south of Weston Airfield and land east of the M5 may be required for flood mitigation measures as part of a recommended strategic flood solution. Additionally land east of the M5 may 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 new development area to the town centre.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 4.74 The principal objective of the monitoring strategy is to ensure that the employment-led strategy is effective, and that a range of job opportunities are delivered and that self-containment is enhanced. If not, then the strategy may need to be adjusted in the future. The Core Strategy will be reviewed by the end of 2018 and if job creation is faster or slower than anticipated across the town as a whole then this may lead to possible adjustments to the employment-led policy approach at Weston Villages. Monitoring will also need to ensure that the identified infrastructure, particularly for transport and flood mitigation, is sufficiently funded and delivered in step with development.

Inset diagram 2 to CS30: Weston Villages





## Area policies

### **CS31: Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead**

Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead will maintain and enhance their roles in providing facilities, employment opportunities and services for their populations and local catchments. At these towns, new housing development within and adjoining settlement boundaries which is of an appropriate scale and of a high quality design that respects each town's distinctive character and local environment, delivers necessary infrastructure improvements and enhances overall sustainability will be supported. Residential proposals must have regard to local housing needs.

Proposals must be capable of being integrated into the existing fabric of the settlement and not create significant adverse impacts in relation to services, facilities and infrastructure including any cumulatively significant adverse impacts. New development must have safe and convenient walking routes to schools and other services and facilities within the town within a reasonable walking distance.

At Nailsea proposals should provide a broad range of housing types to cater for all housing requirements.

Residential proposals outside the settlement boundaries in excess of about 50 dwellings must be brought forward as allocations through Local Plans or Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Within the three towns a minimum number of dwellings will be delivered as follows.

Houses	(2006–2026)
Clevedon	700
Nailsea	1,100
Portishead	3,300

In all three towns employment proposals will be supported that ensure the regeneration of previously developed land, or conversion and/or refurbishment of existing premises.

Employment uses should be appropriate in scale to the role and function of the town in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS20. Alternative uses, including mixed use schemes on existing employment sites will only be considered where they are shown to address other identified community benefits and do not have an adverse impact on the quality and range of sites and premises available for business use.

Shopping and town centre uses will be supported within the town centres which improve the town centre environment and the retail, leisure, and employment offer. The removal of town centre uses will only be permitted in accordance with policy CS21. Proposals for the regeneration of existing centres such as at Nailsea and Clevedon, or the enhancement of specialist areas such as Hill Road, Clevedon will be encouraged.

Other services and community facilities will be encouraged within the urban areas, in locations accessible to the community which they are intended to serve.

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 other 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, whilst retaining the historic and natural settings.

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

### **Background**

4.75 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.

### **The Core Strategy approach to the other main towns**

4.76 Clevedon, Portishead and Nailsea are identified as places which should only consider locally significant development ensuring the availability of jobs and services for themselves and surrounding communities. 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.

4.77 All of these towns have high out-commuting levels and the emphasis will be on discouraging development which would re-enforce 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 1960's and there is evidence that the mix and type of housing and lack of job opportunities is having an adverse impact on the community. Proposals at Nailsea should aim to address this and encourage a more balanced age structure.

4.78 New residential development within the settlement boundaries, and residential development for up to about 50 dwellings adjoining the settlement boundaries, will be supported provided it does not harm the objectives of the plan. Within these towns, developments of more than 50 dwellings have wider infrastructure and environmental impacts which need to be properly considered through a development plan. New development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that the local infrastructure is sufficient to accommodate the demands of the development (for example, school places, community buildings and foul and storm water drainage systems). Larger sites must come forward as allocations, so that they can be consulted upon as part of the plan process, their impacts can be assessed in advance and any necessary mitigation measures identified at the outset.



