

MENDIP DISTRICT

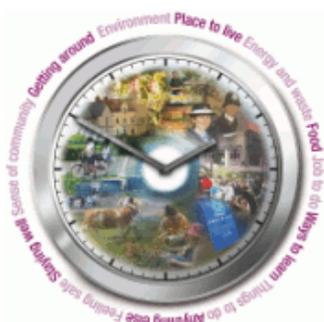
# LOCAL PLAN

2006-2028

## PART I: STRATEGY AND POLICIES

*Formerly known as the Local Development Framework Core Strategy*

**DRAFT PLAN FOR CONSULTATION**  
(Pre-Submission Stage)



“TIME TO PLAN”

**CONSULTATION PERIOD**  
**29<sup>th</sup> November 2012 – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013**



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درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

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## **What is this document for?**

This Pre-Submission Consultation draft Local Plan (Part I) is the version of the Local Plan which Mendip District Council intends to submit to the Secretary of State for Public Examination by a Planning Inspector which is scheduled to take place in mid 2013.

The content of this Local Plan (Part I) has been informed by evidence about the area gathered from a range of sources and studies over the last 4 years. During that period, the council consulted to identify the issues to tackle, then consulted on various options before publishing for public comment a draft plan containing its “preferred options” in early 2011. The council has now brought all that information together in this document.

Before being submitted, regulations require that this version of the plan is subjected to a further period of public consultation. Details of this are set out on the following page.

Following this public consultation the council will collate the issues raised, draft Proposed Changes which the council considers reasonable to make (and consult on these) and then submit the plan for examination alongside all the supporting evidence and other background material which is required.

A Planning Inspector will then be appointed to consider whether this Plan has been prepared in line with the regulatory and statutory requirements, and is a “sound” strategy to manage development across the district over its lifetime.

## **What is the Local Plan (Part I) ?**

The Local Plan (Part I) is the first of two main parts of the Council’s new statutory Development Plan which will be used as the primary basis to make decisions about the development and use of land in Mendip District over the period from 2006 to 2028. It was previously known as the Core Strategy under the Local Development Framework (LDF) arrangements that existed prior to the 2012 Localism Act being put in place.

The Local Plan’s role is to set out how development should be accommodated in the district and various measures that the council wants to put in place to ensure that the needs of communities are met and the local economy is allowed to flourish. At the same time the strategy aims to ensure that quality of life and the environment are safeguarded from harmful impacts. It must be made clear that some parts of this strategy have had to respond to national policies and these are clearly referenced throughout along with details of how the council has addressed them in a way which is appropriate to our local communities.

This Local Plan contains the following sections -

Sections 1 and 2 – introductory information about the plan and its production, followed by a summarised view of the principal issues that the district faces which underline why the council needs to put proactive measures and policies in place through this Local Plan.

Section 3 sets out a ‘Vision’ for the area which communities, businesses and public service providers have all helped to shape. It sets out a view of the future which this strategy then goes on to plan for.

Section 4 sets out the proposals addressing the district as a whole – where will development be best focused, how much is appropriate in each place, what types of homes and jobs we are planning for - and within a predominantly rural district - how will we support and sustain our village communities. The section also sets out how the council is keen to empower communities to shape their own destinies by bringing forward their own local level proposals which will enable the council’s decisions to be even better informed in the future.

Section 5 sets out individual strategies for our five main settlements - Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Street and Wells – where most new development will be focused and where clear planning ahead for homes, jobs, town centres, local infrastructure and other projects is essential.

Section 6 concludes the document with a set of more general policies which will be applied to all types of development and ensure that what is proposed delivers good quality development in the right places and of the right types to meet our needs. These policies, alongside the stated goals for the area (in sections 3, 4 and 5) and national planning policies will be the means by which the council considers applications for development when this plan is adopted

The Local Plan (Part II) – scheduled to be commenced in 2013 – will be more focused, being concerned with specific non strategic allocations of land around the towns and villages. Using the principles established in this Part I document, the council will encourage local interests to agree the most appropriate sites to accommodate planned growth.

Over time the council will also prepare, consult upon and adopt other planning guidance to help people use particular policies in this plan, or, in relation to development sites, provide opportunity for local input to determine how new sites can better meet the needs of our communities.

### **How will this Public Consultation Stage be run?**

Over the past 4 years the council has sought to actively engage local people and other interested parties using a range of means as part of a dialogue in order that this plan strikes the right balance between national policy and addressing local imperatives. The council has held a range of events, attended numerous meetings and forums as well as being responsive to day to day correspondence. All of these means have helped shape this plan.

During this consultation stage the primary focus is for people to read the product of the Local Plan (Part I) and identify specific changes which should be made - along with clear reasoning – to make it clearer or more effective in addressing the management of growth and development across the district. Because this stage is about reading and reflecting on the content of the plan the council will not be holding any public events. However, officers from the Planning Policy team will be available throughout the consultation period to provide people with more information where it is required.

You can contact officers via our customer services team on (01749) 648999 or by email at [planningpolicy@mendip.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@mendip.gov.uk). If more suitable for you to drop into the Council's offices at Shepton Mallet, please ring to arrange an appointment.

### **The Consultation period will run between 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013.**

The council would normally only consult for 6 weeks, however given that this period includes the Christmas holiday period it has been extended to 8 weeks in total.

### **The following page sets out how you can give us your views on the proposals which we need to receive by 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013.**

At the end of the consultation period responses will be summarised for submission to the Secretary of State who will appoint a Planning Inspector to hold a Public Examination of the proposals. Prior to this the council, in response to issues raised, may set out Proposed Changes which it will ask to be considered at the Public Examination. These will be consulted on if matters are deemed material to the intentions of the plan or involve sites not previously subjected to public scrutiny. If, following the Public Examination, the Plan is found to be sound the council will adopt the plan in the autumn of 2013.

## How can people give us their views ?

An eight week consultation period will run from the **29<sup>th</sup> November 2012 to 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013** during which time we would welcome your comments.

**Because any further changes will largely be a matter for a Planning Inspector to consider, all responses need to be made in a standardised format and so all respondents are expected to make use of a specific consultation response form which can be completed by hand or electronically.**

**A separate form will need to be completed in respect of each specific policy issue.**

You can download our response form which you can complete by hand or electronically

Once complete, please either

- drop it into one of the Council Access Points, or
- send it by email to [planningpolicy@mendip.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@mendip.gov.uk), or
- post it to us at

Planning Policy  
Mendip District Council, Cannards Grave Road,  
Shepton Mallet, Somerset. BA4 5BT

## What if you have questions or want to find out more ?

Officers from the Planning Policy team will be available on the phone and to respond to e-mail queries throughout the consultation period. You can contact us via our customer services team on (01749) 648999 or

To keep informed about the ongoing work of the Local Plan you can be added to our e-mail database alert by sending your name and address to our customer services team via the contacts set out above.

## Data Protection Statement

Any written comments you make will be available for public inspection. This is a legal requirement in accordance with the current planning regulations. The information will be analysed to inform and produce the Local Plan and may also be used by other services to inform improved service delivery.



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Mendip District Local Plan Part I sets out a long term strategic vision for the future of the District and how it will develop over the next fifteen years or more. The Plan has been shaped and informed by a comprehensive evidence base and a changing context to planning at both a national and regional level. Consultation, formal and informal, has helped to identify key local issues and then probe in more depth on particular matters. This plan now sets out how the Council intends to stimulate the development which the district needs including housing, economic development and infrastructure. It also puts in place a selection of policies to manage development in a manner appropriate to this district which generic national policy would not adequately cover. A further part of the plan, Part II: Site Allocations, will be prepared by the Council to allocate and/or designate specific sites for development or other purposes in line with the intentions of the policies in this Part I document.

### The Local Plan

- 1.2 The Local Plan is the statutory Development Plan for the district. This Plan will supersede the 2002 Mendip District Local Plan in its entirety. When brought into use it will primarily be used as the main basis for decision making in relation to planning applications made to the Council. However, the confirmation of the main development proposals in the plan will also stimulate an extensive array of joint working between landowners, developers, communities, public service providers, utility companies, interest groups and many others to help ensure that proposals formulated deliver the best and most sustainable outcomes possible. This plan is just the beginning. Its outcomes will depend upon effective coordinated and collaborative participation.
- 1.3 To this end, there are some clear distinctions between this plan and its predecessor. National policy since 2004 has sought to shift the emphasis of the planning system away from rigid policies that sought to control every conceivable possibility in the development and use of land, towards a broader framework that instead focused on Spatial Planning – planning for places and outcomes.
- 1.4 This document, Part I of the Local Plan therefore establishes an overarching development **Vision** and key **Objectives** for the area based on evidence and consultation which subsequent policies and proposals will aim to deliver.
- 1.5 Furthermore, once the Local Plan Part I is adopted, all other parts of the planning framework for the area must be aligned with its intentions in order that a coherent and consistent basis for decision making is established. This is discussed in the following subsection.
- 1.6 Having established these, this document then goes on to make the big decisions about broadly what scale of new development is needed, where that growth should be located, which key initiatives or projects to pursue and other key principles. This plan contains an overall spatial strategy for the district, broad principles to direct how development will take place across the extensive rural part of the district as well as specific policies for each of the five towns. These aspects are set out in the **Core Policies** of this plan contained within sections 4 and 5.

#### **Spatial Planning**

Spatial planning aims to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other strategies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. As a result, the nature of Local Plans will vary from area to area with districts and unitary authorities preparing policy documents in response to specific local needs and issues. The policies and proposals in this Plan are consistent with national policy, but will be used to add specific emphasis to reflect local circumstances. A key feature of this approach is to build in flexibility. Old style rigid policies, frequently applied in the past on a very 'black or white' basis, have resulted in development that passes the policy tests, but along the way have failed to deliver the outcomes intended. A Spatial Planning framework, provided by this Local Plan, accepts that the wider benefits of proposals for a particular place are central, rather than the policies themselves. However, this still requires that proposals inherently contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development as discussed later in this introduction.

1.7 Beyond this, the plan then sets out **Development Polices** in section 6 which will be applicable, to a greater or lesser degree, to all proposals for development. There are Development Policies, which together with the National Planning Policy Framework, will enable the Council to manage impacts on areas where there are constraints on development or where the Council is seeking to manage particular effects. In most cases the policies are permissive – i.e. saying what can be achieved – but put in place relevant criteria which will need to be satisfied during the conception or design stages of preparing a development proposal. To this end, the Council will continue to encourage early dialogue with those considering development in order that subsequent applications are well founded.

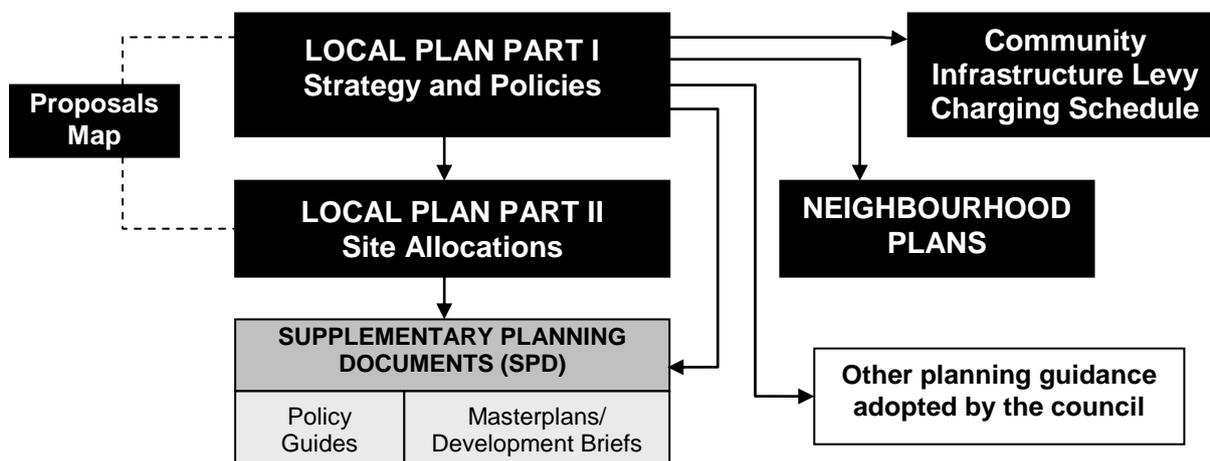


1.8 The adjacent diagram outlines in a visual form the broad structure of this Part I Local Plan and the role which the key components play.

**Other Parts of the Council’s Planning Framework**

1.9 This Local Plan Part I, as the cover and content indicates, sets out the strategy and policies that the council will pursue to meet its development needs and accommodate other development opportunities that emerge during the period to 2028.

1.10 However, other documents will be needed to address specific development issues. The diagram below illustrates the documents which the Council intends to prepare in coming years. Production of these documents will be timetabled within the Local Development Scheme which outlines how and when the Council will update and add to its planning framework.



1.11 Those elements identified in black are parts of the statutory Development Plan which are subject to national regulations governing their preparation and formal independent Public Examination. Identified in grey are Supplementary Planning Documents which can be adopted locally, but are subject to a preparation process defined by national regulations. The final white box would include other forms of guidance prepared, consulted upon, and adopted locally which would form significant Material Considerations in planning decisions.

The following paragraphs provide a simple outline of the role and nature of the components above:

- **Local Plan Part II: Site Allocations** – a Development Plan Document (DPD) which will identify sites to deliver specific, but non strategic, development needs as guided by the principles contained in this Local Plan Part I document. The Site Allocations document may also include designations of other land to safeguard it from development where justified. Where

development sites are considered significant in their setting, the Council may require that a formal Masterplan or Development Brief is prepared and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

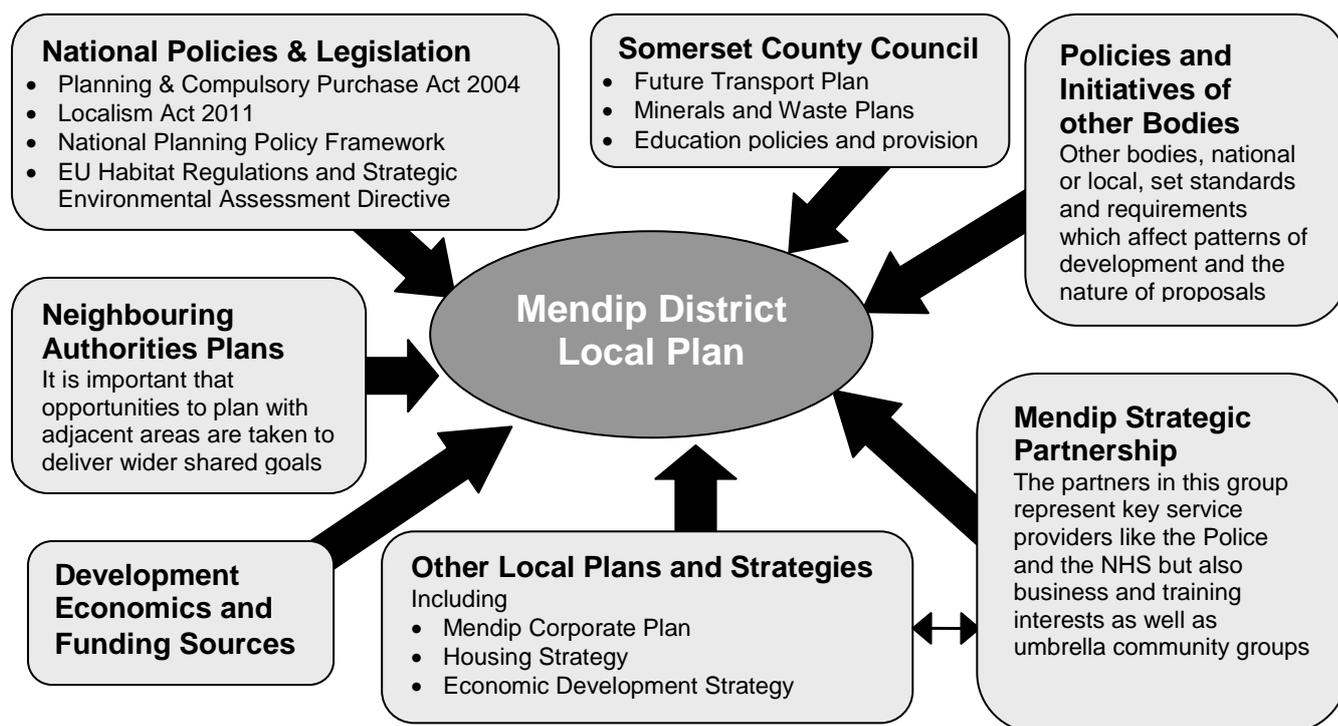
- **Proposals Map** - is the geographical representation of planning policies relevant in the area contained within the Local Plan (Parts I and II). Using an Ordnance Survey base map it will detail relevant land designations as well as policy boundaries and land allocations.
- **Neighbourhood Plans** – introduced by the 2011 Localism Act, are parts of the statutory Development Plan relevant to a specific local area and represent policies and proposals made at a community level as guided by the principles contained in this Local Plan Part I document. These are discussed further in a following Section related to the Localism Act.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule** – The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a development tariff which in future years will be collected to fund the delivery of infrastructure needed to support local growth. It is discussed further in relation to Development Policy 19. The Charging Schedule sets the level of tariff which the council will charge for specific types of development expressed per square metre
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)** - are documents which offer an opportunity for the Council to provide more detail about how a Local Plan proposal or policy will be applied, or in the case of Development Briefs and Masterplans, how a particular development site might be planned. Text related to Development Policy 7 explains more about these.
- **Other Planning Guidance** – is made up of other strategies and sources of information which are considered to be important for planning purposes. This currently includes Conservation Area Character Appraisals, Village Design Statements and some Parish Plans. Such guidance will still be required to have undergone appropriate levels of local consultation and be subject to a formal Council resolution to adopt them.

1.12 Alongside the main policy framework, the Council will produce or update two main supporting documents periodically:

- **Annual Monitoring Report** - This document will report upon delivery and effectiveness of the Local Plan's policies and proposals and be a means to highlight where changes or amendments might be needed to policies in any future review.
- **Local Development Scheme** – This document will set out a timetable for the production and review of parts of the Local Plan in order that interested parties can be clear when particular strands of work will be published for consultation or are to be adopted.

## The Context within which we Plan

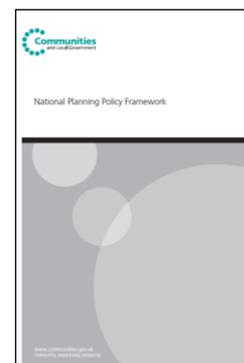
- 1.13 The District Council does not have a free hand in planning for the district's future. Whilst the Localism Act 2011 gives local authorities and communities new powers and responsibilities devolved down from central government, it remains there will always be national planning policies which the Council is bound to work within. As set out in relation to spatial planning above, the Local Plan must also rationalise how it can deliver the goals and aspirations of the community, public service and, most crucially, private investment.
- 1.14 The diagram below outlines many, but not all, of the influences which the Council has sought or been required to incorporate into its thinking.



- 1.15 Some of the key influences are explored in the following paragraphs:

### **National Planning Guidance**

- 1.16 The Local Plan works within alongside, and takes account of, the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) which set out the Government's policies on different aspects of planning.
- 1.17 At its heart it must be in broad conformity with national policy, now primarily encapsulated in the NPPF which states in para.6 that "the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development."
- 1.18 Sustainable Development is defined in United Nations resolution 42/187 as "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*"
- 1.19 The NPPF restates the long held rationale for the planning system, namely to maximise, collectively, the social, economic and environmental benefits in the development and use of land. The Vision and Objectives set out in section 3 are predicated on this rationale.
- 1.20 In essence, sustainable development is already embedded within this plan and the key challenge is therefore more about the application of sustainable development principles in specific circumstances and at a site based level. The Council will continue to adopt a positive approach in seeking to meet the objectively assessed development needs of the district. The strategy and policies in this Local Plan (and its subsequent parts) provide a clear framework to guide development that delivers positive, sustainable growth.



- 1.21 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF sets out a **Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**, which makes it clear that proposals that accord with Local Plans should be approved without delay. In assessing and determining planning applications the Council will apply the overarching policy approach set out below.

### **Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**

**When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will work proactively with applicants to seek solutions which mean that proposals secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.**

- 1. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.**
- 2. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out-of-date at the time of making the decision, the Council will grant permission - unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:**
  - Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or**
  - Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.**

- 1.22 There may be instances where the Plan is silent or in future years, policies become out-of-date. To enable the Council to continue to take a sustainable and positive approach to decision making, applicants will need to assist by submitting evidence to demonstrate how the benefits of the proposal outweigh any adverse impacts. In this way economic, social and environmental responsibilities can continue to be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and well-being.

### **Sustainable Community Strategy**

- 1.23 The [Mendip Sustainable Community Strategy](#) represents the collaborative strategy of a range of partners who work together as the Mendip Strategic Partnership. As an entity, the partnership has few resources of its own, but has a role in agreeing joint working using member resources and budgets to collectively support and deliver each others aims. With representative views from the public, private and voluntary sectors they have established an overall vision for the future of the Mendip area which is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy which was adopted in 2010.
- 1.24 The early stages of production of this Local Plan were coordinated with the production of the Sustainable Community Strategy in order that the development visions set out in section 3 of this document are consistent with the wider vision being pursued by partner groups.

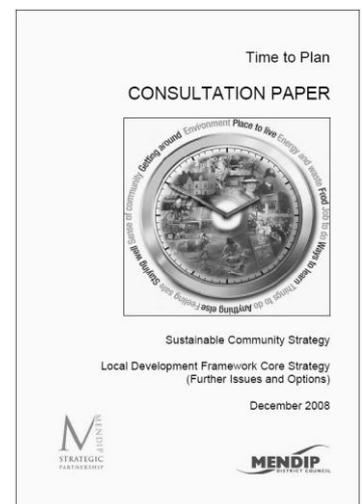
### **Mendip Corporate Plan**

- 1.25 The [Mendip Corporate Plan](#) has evolved during the production of this Local Plan reflecting the need for the Council to deliver clearer and more focused priorities. The objectives of this plan remain consistent with the current Corporate priorities, namely:
- to support business development and growth
  - to take all steps possible to support the provision of housing in the district
  - to address issues of rural isolation, primarily through ensuring partner activity
  - to take on a clear strategic and community leadership role for the district

The objectives and subsequent policies of the plan align directly with these priorities.

## **“Time to Plan”: The Preparation of this Local Plan**

- 1.26 **“Time to Plan”** has been the name of the publicity campaign used throughout the production of this Local Plan. In early 2008, formal consultation (under the previous Local Development Framework Arrangements) commenced with a phase of agenda setting dialogue. This work, undertaken as a joint exercise to inform the Sustainable Community Strategy, allowed local people, businesses and other interests to highlight issues in their locality. Where possible the Council also worked with community groups, such as **‘Shepton 21’** and **‘Vision for Frome’**, allowing strategic and local issues to be gathered in one exercise. Over 1,200 people came along to one of the 6 public events held across the district. This attracted over 1,800 individual responses on a whole range of issues, as well as many hundreds of place based points arising from mapped exercises.
- 1.27 Following on from this consultation phase, a Stakeholder Workshop in July 2008 involving a wide range of public, private, governmental and voluntary sector interests from within and outside Mendip came together to consider the key findings and identify local priorities for the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Core Strategy (as it was then referred to). In light of the outcomes, the Mendip Strategic Partnership was able to agree an overarching vision statement for the Sustainable Community Strategy which in turn helped to frame a ‘spatial vision’ and ‘strategic objectives’ to provide an overall direction for the Core Strategy (which is set out in section 3 of this Local Plan). In the following months specific visions for each of the five Mendip towns were also drawn together to provide a strategic view of their development needs. These vision statements were endorsed by the Council’s executive in the autumn of 2009 and are set out in section 4 of this Local Plan.
- 1.28 After consolidating all the material from the initial phase of consultation and evidence gathering, a set of six ‘Portraits’<sup>1</sup> were pulled together. These documents drew together an understanding of each of the five towns and of the district as a whole, taking in relevant parts of the evidence base, consultation responses and monitoring data. The information was supplemented in many cases with information from face to face meetings with service providers, community leaders and other interests including local businesses, voluntary groups and representatives of minority groups. The ‘Portraits’ effectively provided a baseline source of information for the production of both the Core Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 1.29 Alongside this consolidation of information, a detailed consultation paper<sup>2</sup> was prepared setting out various questions in response to issues where there were realistic choices to be made. The document focused on issues relevant in each of the Mendip towns, promoting sustainable rural development as well as a range of topic based issues applicable across the district as a whole. This was published for a formal 8 week consultation period at the start of 2009. The exercise attracted 475 individual responses.
- 1.30 As a roundup to the initial two rounds of consultation, a summary report<sup>3</sup> of the issues raised was prepared in mid 2009 as a means to consolidate the views of contributors.
- 1.31 During 2009 and 2010 it became apparent that one of the foundations of the planning system that was present at that time, Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) were likely to be abolished which was confirmed in 2010 following the formation of the coalition government. One of the key consequences of this was that the Council had to move from having a defined development strategy and a fixed level of housing provision towards a strategy that was predicated on local needs and demands. As a result, an extensive range of new evidence was gathered to underpin what were then termed “local development requirements.” At the time of publication, the government’s attempts to abolish RSS had yet to be concluded. Nevertheless, the proposals in this Local Plan Part I are not radically different from the intentions of the RSS, due primarily to the general consistency in the fundamental planning principles set out in national policy.



<sup>1</sup> Portraits of Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Street and Wells as well as the Portrait of Mendip (December 2008)

<sup>2</sup> Time to Plan Consultation Paper (December 2008)

<sup>3</sup> Time to Plan Consultation Responses Summary Report (July 2009)

- 1.32 In February 2011, having responded to the impending removal of RSS as well as working through the issues emerging from the preceding Consultation Paper, the District Council published what was then called its Draft Core Strategy setting out its preferred options for public consultation. That draft plan was broadly similar in structure to this document, setting out a Vision, Objectives, Core Policies and Development Policies. A range of events were held to coincide with the consultation period as well as summary proposals being sent to every household. 400 written representations were received.
- 1.33 The latter part of 2011 and early 2012 saw proposals by Government to do away with the national policy contained within Planning Policy Statements (PPS), Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) and a range of other policies and circulars and to consolidate them within the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#). This was subsequently published in March 2012 and introduced new uncertainty. The Council chose to hold back the publication of this pre-submission draft to consider the implications of the new NPPF. This delay conveniently enabled new background evidence about local demographics, economic growth land supply and housing need to be built in, in addition to work needed to introduce new policies where the NPPF had left policy gaps in the Plan.
- 1.34 It was also during this period that the Localism Act came into being. Associated government guidance brought an end to the complicated and confusing terminology associated with the Local Development Frameworks system that had been in place since 2004, instead asking local authorities to return to using the term Local Plan.

### **The Evidence Base**

- 1.35 To inform the production of this Local Plan, and future parts of the Council's planning framework, it has been necessary for the Council and its partners to develop a range of evidence to justify its content. "[Evidence Base](#)" is the collective term used to describe all of the background studies and work, including consultation views, which have and will continue to inform plan making and planning decisions. The full range of information gathered together by the Council is available to view on the website or on request from the Council's offices. All parts of this Local Plan have been informed by evidence, whether in the form of consultation views, official statistics or specific studies.
- 1.36 The Council has a duty to keep this information current to ensure that its flexible policies, when used for decision making, draw upon the most up to date information the Council can get about circumstances and conditions prevalent across the area. As stated before, the plan is a framework and the Council intends to regularly review its evidence so that decisions reflect current circumstances.
- 1.37 Throughout the preparation process of this plan, stakeholders and contributors have been challenged to identify or produce evidence to back their assertions, particularly where fundamental policy stances would result. Where necessary, the Council has also prepared technical papers which bring together various sources of evidence. These papers explore particular issues weighing up alternative approaches and considering their relative impacts. These approaches have ensured that the Local Plan is based on rational and objective decision making, rather than being unduly influenced by unsubstantiated opinions or unqualified assumptions which could ultimately undermine the soundness of the overall strategy.

### **Regulatory Requirements**

- 1.38 The preparation of this Local Plan has been undertaken in line with processes set out in national planning policy and associated statutory regulations. Where relevant, other sources of guidance have been taken into account including that produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Planning Advisory Service and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.
- 1.39 In terms of specific regulatory requirements, the following points itemise specific processes and regulations that this plan had to be assessed against:
- **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** is a mandatory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and helps to fulfil the objective of achieving sustainable development in preparing projects, policies and plans. To ensure that policies and proposals in the Local Plans

contribute to sustainable development, each document produced will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating the requirements of the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The auditing process of the SA leads to more informed and transparent decision-making and helps to achieve the aims of sustainable development in Mendip.

- **Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)** is required following a ruling in October 2005 by the European Court of Justice that land-use plans including Local Plans should be subject to an 'Appropriate Assessment' of their implications for European Sites. European Sites are nature conservation sites which have been designated under European Law, for example Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), as well as species outlined in Regulation 10 of the Habitats Regulations 1994.
- **Equalities Impact Assessments (EqIA)** are required under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Sex Discrimination Act 2007. Impact Assessments are a systematic way of examining whether new or existing functions, policy or procedures differentially affect any person or group of persons.
- **Community Involvement Regulations** require that the Council sets out evidence of how it has engaged the community in plan making when preparing a development plan document. This is partially summarised in paragraphs 1.26 - 1.34 above with a full account being available on the Council's website. Full consultation statements were published after each stage of engagement.

Copies of all of these documents are available on the Council's [website](#)

## **Delivery and Monitoring**

- 1.40 Delivery of the proposals of the Local Plan is a critical consideration. The content of this document has been based upon a sound understanding of issues, evidence and views relevant to the area and of its constituent communities, however the ability to deliver proposals has also been an important consideration.
- 1.41 Accompanying this Local Plan is a Delivery Plan which sets out how key proposals and projects of the Core Policies will be delivered, including where relevant, the roles of other parts of the planning framework. The Delivery Plan itemises the proposals, key partners/agencies, timescales and other details which, during consultation and further work, will be refined to make it clear how things will happen on the ground. The Delivery Plan also itemises elements of key infrastructure which will need to be provided as part of development, through legal agreements associated with planning consents or through development contributions which in future may be accumulated via a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)<sup>4</sup>
- 1.42 Appendix 2 of this document sets out a range of indicators against which policies – notably the Development Management Policies in section 6 – will be assessed to determine their effectiveness over their lifetime, and where appropriate trigger reviews or other support mechanisms to ensure they better achieve the aims set out within the overall Local Plan objectives set out in section 3.
- 1.43 Reporting progress on delivery and effectiveness of policies will be through the Annual Monitoring Report as considered previously.

## **Status of policies and supporting text in the Local Plan**

- 1.44 For the avoidance of doubt, both the policies and the supporting text of all parts of the Local Plan make up the statutory Development Plan for the purposes of determining planning applications.

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<sup>4</sup> See Development Policy 19 and its supporting text

## 2.0 A PORTRAIT OF MENDIP

### Issues facing the District

2.1 This section of the Local Plan provides an account of the issues facing the Mendip area as distilled from the background evidence that has been used to inform this plan. By exploring the issues that arise across the area, this offers context and establishes the basis for the subsequent policy statements and proposals contained later in the plan.

#### **Location and characteristics**

2.2 Mendip is a rural district, covering an area of 738 square kilometres. The district contains five principal towns: Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Street and Wells. They each function as 'market towns' and meet a high proportion of the everyday needs of their residents and those of their rural catchments. There are in excess of 100 smaller rural settlements, varying in size from the largest villages like Coleford and Chilcompton (population circa 2,000) through to the smallest of hamlets which may consist of a dozen or so houses. In 2006, the base date for this strategy, the district had an estimated population of 108,300 with around two thirds living in the five main centres. Frome is the largest town while Glastonbury is the smallest.

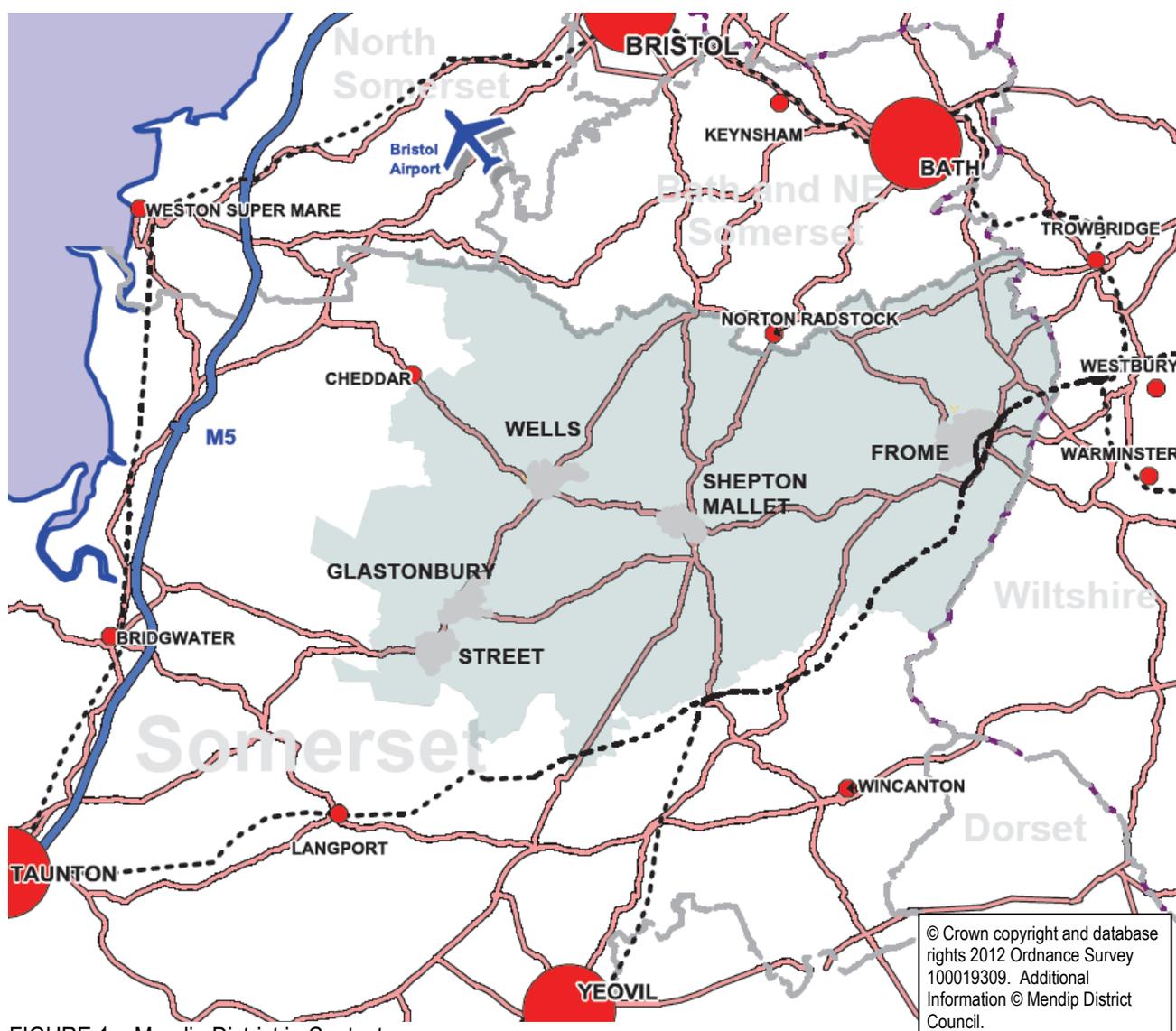


FIGURE 1 : Mendip District in Context

2.3 Whilst containing five towns of varying characteristics, the district is influenced by centres that lie outside its boundaries to greater or lesser degree. To the south and west, Yeovil and Taunton draw trade and workers from the area to some degree, however Bristol and Bath to the north have a much greater degree of influence. They attract commuters to comparatively better paid jobs, shoppers for a wider choice of higher order goods and place pressures on local housing markets.

The market towns of Midsomer Norton and Radstock, in Bath and North East Somerset, immediately adjoin the northern boundary of the district and meet some of the needs of residents of nearby Mendip villages.

- 2.4 Frome and the rural communities to the east of the district have strong links with the Wiltshire towns of Trowbridge, Westbury and Warminster, facilitated by road including the A36/A350 corridor and rail links via Westbury.
- 2.5 Commuting and a workforce to meet the needs of business were highlighted as significant issues during consultation. In light of the fact that the census remains the only true means of assessing flows between work and residence the council has had to rely on 2001 census data, supplemented by commentary in the 2009 West of England Strategic Housing Market Assessment as well as survey data gathered from the latest 2012 Mendip Housing Needs Assessment. The figures below, whilst dated, give an idea of the scale of outflows to each place which are not considered to have changed significantly since the data was recorded.
- 2.6 The level of net out commuting is a particular issue for Frome with around 4,500 commuters travelling to Bath and the west Wiltshire towns whilst reverse flows are substantially lower as indicated in Table 1a below. As a result the town has the lowest ratio of jobs to economically active population of any of the main centres.

	Mendip	Frome	G'bury/Street	Shepton	Wells
West Wilts	1350	1245	42	29	35
BANES	2104	1660	107	258	80
Bristol	1185	325	131	279	450
N Soms	282	59	48	68	106
S Gos	399	189	68	57	87
Somerset & Other South West	-62	527	-350	-126	-112
Other Areas	-95	375	-492	144	-122
TOTAL	5163	4380	-448	709	524

TABLE 1a : Net Commuting Flows to / from adjacent areas (2001 Census/2009 West of England SHMAA)

- 2.7 In the other towns, actual and net commuting flows are not as significant particularly when the local Mendip labour force is factored in as shown in Table 1b. The exceptions to this are Glastonbury/Street and Wells. At Street, specifically, there was a substantial inflow (signified by the negative figures in the table above) of workers from other areas, notably other parts of Somerset. At Wells, the net outflow of 524 employees to areas outside Mendip masks a far more dynamic flow of labour which sees around 2500 workers commute out to Bristol/Bath and other destinations in Somerset with around 1900 travelling in – half from Bristol/Bath and half from other locations in Somerset. Local labour flows within the district showed that Wells drew in almost 1000 employees from other towns.

		Work in....			
		Frome	Glastonbury / Street	Shepton	Wells
Live in...	Frome	10122	207	758	203
	G'bury / Street	156	8100	559	862
	Shepton	451	318	4582	833
	Wells	171	614	763	5342
NET FLOW		391 (out)	437 (out)	479 (in)	963 (in)

TABLE 1b : Commuting Flows within Mendip (2001 Census/2009 West of England SHMAA)

- 2.8 In terms of travel for goods and services, the [2010 Mendip Town Centres study](#) indicates that Mendip performs relatively well with 88% of its residents convenience shopping needs (food, everyday purchases) met within the district. 55% of comparison goods (e.g. clothes, shoes, electrical goods, furniture, DIY, garden, etc.) are also bought within Mendip with 14% of the remainder obtained from online sources. In common with work patterns, Bristol, Bath, Yeovil and Taunton attract trade away from the district although this is accepted to be as a result of the wider range and choice available in these larger centres.

- 2.9 In terms of future needs, the 2010 study indicated that there would be plenty of spending capacity to support town centre regeneration in all of the towns within the non-food sector. However, a significant change in the outlook for retail and the extended role that online retailing will play in the future means that the emphasis must be upon schemes which compliment the existing offer and extend consumer choice – in essence making town centres attractive, convenient and well designed shopping and leisure destinations.
- 2.10 In terms of food store provision, capacity to 2021 – a reliable future horizon – is limited on account of existing operators and consents recently granted in Glastonbury and Wells. Any future stores will be predicated on competition rather than absolute need for them. Scope for better food stores in town centre locations which attract shoppers to purchase food and goods from other shops exist, however a fine balance is needed to ensure the wider vitality and functioning of those centres is maintained, and regeneration of sites in Frome will need to be especially cautious in this respect.

## Environment

- 2.11 Mendip's natural and man-made environments are highly diverse and this is a distinctive feature of the district. The complex geology, topography, hydrology and geography of the area have resulted in habitats and landscapes of distinctive character and high visual quality. There is a wealth of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites of wildlife value as well as important designated geological sites.