**How and where the policy will be delivered**

4.79 In assessing the suitability of development proposals the Council will assess the economic, social and environmental dimensions. Within Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead new jobs, dwellings and retail floorspace (2006–2026) will be broadly provided as follows:

<b>Land use</b>	<b>Nailsea</b>	<b>Portishead</b>	<b>Clevedon</b>
Residential(dwellings)	1,100	3,300	700
Retail (m <sup>2</sup> )	0	14,096	0

4.80 The retail floorspace for Portishead includes developments built since 2006, existing commitments and an estimate of additional convenience (1616 m<sup>2</sup>) and comparison (1826 m<sup>2</sup>) floorspace requirements contained with the 2011 Study.

4.81 The future of these towns relies on co-ordination across sectors from transport providers to affordable housing and healthcare providers.

**Monitoring and review**

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

**CS31**

## Area policies

### **CS32: Service villages**

New development within or adjoining the settlement boundaries of the Service Villages of Backwell, Banwell, Churchill, Congresbury, Easton-in-Gordano/Pill, Long Ashton, Winscombe, Wrington and Yatton which enhances the overall sustainability of the settlement will be supported where:

- It results in a form, design and scale of development which is high quality, respects and enhances the local character, contributes to place making and the reinforcement of local distinctiveness, and can be readily assimilated into the village;
- It has regard to the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required;
- It will not cause significant adverse impacts on services and infrastructure and the local infrastructure is sufficient to accommodate the demands of the development
- It results in high quality sustainable schemes which is appropriate to its context and makes a positive contribution to the local environment and landscape setting;
- It does not result in significant adverse cumulative impacts (such as highway impacts) likely to arise from existing and proposed development within the wider area;
- The location of development maximises opportunities to reduce the need to travel and encourages active travel modes and public transport; and
- It demonstrates safe and attractive pedestrian routes to facilities within the settlement within reasonable walking distance.

Sites outside the settlement boundaries in excess of about 25 dwellings must be brought forward as allocations through Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans.

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

CS32



### **Background**

4.83 National policy supports a sustainable approach to development in the rural areas 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 to the Service Villages**

4.84 Within North Somerset there are a number of villages which carry out the role of Service Villages. 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 2000 to 5000 population per settlement. However, the final classification has taken account of local circumstances, including their relationship to their hinterlands and local opinion which may mean that in some cases there may be a variation from this list of facilities.

4.85 New residential development will generally be acceptable in principle within settlement boundaries and appropriate development up to about 25 dwellings adjoining settlement boundaries, provided it respects the scale and character of the village and the site's location, and is not in the Green Belt. The additional flexibility is intended to enable small scale proposals to come forward which will enhance sustainability in its wider sense. The Council will not support proposals which either on their own or in aggregate cause significant adverse impacts on the character or functioning of the village. Developers are encouraged to engage with the local community before drawing up any scheme.

4.86 With regard to non-housing or mixed uses, the Core Strategy approach provides the opportunity for appropriate new service and employment uses within the settlement boundaries of Service Villages (but not in the Green Belt) in order to support their role as local hubs for community facilities, employment and services, including public transport.

4.87 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 Local Plans or Neighbourhood Development Plans.