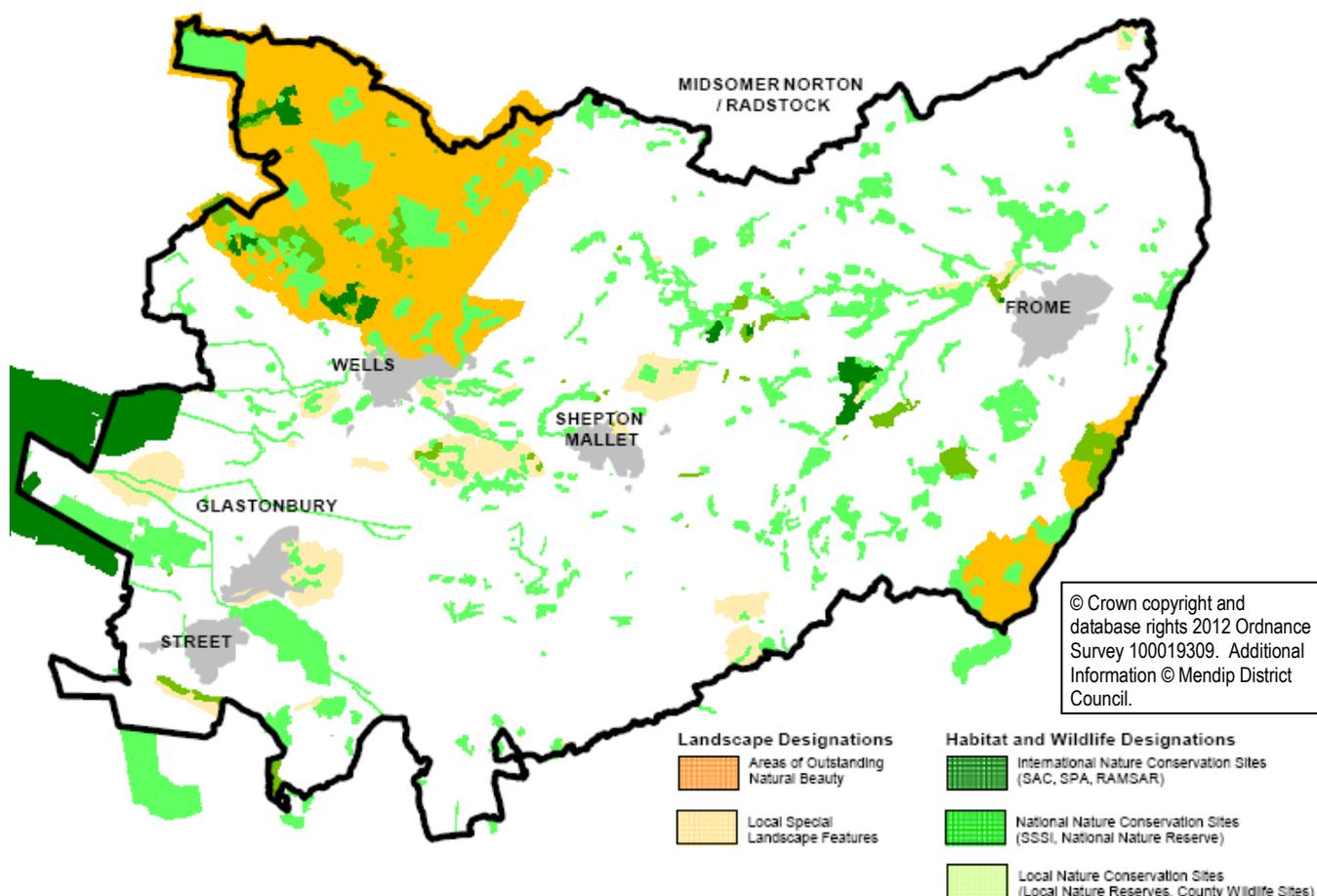


FIGURE 2: The Extent of Designated Landscapes and Wildlife Sites across Mendip District

- 2.12 The Mendip Hills give the district its name and part of the hills form the Mendip Hills AONB. This high landscape quality forms part of the setting for the City of Wells and contributes to the strong sense of place. Three of the district's EU Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are associated with the Mendip Hills and their extensive cave systems which provide important habitats for bat species. Furthermore, the area around Priddy in the north west of the district has one of the highest concentrations of Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The Mendip Hills are also one of the UK's principal sources of high quality hard Carboniferous Limestone rock and the district contains seven active quarries. Most of these lie between Shepton Mallet and Frome, producing around 12 million tonnes per year, and indirectly employ 1,500 people across varied sectors.

- 2.13 Since the late 1990s, a new process called Hydraulic Fracturing, sometimes shortened to “Fracking” has emerged which is capable of allowing the recovery of pockets of hydrocarbons from rock strata. The process, very simply, involves injecting fluid at high pressure into rock formations to propagate cracks and fractures which in turn releases gas (of varying forms including natural gas and coal seam gas) which can then be extracted. In recent years, assessments in the UK has revealed that there may be potential in the Mendip Hills for the extraction of gas using this method. The government is granting exploration licences, but commercial exploitation would be planned and managed through Somerset County Council’s Minerals Plan. The district council expects that a precautionary principle is applied by bodies considering the use of this technique given the importance of the area’s geology on water supply, landscapes and biodiversity. Until the impacts, localised and area wide, including knock on effects on tourism, are understood the Council will not support this form of development.
- 2.14 In contrast to the Mendip Hills are the Somerset Levels and Moors - a low lying plain modified by man over centuries to create grazing land drained by interlocking ditches, known as rhyes. A significant proportion of the Levels and Moors is designated as an EU Special Protection Area (SPA), primarily on account of its birdlife interest. The area is also internationally recognised for discoveries of prehistoric remains that lie preserved in the peat.
- 2.15 The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB fringes the eastern side of the district offering panoramic views across the undulating countryside which formerly made up the ancient Selwood Forest.
- 2.16 The geology, topography and geography of the district have had a direct bearing on the pattern of settlement and communication. The resulting diversity has contributed to the tremendous variation of settlement layout and building styles. These generate a varied sense of place and true local distinctiveness ranging from the Arts and Crafts style worker’s housing built from Blue Lias in Street, to the distinctive honey coloured historic buildings of Frome. As a result, and recognising the extensive heritage, there are 27 conservation areas and nearly 3,000 listed buildings in Mendip. These features are important culturally and economically.
- 2.17 The Levels and Moors form a substantial area at high risk of fluvial flooding and this affects Glastonbury and its surrounding villages. Flash flooding, caused by surface run-off is also a problem in some areas, especially Shepton Mallet. In the future, acknowledging climate change effects, flood risk areas will be more prone to incident and pressure on drainage systems in areas where flood risk is less prevalent may still result in localised inundation.

**People**

- 2.18 In terms of the 2006 population, observable existing variations from national averages were that there was under-representation of 16-30 year olds primarily based on the movement of school leavers from the area for higher education, employment or career progression. Conversely, pre-retirement age groups (50-60) were over-represented as these groups migrate into the area from urban districts.

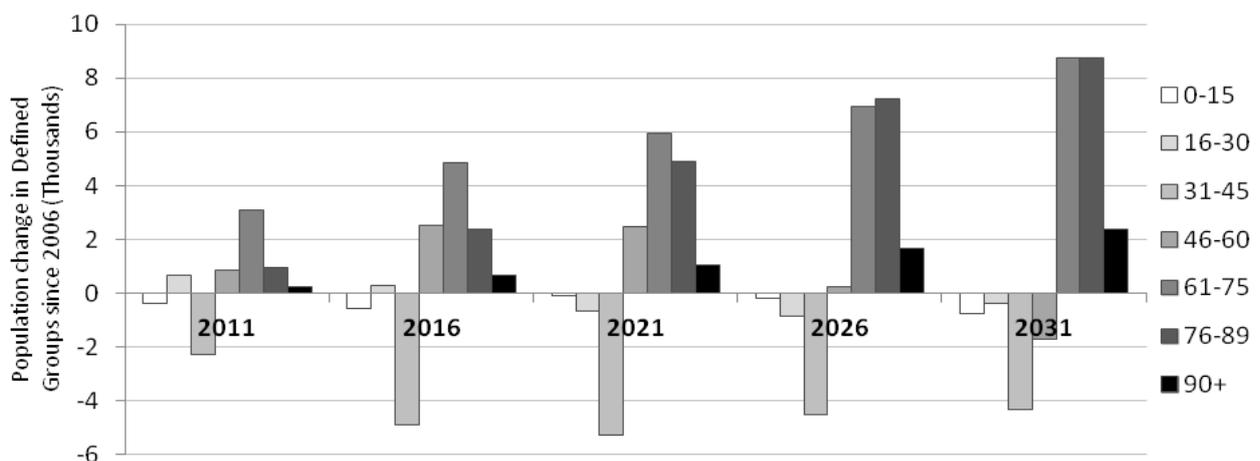


FIGURE 3: Projected Change in the Structure of Mendip's Population 2006-2028 (ONS/Dorset CC, 2012)

- 2.19 The diagram above reveals the trends likely to occur over the next 20 years. It indicates that the decline in younger age groups will continue. More dramatic however, is the growth in age groups aged over 60 which by 2031 will have increased its share of the district population from 24% to 38% with the number of people aged 90 or more trebling to around 3,300.
- 2.20 A clear implication of the latter trend is that the number of households will grow and, furthermore, the average household size is set to fall as retired couples and widow(ers) households make up a larger share of all households. The reduction in household size will arise from other sources such as divorcees. The table below summarises calculations involving projected population growth, falling household size and the consequential demands for new housing arising from these trends.

	Frome	G'bury	Street	Shepton Mallet	Wells	Rural Area	Total
2006 Population (a)	25,479	8,816	11,479	9,678	12,987	38,839	107,278
2006 Households (b)	10,534	3,731	4,637	3,980	5,897	16,957	45,737
2006 Average household size	2.42	2.36	2.48	2.43	2.20	2.29	2.35
2028 Projected population	30,952	9,889	13,184	11,527	12,718	39,520	117,430
2028 Projected households	13,390	4,461	5,776	4,992	6,203	19,502	54,324
2028 Projected average household size (c)	2.28	2.22	2.28	2.31	2.05	2.03	2.16
Additional homes needed to accommodate the same 2006 population using 2028 average household sizes (=a/c-b)	617	246	392	211	436	2,209	4,112

Table 2: Trend based Projected Population/Household Growth and Changing Household Size 2006-2028 (ONS/Dorset CC, 2012)

- 2.21 As implied from the 2006 average household sizes, to some degree this trend is already advanced in Wells which has a markedly older age structure than that of the rest of the district, save for some rural communities. In response to these trend based projections, there is a clear argument that pure application of household growth will only perpetuate trends, in turn justifying levels of new housing provision that improves the inherent balance of economically active people and jobs.
- 2.22 Indicators of health are generally good in comparison to the averages for England. Mendip residents have life expectancies in line with the national average of 78.1 years (England - 77.3) for men and 82.4 (England – 81.5) years for women. Although the district is a prosperous area there are pockets of deprivation as recorded in the Indices of Deprivation. The main areas are Street North, Shepton East, Frome Welshmill, Glastonbury St John's and Glastonbury St Benedict's.

### Housing

- 2.23 The number of dwellings in the district in 2006 was 46,933 and at that time around 1250 homes, 2.5% of the total, were vacant. In 2012, that figure had risen to 1441, although under a more meaningful measure – those vacant for longer than 6 months – the figure stands at 445.
- 2.24 Owner occupation represents the largest share of housing stock, standing at 73% in 2011. 13% are in social rented tenure, with the remaining 14% privately rented. Compared with English averages social rented and private rented properties are marginally underrepresented although the proportions are consistent with South West and Somerset averages. Some commentators have observed that a larger private rented sector has benefits for workforce mobility.
- 2.25 Affordability of housing is the major issue in Mendip as it is across much of southern England. Between 2001 and 2006 the district experienced some of the largest house price rises of any of the local authorities in the West of England area. The average price of a semi-detached house rose by 63%. By the end of this period the proportion of young households able to buy or rent in the market fell to 42%. Whilst affordability of housing has marginally improved as a result of house price falls observed during the 2008-2012 period, all expectations point towards this being a blip as the national housing market continues to be dogged by inconsistent delivery and unrealistic land value

expectations. The impact will be most acute on young people and the population change trends shown in figure 3 above will be partly driven by housing affordability.

- 2.26 The table below summarises the scale of housing need in Mendip for the period to 2016 based on information set out in the latest 2011 Mendip Housing Needs Assessment.

Net annual affordable housing need	Frome	Glastonbury/Street	Shepton Mallet	Wells	Rural	Mendip District
	145	186	65	67	281	<b>743</b>

TABLE 3: Projected net annual affordable housing need in Mendip's sub housing market areas 2011-16 (Fig. 7.19 MDC/JGC Housing Needs Assessment, 2011)

- 2.27 The district total of 743 new affordable homes per year is an unrealistic target for the Council to seek to deliver. Public subsidy for affordable homes is, in the current period of austerity, very scarce. Furthermore, the development industry highlights, quite fairly - up to a point – that development viability cannot support ever escalating levels of affordable housing obligations on the back of market housing. This is recognised nationally and over recent years government has sought to grapple with the issues, making announcements about “affordable rented” tenures, adjusting the benefits regime by bringing in Universal Credit and tackling worklessness. The extent to which these measures will address ever rising demands for affordable homes will become apparent during the lifetime of this Local Plan.
- 2.28 In considering what the District Council can do to address this matter, the clear starting point is that the delivery of affordable homes must be maximised as far as this is possible to achieve. Development Viability work undertaken to inform this plan provides one means to ensure this can be achieved and, as a headline figure, most development sites should be able to support a 30% requirement (40% at Wells and some rural villages) for affordable homes although in each case, specific circumstances will need to be explored where developers argue this level cannot be achieved.
- 2.29 In respect of housing delivery, Mendip district was successful over the preceding plan period in making provision for the development industry to build all of the planned housing. The previous Mendip District Local Plan, guided by the Somerset County Structure Plan (1991-2011) made provision for “about 8,950” for that 20 year period. The table below summarises supply towards the targets set out in that plan.

	Somerset Structure Plan Target Provision (1991-2011)	Homes Completed (1991-2011)	% of Target Met	Brownfield Completions (2000-2011)
Frome	2,590	2,357	91%	1,257
Glastonbury	1,000	1,061	106%	450
Shepton Mallet	1,120	1,338	119%	334
Street	1,135	1,069	94%	394
Wells	1,100	1,001	91%	406
<b>All Towns</b>	<b>6,980</b>	<b>6,826</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>2,841</b>
Rural Areas	1,970	2,553	129%	796
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,950</b>	<b>9,379</b>	<b>104%</b>	<b>3,637</b>

TABLE 4: Housing Targets and Completions in Mendip 1991-2011 (Mendip DC Housing Monitoring)

- 2.30 Overall 104% of the target provision has been built although there is some variation between where it was planned and built. This is largely down to the unpredictable supply of brownfield land arising particularly from the restructuring in the local economy in the towns and, in rural areas, infilling and redevelopment promoted during the housing boom. The later than planned release of a major greenfield area at Shepton Mallet coinciding with some modest speculative brownfield development since 2000 led to a modest overprovision of 180 homes, counteracting the under delivery at Frome and Street. In both of the latter however, delays in major sites (Garsdale/Saxonvale and Houndwood respectively) has been the cause.
- 2.31 Data for brownfield development only exists from March 2000. It shows that the district has been successful in securing 3,637 of the total 5,868 new homes (62%) on brownfield sites in the 11 years from 2000 to 2011. Land supply data considered in section 4 of this strategy suggests that brownfield sites will continue to play a part in delivering a substantial number of new homes in the

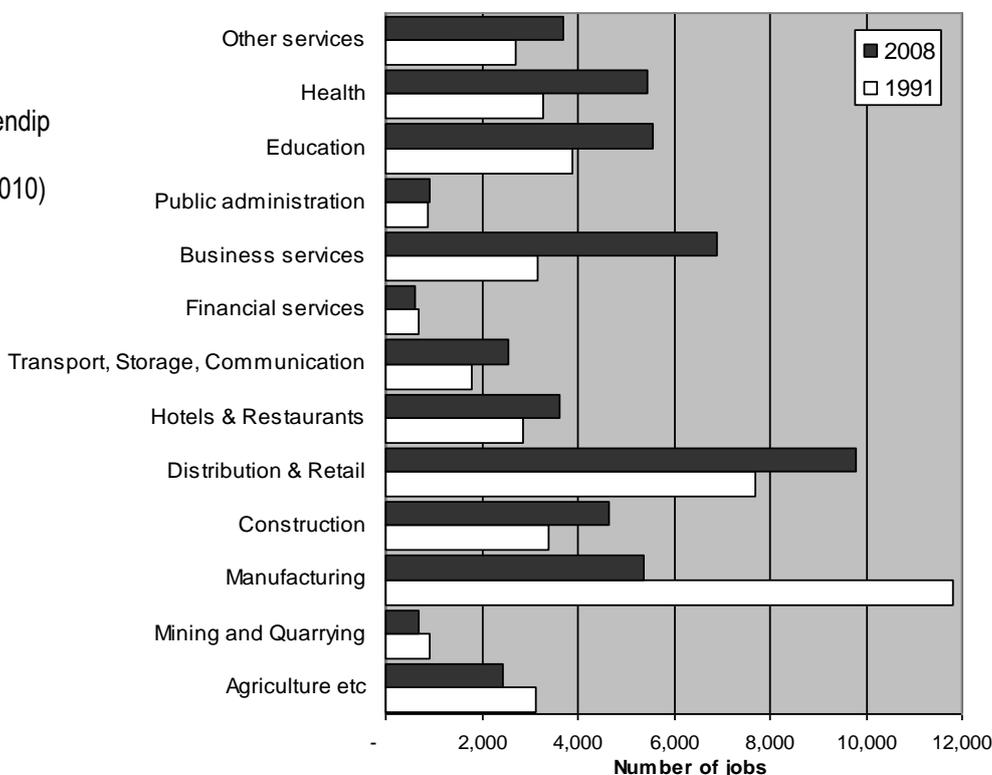
period to 2028. However, the supply of such sites is diminishing and so there will be a need for new development to take place on new greenfield sites.

2.32 As a result of Mendip’s geographic position and the large number of festivals that take place within its boundaries, the district is an area of considerable importance for the travelling community. Based upon the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (October 2010), there is a need for 93 additional residential pitches and 80 additional transit pitches over the period to 2020.

**Economy**

2.33 The economy of Mendip is made up predominantly of micro and small companies and is now largely service based having seen many of its traditional industries decline or move away from the area over the last 20 to 30 years. The diagram below shows the change that has taken place and that the greatest number of jobs are now in distribution, retailing, construction, health, education and business services (such as property management, information technology and professional services). Traditional manufacturing industry has markedly declined which has required some re-skilling of the workforce. Nevertheless, unemployment is low with a rate below the regional and national averages.

FIGURE 4:  
Change in the structure of  
Economic Sectors in the Mendip  
Economy 1991-2008  
(MDC/Oxford Economics, 2010)



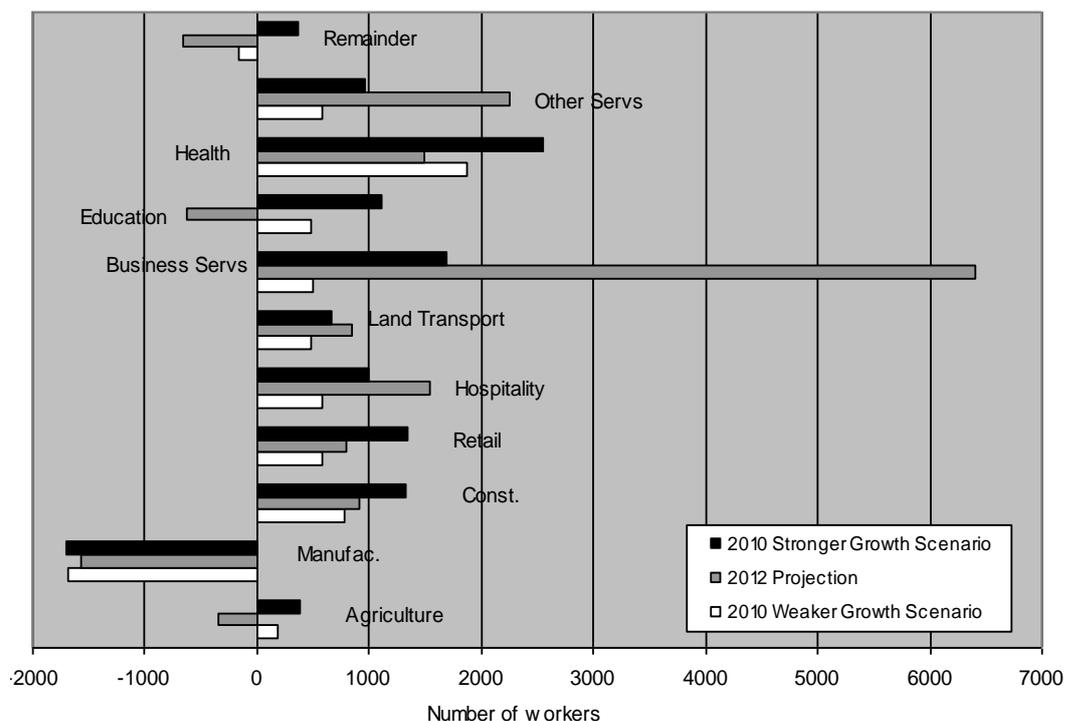
2.34 Another clear observation is that the local economy is a lower skilled, lower paid one, although it should be noted that this is common to economies across the South West as shown in the table below. Mendip wages are consistent with Somerset averages, about 5% lower than SW averages and 15-20% below the UK average. Whilst regional variations are to be expected, the most significant implication for Mendip is that it nestles up against the West of England where higher wages can be secured. The main effects of this are borne out in relatively higher housing prices and significant commuting patterns.

% of UK Average	2000	2008	2012	2020	2030
Mendip	85	80	81	80	79
South Somerset	88	87	83	81	79
Sedgemoor	79	77	77	75	72
Somerset	86	84	82	81	79
South West	89	90	87	86	85
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4a: Comparative Wage Levels (Heart of the West of England LEP/Oxford Economics, 2012)

- 2.35 Despite the prolonged downturn and recession precipitated by the global financial crisis of 2008-09, the longer term prospects for the local economy are good with growth predicted in many sectors. Unsurprisingly, employment in the Business Services sector is expected to grow more than any other with technical and scientific, information, communication and support services being the main drivers. This sector offers significant opportunity within Mendip as employees are less dependent on large scale centralised places of work. Such activities can be remotely based and as a result new business activity has the potential to bring higher value jobs which may reduce some of the commuting trends to places outside the district which have developed since the 1990s. In turn this may enable the local workforce to compete better in the local housing market. Providing improvements in broadband speeds will be crucial in facilitating this.

FIGURE 5:  
Projected Job Growth  
in Mendip to 2030 by  
Economic Sector  
(Oxford Economics/  
Mendip DC, 2012)



- 2.36 Retailing has emerged as a strong component of the local economy which is linked to health and competitiveness of the market towns. By 2030 retailing will be the second largest employment sector. Over the last decade there has been a change to the retailing landscape with large format retailing – particularly foodstores – changing the function of the traditional high street towards a specialist destination with a greater social leisure function. The council will continue to encourage town centre development that supports the high street.
- 2.37 The district's towns provide the best access to employment, services and shops. Glastonbury town centre satisfies the basic shopping needs of local people whereas the other centres offer a broader range and choice of goods. Street has a wider sub-regional offer due to the Clarks Village outlet centre. Nevertheless opportunities exist to improve shopping, particularly in Wells and Frome.
- 2.38 The close proximity of Glastonbury and Street means that together they provide enhanced access to services and together provide the second greatest concentration of jobs in the district. Shepton Mallet Town Centre remains the weakest of the district centres and new efforts to encourage regeneration of the town centre are proposed through a Neighbourhood Plan being advanced by the Town Council which intends to encourage key landowners to work more closely to reshape the offer of the town.
- 2.39 The other main growth sectors include Construction, Health and Other Services with the latter including a range of arts, entertainment and recreational activities. Hospitality (made up of hotels, restaurants) contributes to the wider tourism economy. Visitors to the district spend an estimated £161 million a year. 2010 data indicates that 3,570 jobs are directly related to tourism enterprises, however this understates the contribution made by pubs, restaurants and other visitor orientated businesses that also serve the local population. The district has a number of attractions of regional significance, including Glastonbury Tor and Abbey, Wookey Hole Caves and Wells Cathedral, and the high quality natural and built environments already act as a major draw to the area. One of the

biggest challenges for tourism in the district is to increase the quality on offer and to translate a large number of day visits to overnight stays and longer breaks.

- 2.40 The annual Glastonbury Festival at Pilton, near Shepton Mallet remains the largest regular music festival in the country attracting over 100,000 people. It is estimated to be worth £73m to the local economy. Nearby, at the Bath and West Showground, agricultural shows, exhibitions and other events draw even larger numbers throughout the year offering potential to tap into. The Royal Bath and West Society have set out a clear regeneration plan to modernise the site, offering improved conference space, exhibition buildings and aim to stimulate the site as a showcase of rural activities including food producers, outdoor activities and renewable energy alongside their core agricultural show role.

### **Accessibility & Transport**

- 2.41 Access to most services can be achieved in each of the five Mendip towns although the increasing scale of Frome as a town means that there is greater need to provide more effective intra urban public services as well as further extending foot and cycle links with the River Frome Corridor being seen as an opportunity in this respect. Delivering a wider network of walking and cycling routes is a goal in each of the towns based on community consultation. Across the district there are examples of community groups, supported by Sustrans, who are working towards delivery of multi-user paths utilising, where possible, former railway corridors.
- 2.42 Across rural areas the availability of services in villages is varied. Larger communities like Evercreech, Beckington and Chilcompton have a good range of services allowing people to meet a wide range of daily needs. In others, facilities are limited to the basics, namely a shop, primary school, pub and bus service whilst in the scattered remaining villages and hamlets services are less viable and common. Mendip's villages, like so many across the country, have experienced a decline in the number of facilities and services, such as village shops, pubs and Post Offices. However, it is fair to observe that in reaction to the centralised, homogenised offer of the main supermarkets there are an increasing number of farm shops and similar enterprises which are creating new markets around local and specialist produce.
- 2.43 Transport is critical for Mendip's residents, employers and providers of services. Frome is the only Mendip town to have a railway station and this provides good linkages to Bristol, Bath and the west Wiltshire towns along with services to Yeovil, Weymouth and London Paddington. There are frequent bus services between the towns and Wells has good onward connections to a variety of larger centres including Bristol, Bath and Taunton. Connections from Shepton Mallet to larger centres are less straightforward requiring journeys via Wells. Evening services are limited.
- 2.44 Rural services are varied. Where villages lie on or close to routes the bus can provide a reasonable alternative to the car. However, away from these villages services are less frequent and not suited to serving travel to work needs. The map below is a representation of accessibility by public transport to work in a nearby town before 10am on a weekday. Shaded areas illustrate zones where, with a short walk to a stop, a bus can get you to a town (inside or outside Mendip) whilst the white areas are those where standard public transport would not be feasible. Dial-a-ride services also cover the district but capacity is limited and oversubscribed. Service cuts since 2010 have maintained services to the villages where development is planned, however services and frequency to smaller communities is noted to have declined.

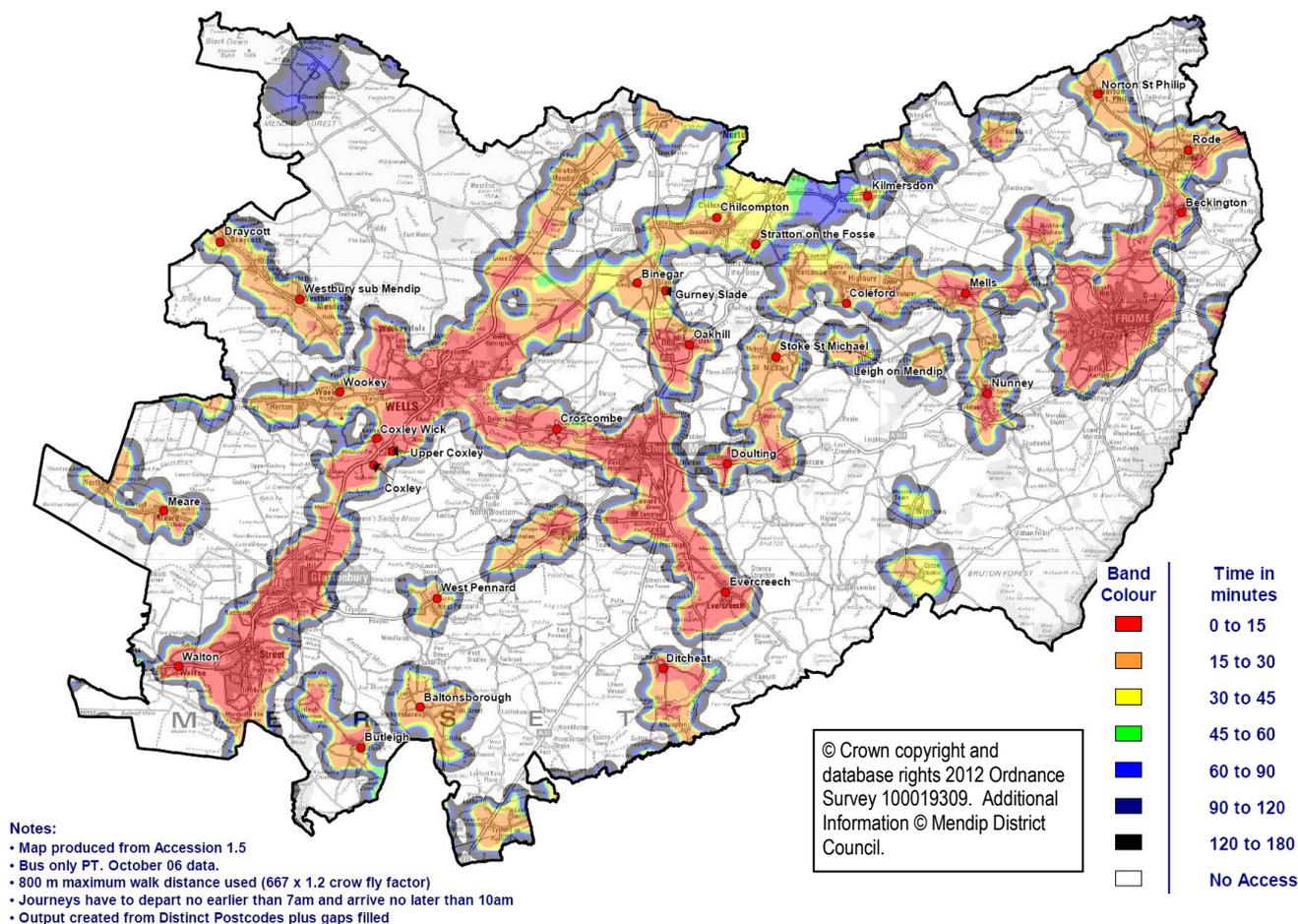


FIGURE 6: Accessibility by Public Transport to a Town before 10am on a weekday

- 2.45 Rates of car ownership are relatively high but, because of the multi-centric nature of the district, patterns of rural travel do not generate substantial congestion flow along specific road corridors. Mendip is not however, immune from congestion. Pinch points on the road network exist at Glastonbury using the A361, whilst at peak times travel within Frome can be delayed. Local views indicated that in Frome, travel outwards to Bath and west Wiltshire combined with a large amount of school traffic (on account of the distribution of schools) is the cause. Whilst observation bears this out, there is evidence that suggests that a high proportion of pupils in Frome walk to school.
- 2.46 In terms of priorities for highway investment, the eastern approach to Glastonbury via Chilwell Street and the Walton Bypass, west of Street remain important schemes and, at Frome, a western relief road to divert heavy goods vehicles approaching from the A362 which pass through the town remains a long held aspiration.
- 2.47 Parking provision has remained a sensitive issue with government policy in the last decade aimed at reducing parking provision to dissuade car use and stimulate the use of public transport, walking and cycling. Under provision associated with new residential development has stretched on-street parking in some towns, notably Frome and Glastonbury, whilst in Wells parking to serve the town centre remains a pressure point which an allocation in the last Local Plan has not delivered. Many views from consultation also highlighted parking charges as a barrier that town centre shops had to endure which supermarkets and retail parks did not.
- 2.48 Broadband coverage is an important means for people to work from home and access services from more remote locations as well as being a key form of infrastructure to stimulate the local economy. Away from the towns, coverage is currently poor and business interests highlight that without this key infrastructure, the ability of people to establish small businesses will be stifled. In 2011, a bid for specific funding by councils in Somerset and Devon to secure accelerated delivery of “unlimited broadband” delivering speeds of up to 100MB/sec was successful and the first stages of that rollout will begin in 2013.

### **Culture and Leisure**

- 2.49 The district's main centres have varied social, cultural and leisure facilities. Frome has a significant cultural offer with two theatres, a cinema, the Cheese and Grain - which offers a venue for live music - as well as a museum and a range of art establishments. Wells has a cinema and a range of local groups and societies, actively supported by sections of the community whilst at Street, Strode Theatre offers a performance venue associated with the college. Shepton Mallet is arguably less well provided for in terms of cultural venues with attempts to bring the Amulet theatre back into use being dogged by financial constraints.
- 2.50 Social leisure, in terms of pubs, bars, restaurants and other venues to provide people of all ages with places to meet, eat and revel is varied across the district. Across rural areas the village hall and local pubs remain at the heart of rural communities although the availability of cheap supermarket alcohol continues to erode viability. Within the towns the traditional pub still has a place however the range of activities sought has broadened to bars, restaurants and clubs which are common place in centres like Bath, Yeovil and Taunton. The town centres study suggests that there is scope for operators to find niches in Mendip although opportunities will depend upon trading conditions and the right site. On the face of it Street (with its Quaker roots that limited commercial leisure development) and Frome (with its proportionately greater population) appear to have the greatest potential to attract this type of investment as both are relatively underprovided for.
- 2.51 Open space and provision for sport is reasonable across the towns. Deficiencies exist in particular types of spaces as detailed in the Council's Play Strategy and Open Space Assessment although planned provision in line with future development can address these needs. The towns and villages have various sports clubs, including bowls, netball, cycling, golf, football, rugby and cricket, although in some cases, notably Street and Shepton Football Clubs and Wells Rugby Club, investment in facilities is needed to maintain support and encourage participation.
- 2.52 Physical sports infrastructure like sports halls, swimming pools and the like are under financial pressure. Local authority provision in Mendip, through managed contracts, remains the subject of review. Pressures exist and will arise for investment to refurbish or replace facilities and costs, particularly energy costs, for swimming facilities continue to rise. The conclusion of the review will make recommendations about how future provision should be best made across Mendip and the planning framework will facilitate that during the Local Plan Part II: Site Allocations process if required.
- 2.53 In terms of cultural heritage the district is blessed. Wells, with its ecclesiastical heart and fine townscapes, and Glastonbury, with the iconic Tor and Abbey steeped in history and legend, stand out but there is so much more. Frome, Shepton and Street also have important and impressive heritage with potential to further exploit in a sensitive manner. And, across rural Mendip, the caves at Wookey Hole, the Somerset Levels, the East Somerset Railway and the Mendip Hills exist within the varied landscapes that in themselves people like to visit, enjoy and walk.

**Summary: Key local issues forming the context for the Local Plan.****Environment:**

- Flooding & flood risk:
  - Significant parts of the district have a high risk of flooding which are predicted to worsen under the effects of climate change – particularly in response to more frequent heavy rainfall events.
  - Surface water drainage in all areas is and will be put under increasing pressure requiring more natural (as opposed to engineered) solutions to be more common.
- Renewable energy:
  - Energy costs are making alternative technologies more viable
  - Mendip has potential and grid connectivity for certain types of technologies
- Biodiversity and Landscapes:
  - A wealth of biodiversity and habitats within the district's diverse landscapes is designated nationally and internationally warranting clear measures to safeguard them and encourage their sustained management.
- Sustainable construction:
  - Buildings completed in the next 20 years may stand until 2126 – they must be adaptable, efficient and well built to meet the challenges of a low carbon future and the potential effects of climate change: new development needs to be built using more sustainable construction methods and higher standards adhered to, whilst opportunities to retrofit energy efficiency measures to existing buildings needs to be encouraged.
- Built environment:
  - Mendip has distinctive places defined by the variety of their setting, materials, history and by the way that people have and continue to live and work in them. Heritage should be preserved and new development should be promoted which adds to the richness of local diversity and creates a sense of place.
- Open space:
  - Protect open spaces, improve access to open space and provide new space to address existing deficiencies (both quality and quantity) and meet the needs of growing communities.

**People:**

- Ageing population:
  - people are living for longer generating more need for supported accommodation
  - Mendip remains an attractive area to move into for elderly groups and as a result becomes more expensive for younger people in turn affecting the ability of businesses to recruit
- Falling household size:
  - Social trends (including the ageing population) are resulting in average household sizes to fall. In Mendip it is expected to fall from 2.35 in 2006 to 2.16 persons by 2026 generating the need for over 4,000 new homes without even adding to the population.
- Education and training:
  - Ongoing need to renew school buildings and extend/relocated provision, particularly at Frome and Street.
  - Provision of new schools to meet growing populations
  - Improve and extend local vocational training opportunities.

**Housing:**

- House prices and affordability
  - Mendip saw a leap of over 60% in average house prices in the early 2000s – more than any in the West of England.
  - In 2006, a Mendip average of 61% of newly forming households could afford to buy or privately rent in the district – even within the cheapest sector of the market.
  - In some parts of the district this dips below 50% in the period to 2026
  - Typical ratios of average house prices to average incomes are over 8.
  - Most acute needs in Wells and rural Mendip although need in all areas warrants maximised affordable housing delivery

- In-migration pressures
  - Chronic undersupply of housing in major centres surrounding the district
  - Mendip is an attractive place for wealthier urban migrants to downsize/retire.
  - Impact upon families/communities social identities and ways of life
  - Affordable homes for local people first
- Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers:
  - Identified need for 93 residential pitches and 80 transit pitches to 2020.

### **Economy:**

- Restructuring of the local economy:
  - Need to diversify the economy following continued decline in manufacturing.
  - Provide higher skilled employment that improves local earnings and enables local people to compete for housing.
  - Overdependence on certain sectors limiting resilience in uncertain times.
  - High levels of entrepreneurial activity
- Commuting patterns:
  - Providing appropriate jobs at Frome to recapture a workforce travelling outside Mendip for employment
- Loss of employment land to other uses:
  - 30 hectares of employment land lost to other uses 1991-2007.
  - More effort needed to ensure that jobs are provided as part of redevelopment sites to limit growth in new travel demands to employment sites on town peripheries.
- Provision of new employment land and premises to meet business needs
  - Cautious estimates indicate need for around 80,000sq m of new employment space requiring up to 12ha of new land
  - Promoting flexible, adaptable and sustainable employment space more aligned to light industrial, service and commercial uses, particularly around town centres.
  - Small / flexibly financed incubator spaces to support business start-up
- Encourage and support the rural economy:
  - Farm diversification.
  - Home working and web based small business start-ups.
  - Limited availability of rural business premises.
- Maximising tourist potential in a manner sensitive to the area's natural, physical and historical assets.
- Vitality and Viability of town centres:
  - Complimentary retail development in Frome and Wells to draw trade back from major centres but in a manner that does not erode the strong and characteristic independent sectors
  - Ongoing need for regeneration of Shepton Mallet high street
  - Underdeveloped 'evening' economies in Frome and Street
  - Modern accessible space in town centre locations for commercial needs

### **Accessibility & Transport:**

- Loss of key facilities in villages:
  - Increase in unsustainable travel as villagers travel to other places to access services and facilities.
  - Affordability, falling household size and ageing population are combining to erode future school rolls in some villages with some risks of closure.
- Public Transport
  - High frequency/journey to work services along certain corridors serving towns and some villages but most rural services considered ineffective and unresponsive to commuter or leisure needs.
- Parking:
  - On street parking pressure has increased
  - Town centre parking considered scarce, although pressure most acute in Wells
- Telecommunications
  - Poor broadband limits many types of business that could exist in a rural setting.
  - Reason for optimism with Somerset wide scheme delivering 'superfast' services by 2015.