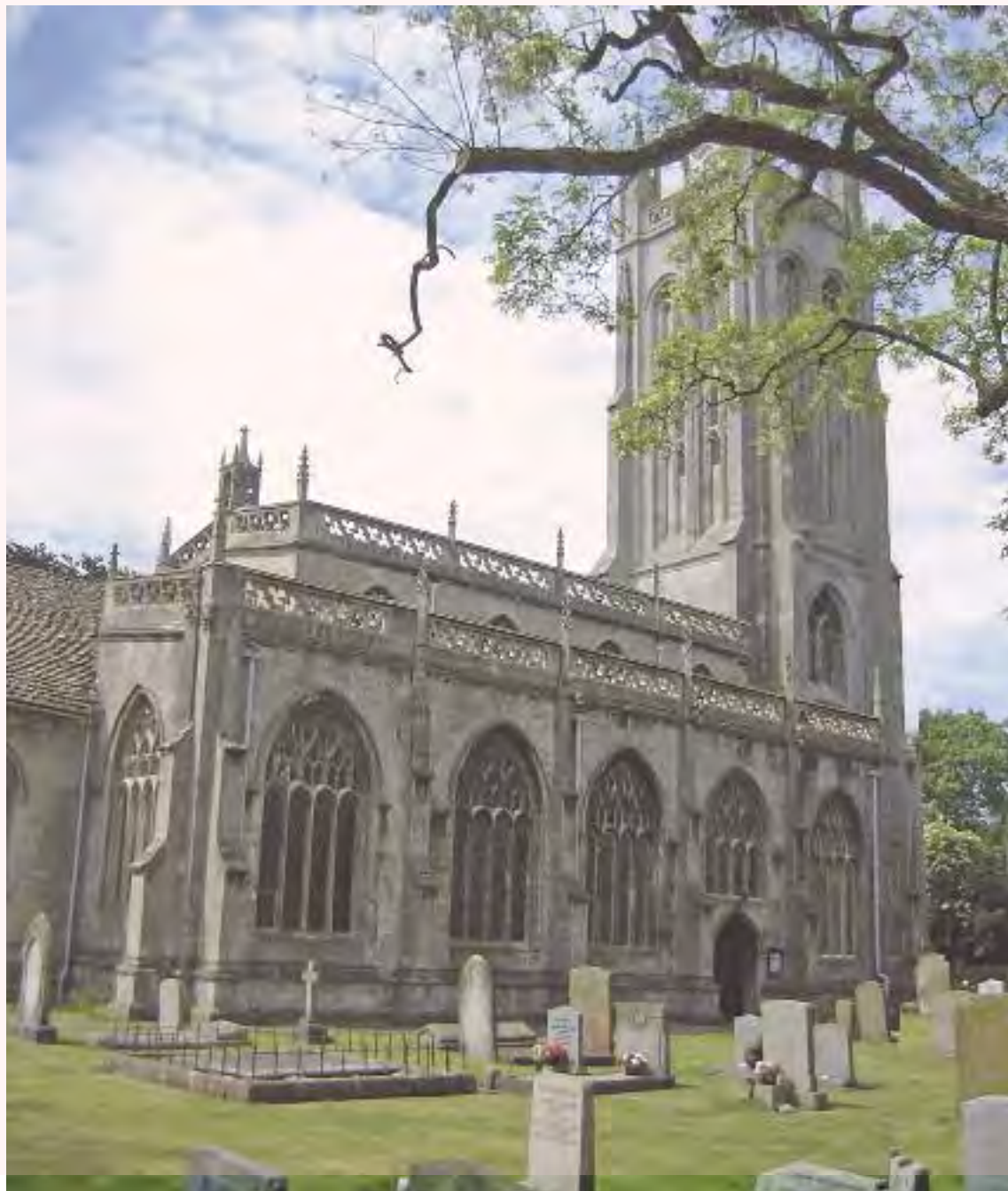
### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

4.88 In assessing the suitability of development proposals the Council will assess the economic, social and environmental dimensions. 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. Developers are encouraged to engage with the local community before drawing up their schemes.

- 4.89 The policy allows for residential schemes to be brought forward adjoining the service village settlement boundaries of up to about 25 dwellings. Larger sites must be brought forward as site allocations to ensure they are brought forward through the plan-led system, subject to appropriate consultation, and infrastructure planning. The purpose of the policy is to allow small scale residential development to come forward within and adjoining the villages where they are in sustainable locations, would not adversely impact on the character, setting or appearance of the village and the local infrastructure is able to support the additional development (for example in respect of school places, community buildings and foul and surface water drainage systems). In this respect the cumulative impact of development will be a significant consideration and a succession of piecemeal developments which individually or taken together have an adverse effect on any individual village are unlikely to be supported.

**Monitoring and review**

- 4.90 The policy will be measured against individual policy targets.