**Culture and Leisure**

- Shepton Mallet needs support to develop a clearer cultural identity as is present in the other towns.
- Frome and Street in particular have the potential to offer local people a better social experience which town centre development (in different ways) can help to accommodate.
- Open space deficiencies, both in terms of area and quality of useable spaces, can be addressed through new provision and investment
- Public and private investment in sports facilities needs to be coordinated through the planning process to enable new or improved facilities to be delivered

### 3. A VISION FOR MENDIP

- 3.1 This section sets out the Spatial Vision for Mendip, which along with the Strategic Objectives that follow it, aims to give a clear statement about how participants in the preparation process would like to see the area in the year 2028.

#### **A Vision of Mendip District In 2028**

- 3.2 The following vision provides a guide to users of the planning framework about the expectations we have for our area. It give some clear signals about the types of places we want to encourage support and enhance, the types of development we need and the key local issues we need to tackle. *It is set out to read as if it were written in 2028 by someone reflecting back on what has been achieved* through coordinated effort, private investment and the resultant way in which it may have benefited people.

#### ***A Vision of Mendip District in 2028***

*In 2028, Mendip remains a rural, multi-centred district of great diversity. Although still strongly influenced by larger centres outside the district for jobs, shopping and leisure, Mendip's market towns have continued to improve their services, facilities and amenities, enabling a higher proportion of peoples' needs to be met locally. In more rural parts of the district, access to basic goods and services has been secured with a number of villages offering an increasingly wide range of facilities to their surrounding communities. New development, primarily focused in the towns, has made efficient use of land but has been used to reinforce the distinctive character of each place.*

*In Frome and Wells, promoting a better balance between homes and jobs has been achieved. In Frome, economic development has been stimulated to improve opportunities for local employment, reducing the outflow of the workforce to Bath or places in the west of Wiltshire. Furthermore, the appeal of its town centre has been dramatically improved by major redevelopment which makes the most of the natural and cultural assets of the town. In Wells, a greater proportion of new housing has been designed to provide for working people, particularly those on lower incomes who are less able to access housing, despite having work in the city. In both of these places, new development has been sensitive to their landscape setting and cultural heritage. In Shepton Mallet, the potential of the town has been unlocked. Its heritage, trained workforce and central geographical position have been harnessed to generate higher incomes, provide community facilities and stimulate new vitality in the town centre. The close proximity of Street and Glastonbury has been exploited through sustainable transport links, enabling local people to gain the best of their complementary offers in terms of housing, employment, shopping and community facilities.*

*The diversification of the local economy is continuing, with high speed broadband access helping to counteract the limitations of the local transport network. New and improved education and vocational training facilities have improved the skills of the workforce, encouraging new and dynamic businesses on well designed sites in the towns.*

*These factors have also facilitated a rural renaissance, allowing small office/workshop based businesses and a new generation of local food producers, making use of older farm buildings and other structures, to employ local people in better paid roles. New rural housing has been primarily focused on the villages with the best range of services and facilities. Demand responsive rural transport services and sustainable transport links are also being developed to improve accessibility for rural residents to their nearest town.*

*The sensitive landscapes and environments of the Mendip Hills and Somerset Levels remain critical assets for wildlife and informal recreation, but alongside cultural attractions like Glastonbury Tor and Wells Cathedral, also attract tourism which is important to the local economy.*

## **Strategic Objectives Of The Mendip Local Plan**

- 3.3 The following Strategic Objectives now go on to draw out the key things that need to happen to provide an opportunity for parts of the Vision to become reality. The objectives are grouped under headings which link back to the Mendip [Sustainable Community Strategy](#).
- 3.4 Many other factors will have a bearing on the outcomes, if indeed this vision is the one that is achieved. However, provided changing circumstances are recognised and flexibility is built in, effective planning can influence the nature of the physical environment in which we live, work and enjoy ourselves and this in turn, little by little, can influence our use of that environment.

### **TO DIVERSIFY AND STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

1. Deliver suitable employment land and premises at the towns to enable forecast job growth potential to be realised, with additional provision in Frome to promote a better balance of jobs and economically active people.
2. Deliver a mixture of modern and flexible employment premises with an emphasis on supporting existing local firms, flexible/incubator space to support the establishment and growth of small businesses and office space that reinforces the vibrancy of our town centres.
3. Retain jobs on redundant employment sites through mixed use re-development.
4. Support proposals which improve and extend tourism in across the district.

### **TO EQUIP PEOPLE AND LOCAL BUSINESS WITH SKILLS THEY NEED**

5. Deliver new vocational training and skills development facilities at the towns including the expansion of Strode College in Street and expansion in secondary education facilities in Frome on a site which could also fulfil potential for further education opportunities.
6. Deliver new primary/first schools in Frome, Shepton Mallet and Street and a replacement of Crispin School in Street.

### **TO PROMOTE GREATER VITALITY AND VIABILITY IN OUR MARKET TOWNS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**

7. Develop and reinforce the distinctive identities and specialisms of the Mendip towns.
8. Concentrate the majority of jobs, housing, cultural activity and services within the district's towns.
9. Maintain and enhance town centres to make them attractive places to visit at any time of the day, and promote sensitive redevelopments, particularly in Wells and Frome, that make them the first choice shopping destination for the widest range of goods that their catchment areas can support.
10. Ensure that the rural population has better access to basic community facilities such as shops, schools and social venues, as well as housing to meet local needs.
11. Support and enable diversification of the rural economy in suitable and sustainable locations.

### **TO ENABLE PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THEIR STATE OF HEALTH**

12. Deliver additional or replacement healthcare facilities in Frome, Glastonbury and Shepton Mallet.
13. Maintain and extend the networks of open spaces and sports facilities, particularly in the towns, to improve their use as a means to promote more active lifestyles.

**TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE LEVELS OF DECENT HOUSING WHICH IS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL**

14. Deliver new housing within our towns at levels that maintain or, as in the case of Frome and Wells, improve the balance of jobs and economically active people and rural housing that is clearly related to identified local needs.
15. Maximise the delivery of affordable housing.
16. Deliver a range and mix of house types and sizes to meet the variety of local housing needs in both the open market and affordable housing sectors.
17. Provide for sites to accommodate the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities.

**TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY BY MEANS OTHER THAN THE PRIVATE CAR**

18. Ensure that the majority of new developments, particularly major traffic generators, are located to be accessible by a range of transport modes.
19. Create safe and convenient footpath and cycleway networks, ensuring that new development encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

**TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRIBUTE TO INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE GOALS**

20. Create well designed places that are safe and responsive to their surroundings, whether built, natural or cultural, whilst maintaining and enhancing the historic environment.
21. Deliver new development that makes efficient use of land, using sustainable methods of construction and utilising technologies that minimises their environmental running costs.
22. Protect sensitive wildlife habitats and valued landscapes from development and enhance biodiversity and local scenery through an integrated network of green spaces, corridors and protected areas.
23. Recognise and manage development in light of emerging climate change impacts with particular regard to the location of new development away from areas of flood risk and developments that would increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

3.5 The following sections now go on to set out policies and proposals aimed at delivering the stated vision and objectives through development within the district. The policies are split into three main groupings, namely:

- Section 4: A Spatial Strategy – *the broad locations, amounts and overall planning principles that will be pursued in parts of the district.*
- Section 5: Town Strategies – *five individual visions – along the same lines as that set out at the start of this section – set out a view of how each town is intended to evolve through the delivery of this planning framework. Subsequent policies and delivery frameworks for each town then set out what needs to happen and how this will be achieved.*
- Section 6: Development Management Policies – *these, in parallel with national planning policies, will provide development interests and the communities with a clear set of local directives to achieve the types of development the area needs, the delivery of appropriate supporting infrastructure and safeguards for valued local assets.*

3.6 As set out in the plan overview in section 1, there are a small number of Saved Policies carried forward from the 2002 Local Plan which relate to site specific issues. For convenience, these are set out in Appendix 1: Saved Policies and will be reviewed and normalised into the plan during the preparation of Part II – Site Allocations.



## 4.0 SPATIAL STRATEGY AND CORE POLICIES

4.1 The determination of what, where and how much development takes place in the Mendip district is set out in this section of the Local Plan and draws upon the vision set out in section 3.

### A Spatial Strategy for Mendip

4.2 [National Planning Policies](#) set out principles which define an overall framework which local planning authorities should use to define where best to focus growth. It is the role of the Plan Making process to use these principles to outline what is the most appropriate means to plan for the area and set this out in a Spatial Strategy. In simple terms, a Spatial Strategy broadly defines where most development will be focused and what scale of development is appropriate in identified parts of the area.

4.3 Taking these cues from national policies and drawing on what has been agreed in the Vision for Mendip set out previously, the broad principles Mendip will apply are as follows:<sup>5</sup>

- The majority of new development should be focused in the towns where there are a range of employment opportunities, services, community facilities and other infrastructure. Where necessary local infrastructure will need to be supplemented to meet the needs of the community and local economy.
- Outside of the main towns, appropriate levels of provision for new development should be made in rural areas to meet local needs and to sustain the rural economy. Again the emphasis is upon delivering the majority of this development in the settlements where people can access local employment or where residents and businesses can make use of available services.
- In smaller communities that have more limited community facilities, small scale development aimed at delivering affordable homes and meeting the specific needs of rural business is considered appropriate.
- Development in the open countryside should be strictly controlled.

4.4 The following subsections now examine each group of settlement types in turn.

#### **The Mendip Towns**

4.5 Within Mendip District, the towns of **Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet**, the city of **Wells** and the village of **Street** all perform traditional market town roles offering employment, services, cultural and community facilities as well as high street shopping to varying degrees. As the principal centres in the district they offer the best opportunities to deliver sustainable new housing and economic development to meet the needs of the growing population.

4.6 In respect of housing growth, the [Housing Distribution Technical Paper](#) has considered the relative needs of these five settlements examining expected population growth and prospects for employment growth, labour market dynamics, as well as affordable housing need and the availability of brownfield land. In light of these aspects and in response to the vision statements drawn up for each town, the broad level of housing development and employment land requirements have been determined as set out in Core Policies 2 and 3.

4.7 The towns of **Radstock** and **Midsomer Norton** lie on the northern fringe of Mendip district. The main built extent of these towns lie in Bath and North East Somerset but some built development exists within Mendip. This Local Plan, whilst remaining flexible about development opportunities on land abutting the towns, does not make any planned provision for development, particularly for housing. However, Mendip District Council will work with Bath and North East Somerset Council to consider the development needs of the towns. Where the specific development needs of the Radstock or Midsomer Norton urban area may be best met on land in Mendip District Council's administrative area (in light of robust consideration of all available development options available) the council may consider making allocations of land as part of its Site Allocations process.

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<sup>5</sup> More detailed consideration of these issues is set out in the Technical Paper "Housing Distribution Options for Mendip" (September 2012)

## Rural Mendip

- 4.8 For rural Mendip, the Council has drawn together a broad range of intelligence<sup>6</sup> related to all of its villages and many of its hamlets, as well as taking regular soundings from parish councils, to understand their character and roles.
- 4.9 As set out in the Vision for Mendip, the rural communities are diverse with some being able to meet most everyday needs, including some employment needs, whilst at the other end of the spectrum some consist only of a handful of dwellings and effectively operate as dormitory communities where residents are required to travel for almost all their daily needs.
- 4.10 In considering how best to provide for the localised needs in rural areas, the council has concluded that there are two principal tiers of settlements:
- **Primary Villages** – those villages with at least a primary school, a community venue (either a pub or a village hall), a shop able to meet a range of daily needs and a ‘journey to work’ bus service.<sup>7</sup> Here new residents can meet many of their daily household needs locally and have a realistic transport alternative to the private car in order to access other services and employment.
  - **Secondary Villages** - those villages with some, but not all, of the basic facilities available in the primary villages but that all lie within transport corridors where ‘journey to work’ bus services operate. On account of their relative accessibility to nearby centres, new development in these villages, albeit of a smaller scale envisaged in the Primary Villages, will enable local needs to be satisfied closer to where that need arises.
- 4.11 In all **other villages and hamlets**, which have few or no community facilities and where residents are typically reliant on the private car to meet all their everyday needs, new development of any scale is unlikely to stimulate the provision of new services. Nevertheless, in exceptional circumstances, as allowed for in national policy and Core Policy 4, these villages may be appropriate places to meet specifically identified local housing needs (as allowed for by Development Policy 12) or dwellings to accommodate rural workers. Economic development appropriate to the scale and infrastructure available locally may also be appropriate. It should also be noted that Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity for all communities to plan for their own needs should they be so minded so long as the proposals made broadly conform with the policies of this document.
- 4.12 In the **Open Countryside**, in line with national policy, new development will be strictly controlled. Core Policy 4 (Rural Development) sets out the overall approach which the council will take in the rural area beyond that which is set out in the Spatial Strategy (Core Policy 1).

<sup>6</sup> In a document called “Rural Settlement Role and Function Study” (2009)

<sup>7</sup> A bus service that enables residents to arrive in an employment centre (i.e. one of the 5 Mendip towns or other major centres outside the district) by 9am and then return them home after 5pm.

## Core Policy 1: Mendip Spatial Strategy

All new development is expected to contribute positively towards delivering components of the vision for the district and the associated strategic objectives.

1. To enable the most sustainable pattern of growth for Mendip district:
  - a. The majority of development will be directed towards the five principal settlements of Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Street and Wells to reinforce their roles as market towns serving their wider rural catchments. Specific proposals for each place are set out in Core Policies 6-10.
  - b. In the rural parts of the district, new development that is tailored to meet local needs will be provided for in:
    - i. Primary Villages – These villages offer key community facilities (including the best available public transport services) and some employment opportunities making them the best placed to accommodate most new rural development.
 

Baltonsborough	Crocombe	Nunney
Beckington	Ditcheat	Rode
Butleigh	Draycott	Stoke St Michael
Chewton Mendip	Evercreech	Westbury sub Mendip
Chilcompton	Meare/Westhay	
Coleford	Mells	
    - ii. Secondary Villages – These villages offer some services and the best available public transport services making them appropriate for development aimed at meeting more localised housing, business and service needs.
 

Binegar/Gurney Slade	Kilmersdon	Walton
Coxley	Leigh on Mendip	West Horrington
Doulting	The Lydfords	West Pennard
Faulkland	Norton St Philip	Wookey
Holcombe	Oakhill	Wookey Hole
    - iii. In other villages and hamlets, development may be permitted in line with provisions set out in Core Policy 4 to meet specifically identified local needs within those communities.
  - c. Development in the open countryside will be strictly controlled but may exceptionally be permitted in line with the provisions set out in Core Policy 4: Sustaining Rural Communities.
2. The scale of housing and employment development within the settlement tiers is set out within the tables associated with Core Policies 2 and 3.
3. In identifying land for development the Local Plan's emphasis is on maximising the appropriate re-use of previously developed sites and other land within Development Limits as defined on the Proposals Map, and then at the most sustainable locations on the edge of the identified settlements. Any proposed development outside the Development Limits, will be strictly controlled and will only be permitted where it benefits economic activity or extends the range of facilities available to the local communities.
4. Development is required to provide infrastructure in accordance with the infrastructure needs for each town as defined in Core Policies 6-10, the accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan or other needs as they arise. Infrastructure to be secured from development within rural communities will be defined as part of the Site Allocations DPD process.

# KEY DIAGRAM

## Mendip Spatial Strategy

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Council

**RURAL MENDIP** CORE POLICY 4  
**1780 Homes, about 2000 Jobs**

- Focus housing in villages with best services and facilities
- Support appropriately scaled economic development
- Enable Affordable housing to meet local needs
- Safeguard existing and stimulate new community facilities

- **Primary Villages**  
Villages with key services
- ◆ **Secondary Villages**  
Villages with some key services

**WELLS**  
 CORE POLICY 10  
**1450 Homes about 1500 Jobs**

- Housing development to support the workforce and deliver affordable homes.
- Safeguard heritage and setting of the city

**GLASTONBURY**  
 CORE POLICY 7  
**1050 Homes about 1000 Jobs**

- Balanced growth
- Making best use of scarce unconstrained land

**STREET**  
 CORE POLICY 8  
**1300 Homes, about 850 Jobs**

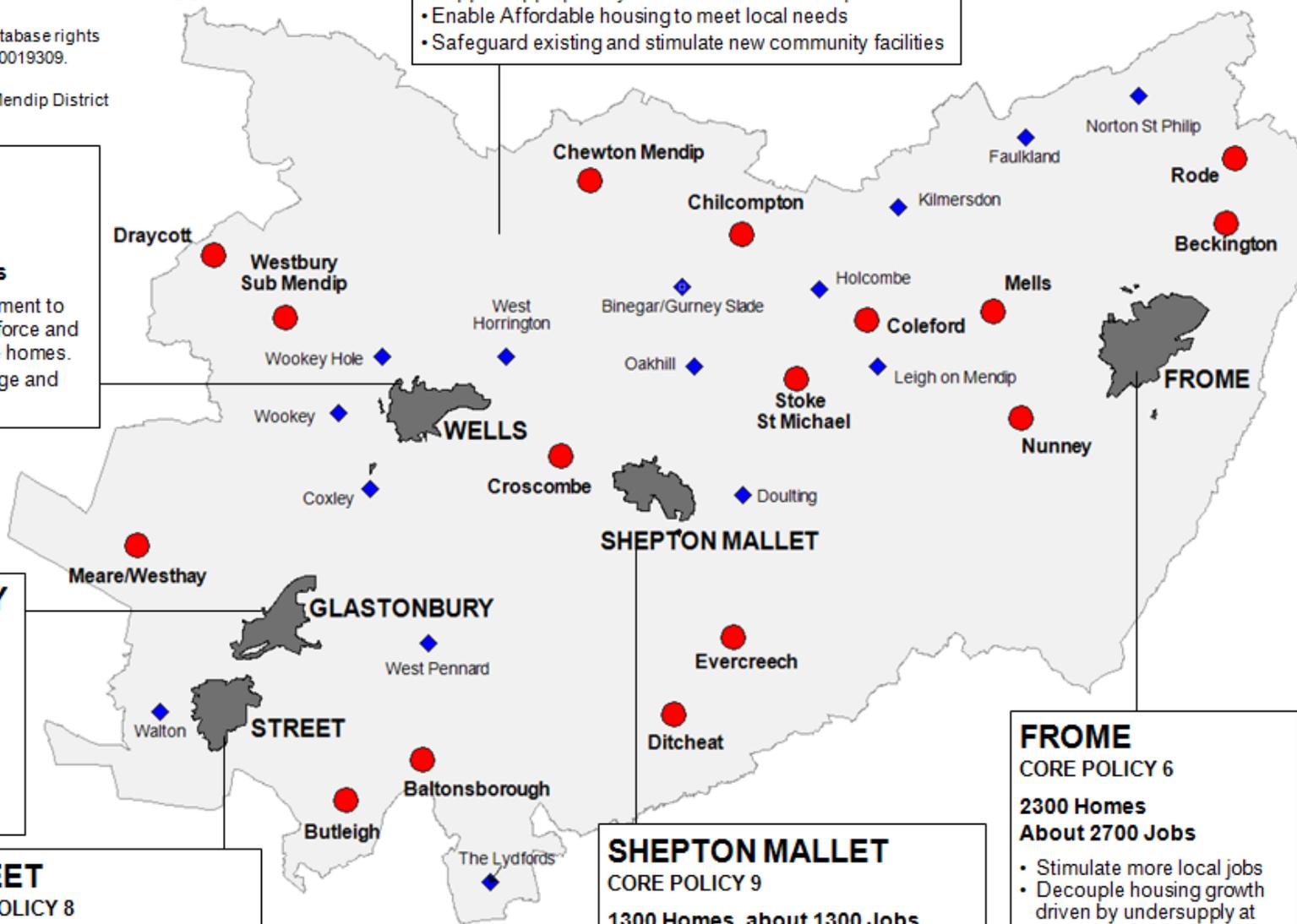
- Diversification of the local economy
- Investment in education facilities

**SHEPTON MALLET**  
 CORE POLICY 9  
**1300 Homes, about 1300 Jobs**

- Balanced growth
- Town Centre Regeneration
- Economic Development at Bath & West

**FROME**  
 CORE POLICY 6  
**2300 Homes About 2700 Jobs**

- Stimulate more local jobs
- Decouple housing growth driven by undersupply at Bath.
- Town centre redevelopment
- Investment in primary and secondary education



- 4.13 The Council is mindful that there is the potential for the availability of services and facilities within rural communities to change over time which may act to undermine their inherent sustainability. Regular monitoring of services and facilities, particularly the key community facilities, will be reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. Where communities gain or lose key facilities their status within the settlement classification in Core Policy 1 will be reviewed enabling a more appropriate application of policy.