## Area policies

### **CS33: Infill villages, smaller settlements and countryside**

Development outside the areas covered by the approaches set out in Policies CS28, CS30, CS31 and CS32 will be strictly controlled in order to protect the character of the rural area and prevent unsustainable development.

#### **Residential development at Infill villages**

Within the settlement boundaries of the infill villages of Bleadon, Claverham, Cleeve, Dundry, Felton, Flax Bourton, Hutton, Kenn, Kewstoke, Locking, Sandford, Uphill and Winford, residential development of an appropriate scale which supports sustainable development will be supported providing that:

- The form of development respects the scale and character of the settlement;
- The size, type, tenure and range of housing has regard to local needs; and
- There is no significant adverse impact on service delivery and infrastructure provision and the local infrastructure is sufficient to accommodate the demands of the development.

In the case of redevelopment proposals within settlement boundaries it must be demonstrated that if the site or premises was last used for an economic use, that continuation in economic use is unsuitable.

#### **Residential development elsewhere**

New residential development will be restricted to replacement dwellings, residential subdivision, residential conversion of buildings where alternative economic use is inappropriate, or dwellings for essential rural workers.

#### **Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing will be permitted within settlement boundaries or in the form of rural exceptions sites, adjacent to settlements. Affordable housing will not be permitted in the Green Belt.

#### **Employment Development**

New small-scale employment development will only be permitted within settlement boundaries provided it is appropriate in scale and character, or involves the sympathetic conversion of a redundant rural building or is necessary for agricultural purposes.

New employment development will not be permitted in the Green Belt except where it involves the reuse of buildings in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Community facilities**

Where the need for community facilities cannot be met within or adjacent to settlement boundaries consideration will be given to sites outside where they are well related to the community which they are intended to serve.

This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 7.

### **Background**

4.91 National guidance emphasises 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 to the Infill Villages, smaller settlements and countryside**

4.92 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 strictly controlled. Outside the Service Villages the number of villages with settlement boundaries is therefore limited to Infill Villages. Within these villages only sustainable development in the form of infilling within settlement boundaries will be permitted.

4.93 The settlement boundaries as defined in the Replacement Local Plan for the infill villages will remain, although there is scope for these to be reviewed and adjusted via the plan making process.

4.94 Within those smaller settlements and the countryside where there are no residential development boundaries, new housing will be strictly controlled. Where affordable housing exception schemes are proposed in accordance with Policy CS17, these will only be acceptable adjacent to the settlement boundaries of the infill villages, or adjacent to the main body of the settlement. Such schemes will not be appropriate in the Green Belt.

4.95 Other non-residential uses will also be very carefully controlled within the smaller settlements and countryside. Small scale employment uses, retail or community uses may be permissible within settlement boundaries, subject to considerations relating to scale and impact and Green Belt.

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

4.96 In assessing the suitability of development proposals the Council will assess the economic, social and environmental dimensions. 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.

### **Monitoring and review**

4.97 Measured against individual policy targets.



# CHAPTER 5: **Delivery**

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 Infrastructure requirements will be set out in this document in the relevant policy sections and with the overall approach set out in Policy CS34. Whilst 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.
- 5.3 A more detailed Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been prepared to support the Core Strategy. This chapter sets out the strategic framework for how development will be implemented.



## Delivery policy

### **CS34: Infrastructure delivery and development contributions**

#### **Infrastructure delivery**

Infrastructure delivery will take place in a coordinated manner guided by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to support the Core Strategy and specific delivery schedules for key areas. These will include mechanisms for the funding and delivery of physical, social, community, environmental and any other infrastructure required to support development and regeneration. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan and delivery schedules will be reviewed and if necessary revised as and when required.

#### **Development contributions**

Development proposals will be expected to provide a contribution towards the cost of infrastructure. Subject to statutory processes and regulations, contributions may be collected towards:

- Initial costs, eg design and development work and 'pump-priming' of projects or programmes.
- Capital costs.
- Ongoing revenue such as the management and maintenance of services and facilities.
- Any other infrastructure related costs permitted by law and identified as a local need.

Contributions will be collected through Section 106 agreements and/or through a Community Infrastructure Levy once a Charging Schedule is in place.

Until a Charging Schedule is in place, and before 2014, contributions from S106 Agreements may be pooled to meet the costs of strategic infrastructure, where this meets the legal tests set out in the Community Infrastructure Regulations.

Once the Charging Schedule is in place, S106 Agreements will continue to be used for site specific costs and affordable housing.

*This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 2.*

## Background

### **The Core Strategy approach**

5.4 The Core Strategy identifies the broad pattern of new development across North Somerset to 2026 and the infrastructure requirements needed to support this development. The Community Infrastructure Levy is the government's preferred mechanism to secure funding to support strategic infrastructure and North Somerset Council will be seeking to co-ordinate the delivery of necessary infrastructure through both development contributions in the form of S106 agreements and, once adopted, the Community Infrastructure Levy. In addition an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and specific delivery schedules will demonstrate how delivery is intended to take place. These will take account of land equalisation, opportunities for co-location, prioritisation and physical delivery.

### **How and where the policy will be delivered**

5.5 The Council will be preparing a CIL Charging Schedule as part of the formal process of CIL adoption. Once approved, this will provide a clear framework for the collection of strategic infrastructure contributions. Much work has already been undertaken through the preparation of the Development Contributions SPD, and while the SPD will not now be progressed, the evidence prepared will inform the CIL process.

As the purpose of CIL is not to mitigate for the site specific impacts of a development proposal, the Council will also, where appropriate, seek development contributions in accordance with the statutory tests necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

### **Monitoring and review**

5.6 The effectiveness of the policy in relation to securing development contributions through both S106 and CIL will be monitored and reviewed in five year tranches.



# Appendix A: Superseded policies

The following policies from the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2007) and the Mineral Working in Avon Local Plan (1993) are superseded by policies in the Core Strategy.

North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2007)		Core Strategy	
Policy No.	Name	Policy No.	Name
GDP/1	Preferred locations for development	CS14 CS19 CS20	Distribution of new housing Strategic Gaps Supporting a successful economy
GDP/2	Environmental and public protection	CS3	Environmental Impacts and Flood Risk Assessment
GDP/5	Developer contributions to infrastructure and other planning requirements	CS20 CS34	Supporting a successful economy Infrastructure Delivery and Development Contributions
ECH/7	Landscape character areas	CS5	Landscape And The Historic Environment
ECH/10	Biodiversity	CS4	Nature Conservation
E/1	Weston-super-Mare vision	CS28	Weston-super-Mare
E1/a	Revitalisation of Weston seafront and town centre	CS29	Weston-super-Mare Town Centre
E1/b	Town centre gateway and outer commercial area	CS29	Weston-super-Mare Town Centre
E1/c	Weston Regeneration Area	CS30	Weston Villages
E/2	Future regeneration potential within the Weston Vision area	CS28 CS29 CS30	Weston-super-Mare Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Weston Villages
H/1	Residential development strategy	CS14 CS28	Distribution of new housing. Weston-super-Mare

North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2007)		Core Strategy	
Policy No.	Name	Policy No.	Name
H/3	Residential densities	CS14 CS15 CS26 CS27	Distribution of new housing Mixed and balanced communities Supporting healthy living and the provision of health care facilities Sport, recreation and community facilities
H/4	Affordable Housing	CS16	Affordable Housing
H/5	Circumstances and criteria for releasing affordable housing sites in rural areas	CS17	Rural Exceptions Schemes
H/12	Sites for Gypsies and Travelling Showpeople	CS18	Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
RT/1	Strategy for revitalising the town and district centres	CS21 CS31 PPS4	Retail hierarchy and provision Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead Planning for sustainable economic growth
RT/6	Out of centre shopping	CS21 PPS4	Retail hierarchy and provision Planning for sustainable economic growth

### Replacement Local Plan policies

Those Replacement Local Plan policies previously saved in March 2010 (ie all except GDP/4, H/10 and T/5) but not listed in the table will remain saved until superseded by the adoption of future development plan documents.