### Application

- 4.14 The Council intends to continue to operate its planning framework by defining Development Limits for those places identified in the Spatial Strategy. Development Limits are clear boundaries which effectively define the principal built form of settlements where most development is to be focused in line with the Spatial Strategy. Within these development limits, as set out in subsequent policies, most forms of development will be acceptable in principle subject to their compliance with other policies in the Mendip Local Plan, relevant parts of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) or any other material considerations. Where exceptional development is considered in communities unnamed in the policy (under Core Policy 1, section 1) a) ii), any site should be broadly adjacent to the existing built extent of the community concerned and have regard to the surrounding landscape setting, as well as being compliant with national and local planning policies.
- 4.15 Until reviewed in the Local Plan Part II: Site Allocations, the Council will carry forward from the Mendip District Local Plan (2002) the existing Development Limits for those settlements named in the Spatial Strategy.

### Mitigating the effects of Development: Strategic Level Impacts arising from Sustainability Appraisal

- 4.16 In completing the formally prescribed Sustainability Appraisal of the development scenarios a number of approaches were rejected as a result of significant negative impacts. Of those options remaining most had some residual impacts that would need to be addressed through policy making to mitigate against their effects. The table below identifies impacts and mitigation measures to address them which will be relevant for development proposals in the district, or those where a specific localised issue was apparent.
- 4.17 In many of the instances below, the intentions have been incorporated into the Town Strategies (section 5) or into the intentions of Development Management Policies (section 6). However, as a checklist, all proposals should be assessed against this list of strategic impacts to determine their direct effects or in combination effects alongside other proposals.

Issue	Most applicable	To be addressed and monitored through
Sustainable urban drainage on brownfield development sites needed in all areas to limit flood risk and reliance on costly engineered drainage	District wide, esp. Shepton Mallet	Policy DP7 requires new development to maximise opportunities from SUDS. (Relevant indicator for DP7)
Pressure to release employment land for housing will be arrested by requiring mixed use development on former employment sites	District Wide	Policy DP20 tackles this issue. (Relevant indicator for DP20)
Brownfield development will have more limited potential to deliver affordable housing	District Wide	Contribution for affordable housing from all development as part of Policy DP12 (Relevant indicator for DP12)
Provide additional recreational open space alongside development near to the Somerset Levels & Moors SPA to limit disturbance to wintering waterbirds and bird breeding from increased population	Glastonbury, Street	Policies CP7 and CP8 include the need for strategic scale open space to address this issue

Issue	Most applicable	To be addressed and monitored through
Growth in water and energy use to be addressed through delivery of development with efficient fixtures and fittings	District Wide	Policy DP7 requires energy and water efficiency. (Relevant indicator for DP7 and Code for Sustainable Homes)
Landscape, biodiversity and heritage impacts must be key considerations in the selection of sites for development	District Wide	Site Allocations DPD process will include Sustainability Appraisal of landscape, biodiversity and heritage impacts to inform site selection.
Better collaborative planning between Street and Glastonbury to deliver shared benefits	Glastonbury, Street	Addressed within CP7: Glastonbury Town Strategy and CP8: Street Parish Strategy. Potential for a Joint Neighbourhood Plan over the medium term.
Localised flood risk must be carefully assessed in rural areas during site selection	Villages	Use of SFRA and EA Flood Map to fully inform Site Allocations DPD Sustainability Appraisal
Information received from the environment agency has highlighted that nutrient discharge from sewage works is affecting water quality and ecology. Under the EU Water Framework Directive there will be an obligation to address this problem.	District Wide	Encouragement of Wessex Water – supported by Env. Agency - to invest in improved sewage treatment to serve proposed new development

Table 5: Recognised issues arising from the Sustainability Appraisal of the proposed Mendip Spatial Strategy.

## Supporting the Provision of Housing

- 4.18 Having established the broad overall spatial strategy, the Local Plan must next define the overall level of housing and employment development which will be apportioned to each place. This Local Plan is making provision for the period 2006-2028.

### **Establishing Local Housing Targets**

- 4.19 Housing provision is a central element in planning for the future of the area. In Mendip district, the housing market is complex with pressures arising from commuters to larger centres outside the district, those moving into the area (including a substantial proportion of the retired and pre-retired age groups) and the local population, including much of the workforce.
- 4.20 In the updated [Housing Distribution Technical Paper](#) (July 2012), prepared to inform this Local Plan, the amount of housing appropriate to each town has been determined through an assessment of population, employment growth, housing need, land supply, environmental limitations and in light of other place based factors which will be discussed further in the town strategies. The following paragraphs and tables summarise the essence of the Local Housing Target setting process:

*A number of options were developed reflecting different pressures arising from population growth, employment growth, affordable housing need and land supply. Each option was then subjected to Sustainability Appraisal which sought to identify benefits and drawbacks associated with the levels of development proposed under each. Those raising significant negative impacts were set aside. Following this scoping exercise, each town and the rural area was assigned a broad range based on the numbers set out in the remaining options. Local considerations, including issues arising from the vision, identified constraints, land supply, were then applied to each set of numbers to determine where in the range the level of provision should be fixed. The table below summarises the issues and sets out the local target established.*

	<b>Range</b>	<b>Issues</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>Frome</b>	1901-2379	<i>Need to tackle commuting flows out of the town High affordable housing need High level of brownfield land Strong employment growth potential</i>	<b>2,300</b>
<b>Glastonbury</b>	683-1190	<i>Employment growth Town is environmentally constrained Brownfield land supply Relationship with Street</i>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Street</b>	856-1670	<i>More jobs than homes Affordable housing need Economic diversification needed Relationship with Glastonbury</i>	<b>1,300</b>
<b>Shepton Mallet</b>	787-1650	<i>Many more jobs than homes Economic potential – although dependent upon Bath &amp; West Showground regeneration</i>	<b>1,300</b>
<b>Wells</b>	1452-1594	<i>Acute affordable housing need Many jobs, but lower level of economically active people Strong economic potential Risk of harm to important city character</i>	<b>1,450</b>
<b>Rural</b>	927-2545	<i>Meeting rural housing needs Safeguarding the countryside</i>	<b>1,780</b>
<b>Proposed Mendip District Housing Requirement</b>			<b>9,130</b>

Table 6: Summary of the exercise used to determine local housing targets

### **Housing at the Mendip Towns**

- 4.21 Having established appropriate development levels for each town it is necessary to consider the supply of land available to deliver the housing. The table below sets out the supply picture at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 and draws conclusions about the need to identify land to accommodate housing development. Decisions about housing provision in rural areas will be made in the Local Plan Part II: Site Allocations document in line with Core Policy 1.

	Frome	G'bury	Street	Shepton Mallet	Wells	
Housing Requirement (as concluded in Table 6 above)	2300	1000	1300	1300	1450	
Less homes built 1/4/06-31/3/11	607	387	359	460	162	
Less homes with granted planning permission at 31/3/11	431	244	408	112	230	
Less yield of housing from sites identified in the SHLAA <sup>8</sup>	Identified sites with existing town Development Limits	724	245	18	122	519
	Windfall allowance (21-2028)	187	93	93	93	93
<b>Residual Requirement</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>446</b>	
Need for a Strategic Site(s) to be identified in the Local Plan	Yes	No (see below)	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Table 7: Mendip District Housing Land Supply at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2011

- 4.22 The table concludes that in each town, to a greater or lesser degree, expected sources of urban land alone will not be sufficient to satisfy the identified requirements. The key diagrams associated with the Town Strategies (associated with Core Policies 6, 8,9 and 10) identify Strategic Sites on new greenfield land which consultation and evidence have indicated most appropriate to consider for development. These are differentiated into two types, namely:
- Development areas which are allocated to meet the needs of the plan period to 2028
  - Future Growth Areas on adjacent land which would represent logical extensions for subsequent plan periods, or offer flexibility in the latter part of the plan period if housing supply from other sources does not materialise or if other evidence warrants the further release of land. Any release of additional land will be made through a future Site Allocations exercise.
- 4.23 In order to encourage a longer term and proactive view in planning for new development, the Council will require the production of and formal adoption as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) of Development Briefs and Masterplans for the Strategic Sites. These documents will inform the development of sites and, where appropriate consider - over timescales beyond the current plan period - where strategic scale infrastructure and community facilities would be appropriate.
- 4.24 With the exception of sites at Wells (as detailed in Core Policy 10) the council does not consider that there is a need to phase the release of sites.
- 4.25 In Glastonbury, there are a number of matters to balance up, namely;
- a) land supply from committed and identified sites in the SHLAA falls marginally short of that required.
  - b) the town is heavily constrained by landscape, environmental and flood risk constraints
  - c) there are competing demands for the use of scarce developable land for employment use
  - d) the close relationship of the town to nearby Street which forms part of the same housing sub-market area and which has less constrained land supply

In light of the uncertainties surrounding these issues, the Council will, through the Local Plan (Part II) - Site Allocations process, allocate modest additional greenfield land to address any shortfall in housing land supply that is identified at that time.

<sup>8</sup> This data is drawn from the [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#) (SHLAA). The latest update of this has a base date of 31/3/2011 and an update to 31/3/2013 will be available in mid 2013.

### **Housing for Rural Communities**

- 4.26 In considering the level of housing to plan for it was concluded that the Council should provide only for locally arising population growth encapsulated in a development level of 1,780 homes. This level of housing does not cater for the demands arising from those wanting to move to the area which, based on 2009 household projections, amounted to 4,320 new homes. To provide for this higher level of housing would dramatically alter the character of communities, generate growth in unsustainable travel, as well as putting pressure on limited local infrastructure. The overall compromise made was that whilst new housing was to be provided, projected demand for it would be in excess of what is planned for.
- 4.27 Subsequent 2010 household projections reduced the locally arising growth component to 1,190 new homes and the full household growth (including immigration) to 2,545 homes. The 2012 Housing Distribution Technical Paper considers the issues involved, concluding that to fulfil the 2,545 figure would impose levels of development on villages that would be out of scale, yet to reduce provision to 1,190 using the previously justified locally arising needs figure would mean that legitimate needs would not be satisfied for the remainder of the plan period. In conclusion, and reflecting the intensive consultation with rural parishes involved in agreement of the initial 1,780 figure, the council has concluded that this level strikes a balance between satisfying all locally arising needs as well as almost half of the demands expected to arise from in-migration.
- 4.28 The acknowledged gap of around 700 homes between the proposed 1,780 and the full projected household growth of 2,545 means that there will be a mismatch between rural supply and demand. The implications and mitigatory measures proposed are considered in relation to Core Policy 4.
- 4.29 Having established a reasoned level of provision for rural Mendip, the consideration is now given to how the planned 1,780 homes would be distributed across the numerous and varied rural settlements within the district. From a national policy angle, the aim is to deliver a sustainable pattern of development which allows new households access to services and some form of transport choice to larger centres but in a manner which allows housing need to be met as locally as possible. At a local level, a lengthy and intensive period of engagement with Parish Councils concluded that two broad principles should be applied in distributing new rural development:
- a. That new development should be located in villages with certain key services, including the best available public transport services.
  - b) Levels of new development in each place should be appropriate to their existing scale and have regard to environmental constraints.
- 4.30 In developing and revising this approach it was concluded that there are 16 villages (termed Primary Villages in Core Policy 1) which had core facilities – namely a primary school, a shop meeting a range of daily needs, a meeting place (whether a public house or a village hall) and a public transport service that allowed people to at least reach a nearby town by 9am and return them to their village after 5pm. These villages would be the first places to consider when distributing planned rural housing in the Local Plan. Initially 80 homes were earmarked to each but, in response to the second principle set out in the preceding paragraph, the council has limited growth to no more than 15% over the existing housing stock, alongside identified local constraints, to tailor development levels in each community to an appropriate scale.
- 4.31 A further group of 15 villages (termed Secondary Villages in Core Policy 1), had the same public transport service but only two of the remaining core facilities. Hence, where the rural development was unable to be accommodated in the Primary Villages (predominantly on account of the excessive scale of new homes proposed when compared to the existing stock of dwellings) these Secondary Villages were considered well placed to accommodate a more modest amount of new homes, again applying the 15% upper limit. The inclusion of these villages has also allowed local housing needs to be met more locally.
- 4.32 The tables below summarise the conclusions of the exercise including the contribution that development since 2006 has made towards the identified requirements for each village. Full details of the methodology used are set out in section 6 of the 2012 Housing Distribution Technical Paper.

<b>Primary Villages</b>	<b>Proposed Village Requirement</b>	<b>Completions / consents granted (1/4/2006–31/3/2012)</b>	<b>Residual Level of development to be planned for as at 31/3/2012</b>
Baltonsborough	45	18	27
Beckington	55	12	43
Butleigh	45	16	29
Chewton Mendip	15	4	11
Chilcompton	70	78	-
Coleford	70	36	34
Croscombe	35	3	32
Ditcheat	25	5	20
Draycott	65	29	36
Evercreech	70	36	34
Meare/Westhay	70	83	-
Mells	10	4	6
Nunney	55	1	54
Rode	65	30	35
Stoke St Michael	45	9	36
Westbury sub Mendip	50	10	40
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>437</b>

Table 8: Proposed Housing Requirements for Primary Villages 2006-2028

<b>Secondary Villages</b>	<b>Proposed Village Requirement</b>	<b>Completions / consents granted (1/4/2006–31/3/2012)</b>	<b>Residual Level of development to be planned for as at 31/3/2012</b>
Binegar/Gurney Slade	40	7	33
Coxley	40	22	18
Doulting	15	4	11
Faulkland	20	5	15
Holcombe	40	42	-
Kilmersdon	15	14	1
Leigh on Mendip	25	10	15
The Lydfords	25	2	23
Norton St Philip	40	80	-
Oakhill	40	43	-
Walton	40	31	9
West Horrington	15	11	4
West Pennard	25	5	20
Wookey	40	33	7
Wookey Hole	15	15	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>156</b>

Table 9: Proposed Housing Requirements for Secondary Villages 2006-2028

- 4.33 The total housing proposed in the Primary and Secondary Villages amounts to 1,225 homes. This leaves 555 of the 1,780 total earmarked for the rural area. 441 of these already arise from dwellings granted consent or built in other rural locations between 2006 and 2012. The remaining 114 are currently unallocated, however it is expected that further consents will be granted outside of the villages identified in this Local Plan prior to its adoption. Furthermore, opportunities will continue to exist within existing Development Limits and on well related brownfield sites and so a limited degree of overprovision can be expected. Monitoring of completions and consents will seek to ensure supply is managed within the overall framework of this Local Plan.
- 4.34 In terms of how the Council will promote the delivery of the proposed housing requirements in each place. The following principles will be followed:
- In villages where the residual level of development is less than 15 homes the Council will, with regard to the supply of development land within existing development limits, assume that housing supply will be delivered from small site development within defined Development Limits during the remaining period to 2028. Where land supply suggests this is not achievable,

small adjustments of existing Development Limits will be made in the Local Plan Part II: Site Allocations process. Recommendations about areas of land to include will be based upon views expressed by the community where there has been an informed and objective consideration of the relative merits and drawbacks of sites promoted through the [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#) (SHLAA).

- b. In villages where the residual level of development is in excess of 15 homes, the Council will, with regard to the supply of development land within existing development limits, allocate sites and/or make adjustments to existing Development Limits to deliver the majority of the residual housing requirement through the Local Plan Part II: Site Allocations process. Recommendations about areas of land to include will be based upon views expressed by the community where there has been an informed and objective consideration of the relative merits and drawbacks of sites promoted through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).
  - c. The selection of sites within the Local Plan Part II: Site Allocations process will be informed by the relative benefits and disbenefits of sites and in line with relevant national planning policies, the Local Plan, site specific Sustainability Appraisal work and any local material considerations.
  - d. In all circumstances the Council will ensure that new land released makes appropriate contributions to the delivery of local infrastructure or contributes to wider strategic objectives defined as being relevant to the community concerned or the wider locality. In all cases this will include affordable housing provision in line with Development Policy 11.
- 4.35 It should be noted that the Local Plan Part II: Site Allocations process will not begin until mid 2013 and is unlikely to be concluded until mid 2015 based on the current procedural requirements. The residual levels of development in each village will be monitored to ensure that when allocations come to be made all recently completed and consented development is accounted for.

### **Affordable Housing**

- 4.36 Affordability in Mendip's housing market has worsened considerably in the last decade. The [West of England Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#) (2009) considered a range of measures in the broader housing market. A key figure in the tables prepared for Mendip's sub-housing market areas was that even during the best market conditions (higher supply, shallower rises in house prices) only 61% of newly forming households would be able to afford to buy or take on market rents for housing across the district as a whole. In Frome and Shepton Mallet the levels were marginally less with the best situation allowing up to 65% of new households to compete in the housing market. In Wells, for much of the next decade, less than half of new households will be able to reasonably access market housing. Updated information in a [Housing Needs Assessment](#) produced for the Council in 2012 indicates that the situation is not improving despite recent falls in house prices. Using a slightly different methodology it records that the proportion of newly forming households unable to afford market housing increased to 75% in 2012.
- 4.37 A supply of affordable housing is therefore important yet chronic undersupply already ensures that a backlog of around 1,224 households are on the Council's waiting lists in 2012. If all those projected to be in housing need notified the Council to join the waiting list, that figure could increase by 522 to 743 per year until 2016, depending upon differing assumptions used.
- 4.38 Since 2010, the government has introduced a range of changes to the funding and manner in which it sees housing needs being met including a proposed cap on housing benefit, replacement of properties in "social rented"<sup>9</sup> tenures with new ones in an "affordable rented" tenure and indication that the private rented sector can be used to address a higher proportion of need. Such measures may address those households whose incomes fall just short of being able to compete in the open housing market, however in Mendip, where median incomes fall short of that needed

<sup>9</sup> Affordable Housing is an umbrella term for a range of tenures of housing. Social Rented properties are made available at rent levels typically below 30% of market rents. Affordable Rented properties are typically let at 75% of market rents. There are other tenures within a grouping called Intermediate Housing where rents or purchase prices are set anywhere between 70 and 95% of market rents. Finally, Shared Ownership/Shared Equity/Homebuy properties are made available on a part buy, part rent basis.

for secure even “affordable rented” properties it remains unclear how far these measures will tackle the scale of the problem indicated by the research referred to above. To compound the problem further, the economic downturn since 2009 has seen development viability decline in turn limiting the proportion of affordable housing able to be negotiated on the back of market housing.

- 4.39 Given that the proposed 9,130 housing requirement for Mendip as a whole would deliver around 415 homes per year to 2028 it is clear that the problem is not one that can be fully solved through the level of development considered appropriate in the previous section. The council continues to work closely with Housing Associations to facilitate their affordable housing delivery programmes. Ultimately the Council is open to negotiation about any scheme that can secure and make available housing to meet identified needs.
- 4.40 Against this background, the Council will continue to maximise, as far as development viability can bear, the delivery of affordable homes. As a result Core Policy 2 sets out the Council’s intention to secure affordable housing, or a contribution in lieu on small sites. The mechanics of these requirements are addressed in more detail in Development Policies 11 and 12.