### Mineral Working in Avon Local Plan policies (as relating to North Somerset)

Mineral Working in Avon Local Plan 1993		Core Strategy	
Policy No.	Name	Policy No.	Name
MLP4	Release of land for mineral extraction	CS8	Minerals planning

The Core Strategy does not supersede any of the saved policies in the North Somerset Waste Local Plan (2002). However it should be noted that some policies were superseded by policies in the West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy when it was adopted.

## Appendix B: **Glossary**

Affordable housing	Housing that meets the needs of households whose income does not allow them to rent or buy in the local market. It can include social rented and intermediate housing.
Affordable Rented:	Rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent.
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)	A report submitted to the government by local planning authorities assessing progress with and the effectiveness of the Local Development Framework.
Area Action Plan (AAP)	A specific type of Development Plan Document used when there is a need to provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Countryside designated for its national landscape value. The primary purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. North Somerset contains part of the Mendip Hills AONB.
Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)	A strategy prepared for a local area with the objective of conserving and enhancing biological diversity.
BREEAM standard	A widely used environmental assessment method for buildings. It sets the standard for best practice in sustainable design and is a measure used to describe a building's environmental performance.
Brownfield land	Brownfield land is also referred to as previously developed land. It is land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. It excludes residential garden land.

Building for Life Standard	A national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods to improve social wellbeing and quality of life. Schemes are assessed against 20 Building for Life criteria.
Carbon footprint	The measure of the impact an activity or development has upon the environment, particularly climate change.
Code for Sustainable Homes	The Code is a national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes which aims to reduce carbon emissions and create homes that are more sustainable. Code Levels range from 1 to 6 where level 6 is zero carbon.
Combined heat and power (CHP)	An efficient way of generating electricity and heat simultaneously which can be used, for example, for district heating schemes.
Community infrastructure levy (CIL)	A national scheme that authorities can choose to introduce designed to secure financial contributions from development to help fund strategic infrastructure.
Conservation Area	Designated areas of special architectural or historic interest, whose character and appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Core Strategy	A Development Plan Document setting out the long-term spatial vision for the local planning authority area and the spatial objectives and strategic policies to deliver that vision.
Developer contributions	Contributions from development proposals towards the provision of infrastructure and services necessary to serve the development such as schools, affordable housing or transport. Contributions may be financial or by direct provision of works or land, secured through legal agreements.
Development plan	The statutory planning documents setting out the policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the local planning authority area.

Development Plan Documents (DPDs)	Spatial planning documents which, once adopted form part of the Development Plan. They include the Core Strategy and other documents such as the Sites and Policies DPD.
Employment land survey	An annual review of employment development, monitoring activity on sites which have been allocated for employment use and other proposals.
Flood risk assessment	An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered. A strategic flood risk assessment (SFRA) is carried out by the local planning authority to inform the preparation of its Local Development Documents, having regard to catchment-wide flooding issues which affect the area.
Green Belt	Land designated around large built-up areas to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and where inappropriate development is tightly controlled. North Somerset includes part of the Bristol-Bath Green Belt.
Green infrastructure (GI)	Green infrastructure comprises the strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features and includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens.
Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)	Any plan or programme which could affect sites of international importance for wildlife will be subject to the Habitats Directive and will require an HRA. This involves assessing whether the plan is likely to have any significant effect on the site. If so, a full Appropriate Assessment will have to be undertaken to assess in detail the likely effects.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	A document identifying future infrastructure and service requirements identified by the council and other service providers needed to support the delivery of the Core Strategy.
Intermediate housing	Affordable housing which is provided at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents. This includes various forms of shared ownership housing.