### **Housing Density**

- 4.41 The council does not intend to impose a rigid housing density policy for new residential developments. The density of development should primarily be established through careful consideration of local context, local character and specific site conditions having regard to matters set out in Development Policies 1-10.
- 4.42 Nevertheless, the Council is mindful that land is efficiently used in order that the need for new greenfield land for development is minimised. Hence, as broad guidelines, the net density of new housing development (i.e. the developable area excluding roads, footpaths and other public areas) should aim to be equal to or greater than the levels set out below.
- Sites within towns - 30-40 dwellings per hectare
  - Sites in rural areas - 25-30 dwellings per hectare
- 4.43 Issues arising from higher density development will be managed by Development Management Policies, notably those related to design, amenity and environmental protection. Where an application for development is of a density significantly lower than the guidelines above without reason that is obviously apparent from the local context, applicants will be expected to specifically explain their approach in their Design and Access Statement.

### **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation**

- 4.44 Government has made it clear that provision to meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities must be planned for through the Local Plan process as set out in a separate policy document called “[Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#)” published alongside the National Planning Policy Statement in March 2012. In essence it sets out that where councils do not adequately plan for these needs, planning applications for sites in any location (subject to conformity with national and local planning policies) may be granted on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.
- 4.45 The Council intends to plan for the level of provision set out in the most current [Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment](#) as set out in the text supporting Development Policy 15 when it undertakes its Local Plan Part II: Site Allocations process in 2013 and, in advance of that, will undertake an exercise to identify potential sites which sites it may then go on to allocate in the same way that the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) does for mainstream housing.
- 4.46 In the interim period, proposals submitted to the council will be assessed against the criteria within Development Policy 15 as well as the content of “Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.” The criteria in the policy will also be used to consider the suitability of potential sites it may seek to allocate.

## Core Policy 2: Supporting the Provision of New Housing

1. Provision for new housing will be made in line with the table below to address needs arising in 22 year period from 2006 to 2028.

	Settlement	New homes 2006-2028	Annual target provision	% of the district requirement
Towns	Frome	2,300	105	25%
	Glastonbury	1,000	45	11%
	Shepton Mallet	1,300	60	14%
	Street	1,300	60	14%
	Wells	1,450	65	16%
Villages	16 Primary Villages	1,780	55	13%
	15 Secondary Villages		25	6%
Total	Mendip District	9,130	415	100%

2. Delivery of the proposed housing will be secured from:

- a. Infill, conversions and redevelopments within Development Limits defined on the Proposals Map subject to compliance with national planning policy and specific policies within the Local Plan, particularly matters relating to design, local distinctiveness and identity and amenity.
- b. Strategic Sites identified on the Key Diagrams for each town associated with Core Policies 6-10. On the Proposals Map, detailed extents of Housing Allocations within the Strategic Sites are shown which are capable of delivering residual requirements of housing to 2028 as identified in Table 7.

Strategic Sites for Frome, Shepton Mallet and Street include Future Growth Areas shown on the Proposals Map. Areas of land within these Future Growth Areas will be released for development through a formal Site Allocation process or by a formal Council resolution where:

- i) Housing completions in the relevant town falls more than 20% behind the expected rate of delivery implied by the annual target provision in the table above, or
- ii) Outside any review of this Plan, the Council determines in light of new evidence that the rate or volume of housing provision should be increased in the relevant town or that the release of land would logically contribute to a better pattern of development.

All Strategic Sites will be the subject of Development Briefs (to be prepared from the outset in dialogue with the local community) which will then be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) prior to the granting of any planning permission for new housing or mixed use development. Where adjacent Future Growth Areas are identified, Development Briefs will be expected to indicate a broad provisional form of subsequent development areas including substantive infrastructure or community facilities.

- c. Other allocations of land for housing and, where appropriate, mixed use development, outside of Development Limits through the Site Allocations process in line with:
  - i) the requirements identified within supporting text above
  - ii) informed views of the local community
  - iii) the contribution of development since 2006 towards identified requirements in each place, development with planning consent and capacity within existing Development Limits

All allocations made will be the subject of an appropriately detailed Masterplan prepared with the relevant community and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document prior to the granting of planning permission.

3. All housing developments will make contributions towards the delivery of affordable housing in line with Development Policies 11 or 12.

## Supporting Business Development and Growth

### Overview

- 4.47 The needs of the Mendip economy have been central in considering the strategy pursued in this Local Plan. In the deliberations over housing numbers and in drafting the Town Strategies set out in section 5, business and employment growth as well as the health of the labour market have been carefully analysed.
- 4.48 A successful local economy is only as good as the opportunities that are made available to establish new enterprises, the workforce it offers and the entrepreneurs that can be encouraged, retained or attracted to the area. This Local Plan intends to set out a position that “**Mendip is Open for Business**” by limiting the amount of policies put in the way which may hold back the rapid delivery of new economic activity and also by promoting a range and choice of sites and premises which enable as broad a spectrum of end users to find a niche in the district. The wider flexibility of the plan should also enable new firms, existing firms and those from outside the area to approach the council with the confidence that planning is not a barrier to economic development and job creation.

### Overall Prospects for the Mendip Economy to 2030

- 4.49 Section 2 of this plan gives an overview of the structure and prospects for the local economy. Analysis for the Heart of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)<sup>10</sup> undertaken in 2012 indicates that in pure employment growth terms the district has the preconditions to deliver the highest level of average annual employment growth in the period from 2012 to 2030 across the whole of Devon and Somerset. Whilst that level of job growth will be around a third lower than observed in 2000-12, it is important that this potential is exploited.
- 4.50 Mendip’s economy is generally a diverse one with all main sectors represented in some way. There are few large companies and a lot of activity is focused around local trade. To some extent, this has meant that the local economy has remained resilient during the financial crisis and recession since 2008. Projected job losses have not materialised and the LEP work sees Mendip, again, at the top of the list of district/unitary areas in terms of the time taken for employment to recover to pre-recession levels.
- 4.51 **Projected growth** in coming years is most clearly expected in the Business Services and Other Services which have recently been disaggregated into six main groupings. Four of these – Information and Communication, Business Administration/Support Services, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and most significantly, Professional, Scientific and Technical – have the greatest growth potential.
- 4.52 These uses are relatively footloose in the sense that they can be located in a range of settings varying from urban and rural home offices, studio space in converted buildings, commercial premises in town centres as well as business/office parks. All of these can be relatively compatible with residential uses which mean that their locations are not particularly limited. The same can be said for hospitality businesses although the primary focus for these will be town centres, other commercial clusters and rural locations linked to leisure and recreation activities.
- 4.53 The traditional industrial estate and trading estates where the range of uses may be less compatible with other uses, notably housing, will still have a role. Storage and distribution, haulage, construction and other services such as waste management, motor trade and niche manufacturing all have growth and modernisation potential.
- 4.54 Health and education represent the most prominent public service employers in the district. New provision at Glastonbury and Frome in recent years has already delivered new jobs. However, the challenges of caring for the ageing population and growth in alternative therapies mean that there is an increasing private component. Private schools and other training enterprises mirror this in the education sector.

<sup>10</sup> Local Enterprise Partnerships are successors to the previous Regional Development Agencies. Involving private and public sector interests the Heart of the South West of England LEPs stated purpose is to lead and influence outcomes for economy of Devon, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay by improving economic growth and job creation.

- 4.55 Agriculture and quarrying, two significant rural sectors, are expected to remain static or see modest decline in employment on the back of modernised working practices and a consolidation of activity into fewer, larger operations.

### **Economic Vision and Strategy**

- 4.56 The vision within the Council's corporate plan for 2012-2015 is *Mendip - a place to be proud of - where people, communities and businesses are encouraged to achieve their potential*. Underpinning this, are four priorities that provide a framework for this to happen. One of the priorities is to *support business development and growth*. A review of Mendip's economic strategy is currently underway to ensure that the role of the Council is refocused and that as an organisation it is better placed to help grow the economy and deliver business development activities.

### **Land Supply**

- 4.57 The availability of traditional employment land on industrial estates, trading estates and other sites varies from town to town. All have well established estates which are hives of diverse activity and there is a reasonable amount of turnover, offering space of varying prices and configurations.
- 4.58 Commerce Park at Frome, Morlands at Glastonbury and Cathedral Park at Wells represent new high quality serviced land available to accommodate new and growing businesses. Similar land at Street Business Park is expected to come online in the next few years. Other land, where the principle for employment use has been established, exists at Dulcote Quarry near Wells and the Bath and West Showground site, although the prospects for their imminent development is currently clouded by the uncertain economic outlook.
- 4.59 In rural areas, small business parks and trading estates exist linked to villages or in more remote locations and they are supplemented by converted rural premises which offer space of varying quality and size.
- 4.60 New employment land needs have been established using data from three broad areas of work, namely:
- a) [Economic Projections](#) – a broad assessment of the likely growth of jobs in the local economy was undertaken in spring 2012 by Oxford Economics for the Heart of the West of England LEP. Following a review of this data, the Council has chosen to plan for mid range job growth as set out in the table below. Having identified likely job creation at a town level, broad assumptions about land and necessary floorspace requirements have been applied to identify new land needs and understand the types of development to plan for.
  - b) Development Monitoring – understanding the level of new completions, changes of use and, losses enables supply to be paced to demand.
  - c) [Land and Premises Survey](#) – undertaken every 5 years this study allows the state of existing main employment sites to be assessed in order to determine their ongoing contribution to the needs of business in the area and their impacts on communities. The 2012 version incorporates the survey of local businesses to understand likely needs of existing firms already present in the district. This helps understand emerging land demands driven by modernisation, trends in business practice, support needs and other expectations.
- 4.61 The considerations around the level of new floorspace and land to be allocated are set out in the [Employment Land and Premises Technical Paper](#) (October 2012) and can be summarised as set out in the table below. The types of space have been broadly disaggregated to enable some understanding of the likely needs for space taking into account the types of activity – i.e. its compatibility with other land uses.
- 4.62 The **Traditional Employment Land** typology groups uses where impact from goods vehicles, on site noise and disturbance and building scale would warrant specific land provision. This would include storage and distribution uses, construction yards, bulk processing and larger scale manufacturing uses.

- 4.63 At the other end of the spectrum are **Town Centre Uses** such as offices, hospitality, shops and leisure uses which, with appropriate design, can be readily integrated into most urban settings.
- 4.64 Between the two are **Commercial Uses** such as motor trade uses, research and development and some property management activities which could be accommodated as part of mixed use development or in tandem with industrial land provided that appropriate infrastructure and amenity considerations are observed.
- 4.65 Demands for space for education and health uses are not quantified as the nature of facilities will vary from schools, training facilities and health centres down to consulting rooms and optician shops which could be accommodated in town centre, commercial or even residential settings.

<i>All figures in hectares unless stated</i>	<b>Frome</b>	<b>G'bury</b>	<b>Shepton</b>	<b>Street</b>	<b>Wells</b>
<b>Projected new jobs</b> (Mid range figures)	<b>2,696</b>	<b>1,041</b>	<b>1,296</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>1,502</b>
<b>Net Additional Floorspace needs by land type to meet Job Growth (sqm)</b>					
- Traditional Employment Land	3,900	3,100	3,900	500	6,500
- Commercial Uses	8,850	4,400	6,600	2,700	9,850
- Town Centre Uses (excl. Retail)	11,850	4,200	5,450	7,100	9,750
Total	24,600	11,700	15,950	10,300	26,100
<b>Net Additional Employment Land to meet Projected Job Growth</b> Traditional Employment Land/ Commercial Uses only.					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>4.7</b>
<b>Needs identified from business community (to 2016)</b> (as set out in the 2012 Employment Land and Premises Study)					
- Pent up demands	2.4	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2
- Modernisation	0.2	2.7	1.6	3.2	0.2
- Self employment/Incubation needs	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
- B Class losses compensation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
- Demand from neighbouring areas	2.5	-0.5	0.5	0.5	0.0
- Home working (10% of commercial)	-0.3	-0.1	-0.2	-0.1	-0.3
- Further allowances for 2016-2026 (reflecting elements above)	11.0	2.0	9.0	5.0	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>6.4</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECTED LAND DEMAND</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>11.1</b>
Net gains / losses of employment land since 1.4.06-31.3.11 (where there is no commitment to re-provide jobs on site)					
	8.02	2.03	0.46	1.12	-5.06
Consented Development at 31/3/2011	8.62	4.17	0.13	3.91	18.99
Allowance for Bath & West Showground site.			10.11		
<b>TOTAL LAND SUPPLY at 31.3.11</b>	<b>16.64</b>	<b>6.20</b>	<b>10.70</b>	<b>5.03</b>	<b>13.93</b>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) to 2030</b>	<b>(3.59)</b>	<b>(0.34)</b>	<b>(3.67)</b>	<b>(4.84)</b>	<b>2.84</b>

Table 10: Summary calculations determining employment land supply 2006-30

### **Leisure, Recreation and Tourism**

- 4.66 Leisure, Recreation and Tourism is an important part of the Mendip economy generating prosperity from the array of natural, historical and cultural assets which the district is blessed with. The area serves a significant role in meeting short trip visits from people living in the surrounding major urban centres but also has its own events and qualities which encourage longer stays in the area, most notably the Glastonbury Festival which in 2007 was estimated to bring over [£73m](#) to the economy.
- 4.67 Whilst wanting to encourage visitors to come to the district and enjoy their experience, the council has always been mindful that tourism can have its drawbacks. Overdevelopment associated with the varied features which attract people to the area only contributes to diminishing the overall experience which visitors and local people benefit from. This in turn undermines the wealth creating opportunities. As a result, the Council aims to take a measured approach to considering tourist development with a primary aim being to ensure that the quality of provision is maintained and improved, whilst the scale of development is in keeping with the area and its constituent communities.

### **Improving the potential of the local workforce**

- 4.68 Any workforce has to be adaptable to change and in the last 20 years Mendip's towns in particular have seen a transformation in their local economies arising from changing business practices and most notably globalisation. The local workforce, through its own efforts and some support from public agencies, has for the most part up-skilled from lower paid manual activities to those, for example, of a semi-skilled and customer focused nature or have established their own businesses.
- 4.69 In planning for the future, particularly one where global pressures are more prominent, the Council wants to promote a better partnership between businesses and the area by encouraging investment in people as well as places. By improving skills through occupational training employees can be more productive and responsive to the needs of business, in turn enabling wage levels to be improved, which is important given the issues of affordability in the housing market.
- 4.70 Accordingly, where new business investment is proposed that would create 10 or more jobs, the Council will seek to negotiate a local labour agreement which will be aimed at encouraging businesses to offer new jobs in the local area in the first instance, put in place training arrangements with local providers and, where appropriate, encourage procurement of goods and services locally to reinforce business networks and the local economy.

### Core Policy 3: Supporting Business Development and Growth

1. Proposals for economic development will be supported where they:
  - accord with the Spatial Strategy defined in Core Policy 1 and, in rural areas, the principles set out in Core Policy 4;
  - encourage a diverse, robust, thriving and resilient local economy;
  - enhance the image of the area as a business location;
  - limit the growth in demand for private transport and are accessible by sustainable transport modes;
  - offer higher quality job opportunities to local people or improve the skills of the resident work force
  - consider options for the use of local contractors and supply chains in the construction and subsequent running of the enterprise
  
2. The Council will plan for the creation of 9,410 new jobs in the period 2006-2028 and facilitate provision of land and premises in line with the amounts detailed in the following table to accommodate this growth and the needs of business in the area.

Settlement	Projected jobs (Mid to upper range)	Net new floorspace demands (sqm)	Employment land required (Hectares)
Frome	2,696	24,600	20.2
Glastonbury	1,041	11,700	6.5
Shepton Mallet	1,296	15,950	14.4
Street	856	10,300	9.9
Wells	1,502	26,100	11.1
Rural Areas	2,019	Approach set out in Core Policy 4	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>9,410</b>	<b>88,650</b>	<b>62.1</b>

Further details about the nature and location of future provision are set out in the Town Strategies in Core Policies 6-10.

3. The Council will support proposals which extend the attraction of the area to visitors.

**The Council is keen to ensure that the path to securing planning consent, especially for business development, is as smooth as possible.**

The most effective means of achieving a swift decision is for applicants and agents, or business owners themselves, to contact the council well before a development scheme begins to be conceived. This will allow relevant matters to be explored and clear advice given about the level of supporting information that may be required in making an application. Furthermore, where relevant, third party advice from other organisations (e.g. Highway Authority, Environmental Protection) can be secured in good time.

This early engagement will enable any subsequent planning application to be more easily determined.

## **Sustaining Communities in Rural Mendip**

- 4.71 Core Policies 6-10 in section 5 set out strategies for the district's principal towns to outline how strategic level needs will be delivered. As considered in the Spatial Strategy (set out in Core Policy 1) they are the main focal points for growth.
- 4.72 However, as set out in the district wide Vision, Mendip is a predominantly rural district and the Local Plan needs to give a clear view of the development principles which will apply across this varied area. Distilled from the *Vision for Mendip* and associated objectives in section 3, the priorities for rural development can be summarised as:
- Protection of the open countryside for its intrinsic value and as a resource for a range of uses including wildlife, agriculture, tourism and recreation.
  - Provision of housing to meet specific local needs including affordable housing to enable people to live and work locally or stay in communities where they have a clear local connection.
  - Delivering most development in places where people can access services and facilities using a choice of means of transport.
  - Supporting the rural economy, although ensuring that the scale of development is appropriate to the rural setting.
  - Protection of essential community infrastructure and ensuring that it is extended where development imposes undue burdens upon it.
- 4.73 Detailed proposals specific to individual villages will be pursued through the Site Allocations process (Part II of this Local Plan – to be commenced in 2013) but this section establishes an overall strategy for rural development. However, for most other forms of rural development, the Council will not be as prescriptive and will use national guidance and development management policies set out in section 6 of this document to determine applications for development.

### **Housing**

- 4.74 Core Policies 1 and 2 establish an overall framework for the distribution and amount of housing development across rural Mendip with the main elements being:
- focusing all new planned development in the identified Primary and Secondary Villages where new rural residents will have good access to basic services and facilities including a public transport choice.
  - delivering all locally arising needs and a proportion of wider household growth which will occur in response to people choosing a rural lifestyle by moving from other areas.
- 4.75 Paragraph 4.28 concludes that whilst all projected household growth across the district will be met, a proportion of the non-local growth in rural areas will not be provided for on account of the scale of development this would impose on some villages. The implications of this are that undersupply may further pressurise affordability for local people. In response to this it is valid to point out that:
- The plan as a whole makes provision for 9,130 new homes across Mendip district which reflects needs associated with household growth, job creation and labour market dynamics. Between 2006 and 2028, the Mendip wide figure for Household Growth is 8,693. Hence, the Council is making provision in excess of all projected household growth and more of this is being accommodated in the more sustainable urban locations.
  - Greater attention to the mix of housing being delivered in rural communities under Development Policy 14 should mean that more new housing is better suited to needs in the local market rather than what housebuilders, over recent years, have been delivering to appeal to buyers from further afield.
- 4.76 A further area of concern raised in consultation was that the concentration of new development into a limited number of villages would condemn smaller villages and hamlets to higher prices, declining demand for, and consequential loss of, local services and an inability of rural workers to secure housing.
- 4.77 In response to these issues, the key point needing to be addressed is how new rural development can be focused to better meet local needs, and particularly, to deliver more affordable homes.

Making allocations of housing in smaller villages would satisfy both concerns. However, to allocate small sites across a further tier of villages would be a mammoth undertaking. Furthermore allocations could not be guaranteed to focus on meeting local needs as premium land values would necessarily justify viable developer returns accrued through more large, high value properties that don't tackle the fundamental issue at hand.

- 4.78 In line with the principles of Localism, and to bypass the need for a community referendum which the government's Community Right to Build imposes, the Council considers that a community led or community supported development is a progressive means for all Parish Councils to have a greater say in the development that they need.
- 4.79 Clause 2 of the policy below, clarified in more detailed terms in Development Policy 12, makes allowance for Rural Exception sites, and as the National Planning Policy Framework allows for, the Council has concluded that such sites can now include an element of market housing where four additional tests are met.
- 4.80 In addition to this policy, the Council is also mindful of the continuing need to provide accommodation for rural workers who by nature of their land based enterprises, need to live on or in close proximity to their holding. Development Policy 13 sets out the circumstances and policy measures which applicants will need to satisfy in securing planning permission for such properties.