Key diagram	Diagram setting out the broad spatial implications of the policies and proposals contained within the Core Strategy.
Lifetime Homes	Dwellings designed to provide accessible and adaptable accommodation for everyone, from young families to older people and people with a temporary or permanent physical impairment.
Listed Building	Buildings identified as being of special architectural or historic interest. Special consent is required for development affecting Listed Buildings.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	The collection of Local Development Documents produced by the local planning authority which collectively delivers the spatial strategy for its area. It includes the Core Strategy, Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.
Local Nature Reserve	Non-statutory habitats of local significance designated by local authorities where protection and public understanding of nature conservation is encouraged.
National Nature Reserve	Area designated with the aim of securing protection and appropriate management of the most important areas of wildlife habitat, and to provide a resource for scientific research. All National Nature Reserves are SSSIs.
National Planning Policy Framework	Documents which set out the Government's national policies on planning issues and the operation of the planning system. Local planning authorities must take it into account when preparing the Local Plan. The guidance may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.
Ramsar Sites	Internationally important wetland sites, which are especially valuable as a waterfowl habitat. They are designated under the Ramsar convention on wetlands of international importance.
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)	A document setting out the strategic planning policies for the region, which in the case of North Somerset is the South West. The coalition Government has announced its intention to abolish RSS through the Localism Act.



Renewable energy	Energy generated from the sun, the wind, hydro power and plant material (biomass).
Rural exception sites policy	Policy enabling small sites within rural areas which wouldn't otherwise be released for housing to be developed to meet identified local affordable housing needs.
Scheduled Monument	Archaeological sites, monuments or buried remains of national importance, designated by the government.
Section 106 Agreement	Section 106 of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act allows a local planning authority to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission. They are used to support the delivery of services or infrastructure such as transport, recreation, education and affordable housing.
Settlement boundary	A line on the proposals map defining the area of a settlement within which specific development policies apply. Settlement boundaries do not necessarily include all of the town or village.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as an area of special interest by reason of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features.
Social rented	Affordable rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and Registered Providers.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	A site designated under the European Community Habitats Directive, to protect internationally important natural habitats and species.
Special Protection Areas (SPA)	Sites classified under the European Community Directive on Wild Birds to protect internationally important bird species.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	A generic term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European SEA Directive requires a formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use.

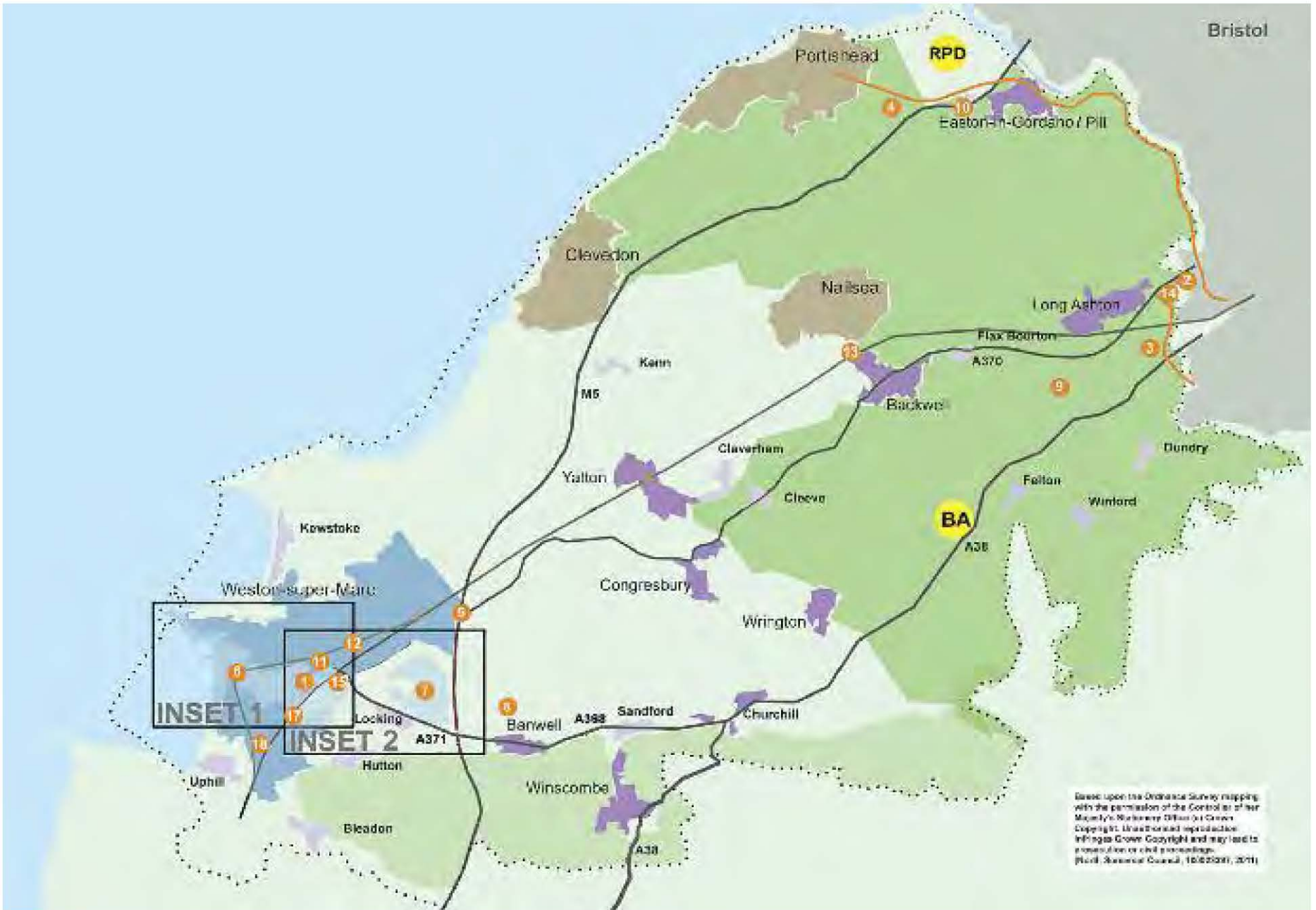
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)	A study that assesses the overall potential for housing development in an area, including the identification of specific housing sites and their deliverability.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	A study of the existing housing market in an area, including an assessment of the future need for market and affordable housing.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Documents prepared as part of the Local Development Framework to provide additional guidance on how policies will be implemented. They may include design guides and development briefs.
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	The process of appraising the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.
Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)	A document setting out the long-term vision for the area to tackle local needs. The SCS is prepared by the local strategic partnership.
Sustainable development	Development which meets the needs of the present generation, without compromising the needs of future generations to meet their own needs.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	Sustainable drainage is a concept that takes account of long term environmental and social factors in decisions about drainage, and is concerned with the quantity and quality of runoff, and the amenity value of surface water in the urban environment. SuDS provide an integrated approach to surface water design problems, which consider quality, quantity and amenity aspects equally.
Use Classes Order	The Town & Country Planning (Use Classes Order) 1987 as amended specifies various classes of use for buildings or land. Within each class the use for another purpose of the same class does not require planning permission.

# Key diagram

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 Weston town centre sub-areas (Inset 1) and the strategic allocation at Weston-super-Mare (Inset 2). These can be viewed in the supporting text to policies CS29 and CS30 respectively.

## Key

- ..... North Somerset boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  BA Bristol Airport
-  RPD Royal Portbury Dock
- Settlement hierarchy**
-  Weston-super-Mare
- Inset diagrams**
-  Inset diagram 1: Weston Town Centre, CS29
-  Inset diagram 2: Weston Villages, CS30
-  Clevedon, Nailsea, and Portishead  
See Policy CS31
-  Service Villages  
See Policy CS32
-  Infill Villages  
See Policy CS 33
- Major transport schemes**  
Numbers on the diagram can be cross-referred to the items in Policy CS10
-  Major transport schemes  
See Policy CS10







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