### **Economic Development**

- 4.81 Rural Mendip is an extensive area with a range of economic development opportunities that are able to be exploited. Agriculture, quarrying and tourism are key examples, however there are a plethora of small businesses, of a scale appropriate in a rural setting, which generate wealth and employment. However, as policies in this plan and within national policy make clear, the desirability of unfettered development in the countryside must not undermine its intrinsic value. Indeed, recreation and tourism is predicated on the back of the districts rural character. In line with Core Policy 3, the council will support the emergence and growth of rural enterprises and clause 4 of the policy below sets out additional specific policy relating to rural economic development.
- 4.82 A key element of the approach is an acknowledgement that the evolution of small enterprises, perhaps based initially in a domestic setting or converted rural buildings (as allowed for under Development Policy 22), into larger businesses may not always be appropriate. This may be because, for example, of the impact of new buildings in the rural setting, or higher levels of traffic generation on unsuitable rural roads. However, to move the business from its origins to a town may sever employee links or change the business ethos or image. In response to this, and to rebuild inherent sustainability of rural settlements the Council intends to be proactive in promoting allocations of small employment sites in the Primary Villages listed in Core Policy 1. This does not exclude the potential for schemes to be brought forward by applicants in other villages.
- 4.83 Clause 5 of the policy gives a steer that the delivery of new community facilities will be supported whether commercial or otherwise. Subject to support from the community, the council may consider that other forms of development – typically housing – could be used to cross subsidise new facilities. In such circumstances the Council will require open book accounting of the scheme to demonstrate that any additional development is proportionate to the cost of delivering the proposed facility and that a viable business plan is provided by a committed operator, or community group.

### **Local Infrastructure**

- 4.84 Rural development has largely been incremental in nature and this means that the impact on local infrastructure, whether services like sewage systems or facilities like schools, cumulatively take on more and more demand. Critical thresholds have, or are close to being reached in some communities as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan accompanying this Local Plan. As set out in Core Policy 1 new development will be expected to contribute to new local infrastructure and in some cases this may mean that upgrade works will be required prior to any new growth being accommodated.

- 4.85 Community facilities have seen decline over many decades in response to changing social trends, competition from town based commercial activity, wider car ownership, technology and, consequentially, economics viability. The council cannot hold back many of these changes and it is for operators to adapt, diversify and maintain custom from their communities. Planning policies will broadly support any efforts by operators. However, there are examples where individuals or organisations make decisions of convenience, typically to capitalise a land asset or building, that would condemn an otherwise viable service or facility to be lost with clear consequences for users in the community. Development Policy 17 sets out a number of tests that will be applied where development or a change of use affecting a premises used for a community use is proposed.

## **Core Policy 4: Sustaining Rural Communities**

**Rural settlements and the wider rural area will be sustained by:**

- 1. Making planned provision for housing within the Primary and Secondary Villages having regard to identified constraints and at a scale commensurate with the existing housing stock in line with Core Policies 1 and 2.**
- 2. Identifying and delivering opportunities for the provision of rural affordable housing, secured for the benefit of the community in perpetuity, where there is evidence of local need as set out in Development Policies 11 and 12.**
- 3. Making allowance for occupational dwellings in rural locations, where there is a proven and essential functional need, to support agricultural, forestry and other rural-based enterprises set out in Development Policy 13.**
- 4. Supporting proposals for development of the rural economy as set out in Core Policy 2 which,**
  - a. deliver modest clusters of flexible premises able to meet the needs of the rural economy in the Primary Villages identified in Core Policy 1, or**
  - b. enable the establishment, expansion and diversification of business in a manner and of a scale which is appropriate to the location and constraints upon it, or**
  - c. involve the conversion of existing buildings for an economic use as considered under Development Policy 22.**
- 5. Support for viable schemes which extend the range of community infrastructure allowing local people to secure more of their everyday needs locally.**
- 6. Ensuring that where development imposes burdens which exceed the capacity of existing facilities, new development is phased for delivery in line with improvements to the relevant infrastructure.**
- 7. Safeguarding community facilities and commercial premises, or premises formerly used for such purposes, in line with Development Policy 17.**

## Promoting Community Leadership

### **Local Context**

- 4.86 The District Council takes a leading role in defining the issues of the district and works with partners to ensure they are addressed. In this, the Council's role is as much to work to enable actions to be taken forward by other agencies as it is to undertake direct delivery. In a context of decreasing resources, it is imperative that the Council uses the resources at its disposal to best effect. In the sphere of planning the District Council will continue to maintain the role of Local Planning Authority and in exercising this function it must retain a strategic overview.
- 4.87 However, a community leadership role complements the strategic role, encouraging and supporting the development of communities so they are able to take forward issues at local level. Stronger links must be built between the public organisations, including the district council, and parish councils to encourage greater ownership of issues and services at parish level. There must also be an understanding between parish councils and other public organisations of the role each can take in developing and supporting the community through encouraging local self-action. These are the principles of Localism.
- 4.88 To this end, policy making and decisions about development will always be better informed by the input of local communities where development is proposed. The development process makes allowance for the views of communities and affected parties to comment upon development proposals but this is more often than not reactive to relatively advanced proposals. Since the 1990's a range of initiatives, some of which are described in the adjacent box, have been promoted to enable communities to be more proactive in defining their goals whether related to development or to the achievement of wider objectives involving other interests.
- 4.89 The following policy therefore gives a clear and positive statement that community led guidance, where informed by evidence, prepared in consultation with the wider community and formally endorsed by the Council will be given full weight in the development process, informing future planning policy and proposals as well as helping the Council to approve better development.

### **Examples of Community Led Guidance**

**Parish Plans** are underpinned by an informed and consultative preparation process providing a means for local communities to articulate short, medium and longer term goals aimed at improving quality of life, economic activity and maintenance of environmental quality. Ensuring buy in by interests who will deliver action is an essential part of the process, and where achieved – through collaborative negotiation - the activity of local groups, public agencies and private investment can work towards the outcomes over time.

**Town and Village Design Statements**, again prepared in a consultative manner, allow communities to define what is important and characteristic about their locality in order that new development proposals can be better informed.

**Local Housing Needs Assessments** provide a means for local needs to be better understood in order that affordable housing schemes and market housing proposals deliver the right types of housing.

### **Neighbourhood Plans**

- 4.90 During the preparation of this Local Plan, the Government has introduced Neighbourhood Plans which offer opportunities for parish and town councils to shape how development takes place in their communities. Within available resources, the Council will support the preparation of such plans which have a prescribed procedure as set out in regulations. Section 1 of the plan explains a bit more about this and the interaction of policies in Neighbourhood Plans with this Local Plan.
- 4.91 Some communities have questioned whether Neighbourhood Plans supersede the types of guidance described above. The simple answer here is no. The need for information and guidance about community needs, built character and local aspirations remains and may be important as a starting point to define what a Neighbourhood Plan might contain. In many cases, these forms of guidance may be all that a community needs to, say, encourage better design or deliver homes that are better tailored to the needs of local people.
- 4.92 Parish and town councils are encouraged to get in touch with the district council at an early stage to discuss what they want to achieve and in turn, officers will advise on what would be the most appropriate course of action for the community to pursue. Information is available on the council's [Neighbourhood Planning](#) website

## **Core Policy 5: Encouraging Community Leadership**

Where adopted by the District Council, the views of a community expressed in a Parish Plan, Town or Village Design Statement, Local Needs Assessment (or other forward looking structured document which has had the benefit of wide community involvement) will be a significant material consideration in:

- pre-application discussions with development interests,
- the determination of planning applications,
- negotiation of development contributions towards realistic identified projects which can be delivered with a defined timescale,
- future policies and development proposals (as part of the prescribed process),
- any reviews of wider service delivery by the Council.

In order to be adopted by the District Council, community led guidance needs to:

- be informed by robust evidence and the wider strategic context,
- have involved clear stages of wide local community engagement,
- be formally endorsed by the Parish Council(s),
- have a delivery plan whose actions are supported by relevant stakeholders,
- demonstrate how effectiveness will be reviewed over appropriate timescales.



## 5.0 TOWN STRATEGIES

- 5.1 The five principal centres of the district are vibrant places with their own roles and characteristics. Each performs a traditional market town role in meeting the typical everyday needs of local people in terms of homes, jobs, cultural attractions and community facilities. However, in preparing this Local Plan it was clear that they each face a range of specific issues which generic policies would not be capable of articulating.
- 5.2 The following parts of this section each explore in more detail issues facing each of the towns which have been distilled from a series of longer documents specifically exploring issues in each place.<sup>11</sup>
- 5.3 Following these summaries, a vision statement for each place is set out drawing on the views which local people had about the future of their towns. In light of these vision statements, delivery policies for each town are then set out alongside illustrative key diagrams which indicate what types of new development are promoted, areas of land earmarked for development and key projects.
- 5.4 The proposals are itemised in a delivery plan which accompanies this Local Plan. This sets out who, what and how proposals and supporting infrastructure will be delivered by a range of public, private and voluntary interests.
- 

<sup>11</sup> [Portraits of Place](#) were prepared in 2008 to summarise the evidence relating to each of the five towns as well as a district wide overview. Further studies and information produced since that time, which are available on the council's website, inform the content of proposals in each town.

## FROME

- 5.5 Frome is the largest town in Mendip with a population of approximately 27,000. Due to its location on the eastern edge of the district it has a strong functional relationship with Bath and the towns of west Wiltshire. It also has a large rural area to its south and west which looks to the town for a range of needs. This geographical position has led to the town, in more recent times performing, to some degree, a dormitory role whereby workers live in Frome but travel elsewhere to work, particularly to Bath. There are reciprocal movements of workers into the town. However, workforce supply data set out in Table 1a confirms that the workforce outnumbers the amount of local jobs available. In response to this the agreed approach has been to improve the self containment of the town. This would be achieved through limiting the amount of housing and maximising projected economic development.
- 5.6 The River Frome runs through the town and consultation responses indicated that local people see the river corridor as an underutilised resource for recreation, wildlife and as an informal transport corridor for walking and cycling. In terms of wider open space, there are good overall levels of provision of open and play space, spread evenly across the town, but there are deficiencies in strategic and neighbourhood park provision. Around 8 hectares of open space will need to be provided over the plan period to readdress these deficiencies and provide for the needs of the forecast increase in population. There will also be a replacement/refurbished leisure centre accommodated in Frome over the life of the plan.
- The **level of new housing development** to be directed to Frome is around 2,300 homes. If projected job growth is secured, this level of development will make inroads into the identified workforce imbalance. Restricting housing supply further, as proposed under alternative options, was considered to have a short term negative impact by creating more pressure on the local housing market. This may still be an outcome, which in turn could affect the ability to stimulate economic activity. Hence, to address this contingency land is identified and able to be released if needed.

Around 2,000 homes can be delivered on brownfield land therefore there will be a need for a site or sites to deliver 300-400 homes. Land at Southfield Farm, as allocated under the last Local Plan, continues to represent the most appropriate location for new development. As indicated above, contingency land to the south of The Mount represents the next best location if housing supply cannot be maintained.
- 5.7 As a centre, Frome offers a good range of services and shopping. There is a strong independent retailing sector based within distinctive shopping streets in the town centre. Views indicated that a few more national retailers would help to limit travel to other towns, particularly Bath, for certain goods. There is some retail warehousing and two supermarkets on the periphery of the town. The aesthetic quality of the main shopping areas is considered to be poor. However, the Saxonvale area on the eastern side of the centre – including Kingsway, and emerging longer term plans for the existing Westway Centre, provide opportunities to sensitively improve the range of national retailers, particularly in terms of fashions. Both also offer opportunities to better integrate the river as a more prominent feature in the town centre and create opportunities for associated public realm improvements. Frome is also known for its thriving creative sector underlined by the presence of two theatres, a cinema, a concert venue and a centre for contemporary arts and crafts. There is good reason to support the growth of businesses emerging in this sector. However, consultation highlighted that the evening economy - in terms of restaurants, social activity and leisure uses - is underdeveloped and thus could be viewed as an opportunity that town centre redevelopment could help to address.
- 5.8 As stated above, the biggest challenge the town faces in the next 20 years is to reduce the outflow of workers from the town by providing more jobs locally. The number of new jobs in the town is predicted to rise by around 2,700 (based on a moderate projection) and this level must be seen as a minimum if the town is to start reducing the level of out commuting it experiences. Those sectors which are predicted to grow are Business Services, Retailing and Health. Whilst Commerce Park, a major employment area to the north east of the town offers a good supply of new serviced land for a wide range of uses, there is a need for smaller sites to emerge within the town (particularly around the town centre) which can offer office and studio type space. Demands for this space can be expected from Professional, Information Technology and Arts based activities. The Frome Neighbourhood Plan is considering measures to ensure that employment space is re-provided through mixed use development of underutilised sites which this plan encourages within Development Policy 20.

- 5.9 Frome operates a three tier education system and it is anticipated that over the plan period there will be a requirement for a further two primary schools and a need for additional secondary provision. However, if the town moves from a three tier to a two tier system this is likely to require further new provision to deliver a wider curriculum. The Southfield Farm/Wallbridge development area includes an obligation to deliver one of the new schools. The Council will work with the Local Education Authority to deliver a second new school to address projected needs that are expected to arise in the latter part of the plan period. In 2012 a proposal for a Steiner School was being advanced and the implications of this on the need for future school places will be factored in and considered through an update to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Given the concentration of schools on the southern side of the river, the best location for any new school remains to the north of the town which can address recognised traffic issues across the town associated with the morning school run. The County Council retains a site at Packsaddle that was purchased for this purpose. FETE (Frome Education and Training Enterprise) is a partnership of training providers and other agencies who are working towards creating a permanent facility in the heart of the town as part of the Saxonvale redevelopment. Their current temporary accommodation offers a range of vocational training to improve skills in the local workforce.
- 5.10 It should be noted that Frome Town Council, with support from the district council, is bringing forward a formal Neighbourhood Plan. This plan is intended to set out a number of specific policies applicable to applications for development in the town. Many of these policies add specific detail to the proposals set out in Core Policy 6. A further source of guidance for those considering development in the town is the Frome Town Design Statement (TDS) which characterises built up areas of the town.

<b>Summary</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive character and cultural offer</li> <li>• Good location to capture tourism potential of the wider Mendip, Bath and west Wiltshire area</li> <li>• Historic built environment</li> <li>• Independent retailing</li> <li>• Employment land supply at Commerce Park</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role as a dormitory town with a proportion of residents working in Bath and other centres</li> <li>• Main shopping offer and environment is poor resulting in trade leakage</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saxonvale town centre redevelopment area</li> <li>• the river corridor - providing extra recreational spaces and benefits to biodiversity</li> <li>• potential of the creative and night time economy</li> <li>• more vocational training to young people through a fit for purpose, suitably located, FETE learning centre</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in flooding events due to climate change</li> <li>• Perceptions of excessive urban infill/garden development making areas of the town feel 'over developed'</li> <li>• Availability of school places and limited County Council capacity to invest</li> </ul>

## Vision

*In 2028 Frome residents have access to a wider range of jobs locally which has led to a reduction in the level of commuting out of the town. Commerce Park is now fully occupied and additional sites within the existing built up area provide offices and workshop space allowing employees to travel to work without the need to use a car. Having secured a permanent home, the FETE project is contributing to a better skilled local workforce. The improved and extended facilities at Frome College have allowed new teaching specialities (including Further Education courses) to emerge which equip young people with knowledge and skills that are valued by a range of local businesses. Local business is also more confident due to the help and advice now being offered by Business Support enterprises and work hubs.*

*Local people have access to a good range and choice of housing which better reflects their needs rather than the demand from the other parts of the sub-region. The location of most recent housing development has been in the town's built up area making use of a good supply of previously developed land although in a manner sensitive to the town's built heritage. Land to the south east of the town was set aside in response to concerns about the intensity of brownfield redevelopment. This land has delivered exemplar development of well designed zero carbon homes and community facilities, including a new school and extensive open space meeting a range of recreation needs. These areas are also well connected to the other parts of the town through well conceived foot and cycle links including crossings of the railway and the river.*

*Within the town centre, the Saxonvale area and the recently completed redevelopment of the Westway Centre now mean that residents and communities nearby meet almost all of their shopping needs in the town, particularly fashions and other high quality goods that people previously travelled to Bath to buy. These redeveloped areas also offer a wider range of restaurants and social venues, including a larger cinema, making Frome an attractive destination for a good night out, whilst a hotel, within easy walking distance of the town centre, provides for guests. The environment of the wider town centre is also improved. As well as new public spaces in the redeveloped shopping areas, the Market Place has been remodelled to favour people over cars so that most drivers choose other routes around the town. These alterations have enabled the market to return to the heart of the town centre and grow in turn drawing in even more shoppers and visitors.*

*Local people now consider the river as an asset to the town. On the river banks around the Market Yard and the Westway Centre, the channel has now been softened and integrated with the redeveloped shopping area to offer a pleasant setting for people to linger, enjoy a bite to eat or meet with friends. The wider river initiative, underpinned by local groups, landowners and public bodies, has seen it emerge as the spine of a well connected open space network which encourages more active lifestyles, travel by foot and bicycle, as well as being wildlife corridors in their own right. More widely, the quality of open spaces in the town has improved through the use of a dedicated fund contributed to by new development schemes.*

## Core Policy 6: Frome Town Strategy

**Frome is designated as a principal settlement serving a market town role to its wider rural catchment area. During the lifetime of the Local Plan the overarching aim is to improve its self containment. The following developments are proposed:**

- 2300 new homes will be delivered in line with the needs of the local market and job creation:
  - Around 2000 homes will arise from previously developed sites and other urban land within the existing Development Limits defined on the Proposals Map in a manner which respects and enhances the town's character as defined in a Town Design Statement prepared by the Town Council and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.
  - Greenfield land will be required to accommodate around 300-400 new homes.
    - a) Land at Southfield Farm/Wallbridge, identified on the Proposals Map as CP6A, will deliver around 400 new homes within a well designed development which will include a primary/first school to meet the needs of the growing population, footpath links crossing the river and railway, landscaping and open space that contributes to the wider River Frome corridor initiative as well as other community facilities which would be reasonable to provide on the site. A Development Brief for the site will be prepared and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) prior to the grant of planning permission.
    - b) A Future Growth Area adjacent to land with a resolution to grant planning permission for housing (identified as CP6B on the Proposals Map) to the south of The Mount offers flexibility in the supply of land should it be required to maintain the delivery of housing or make up shortfalls in the delivery of housing on brownfield sites within the town. Any release of this land will be made through the Site Allocations process, the Frome Neighbourhood Plan, or under the provisions set out in Core Policy 2.
- Provision for between 2,700 and 2,900 new jobs will be made:
  - on existing land at Commerce Park which will continue to offer flexible, serviced space for a variety of employment needs.
  - through mixed use redevelopment of redundant or underutilised employment sites within the town where they arise, to deliver flexible space for offices, studios and other residentially compatible small business space.
  - on other fringes of the town where proposals bring forward additional land which deliver flexible modern workspace.
- Town centre redevelopments, including Saxonvale and, in the longer term, the Westway Centre, (as identified on the Proposals Map as CP6C), will collectively deliver:
  - a medium scale foodstore of about 1500sqm (net) - including only an ancillary element of non-food goods - to supplement limited town centre choice and in turn draw back trade from out of town large format foodstores.
  - Up to 7,000sqm of additional non-food retail space in a range of unit sizes that encourage a broader range of national, regional and local operators into the town.
  - Uses that enhance the attraction of the town to visitors and as an evening destination for social and leisure activities.
  - creative and imaginative public realm improvements as well as new urban spaces which integrate new development areas with the towns historic centre and which also incorporate and enhance the River Frome as a feature within the town centre.
  - At least half of the 11,500sqm of flexible office/studio space requirement (see Table 10) including a permanent site for FETE within the Saxonvale area.
- Provide expanded secondary school provision and a further new primary school (in addition to that expected to be secured as part of the Southfield Farm/Wallbridge development)

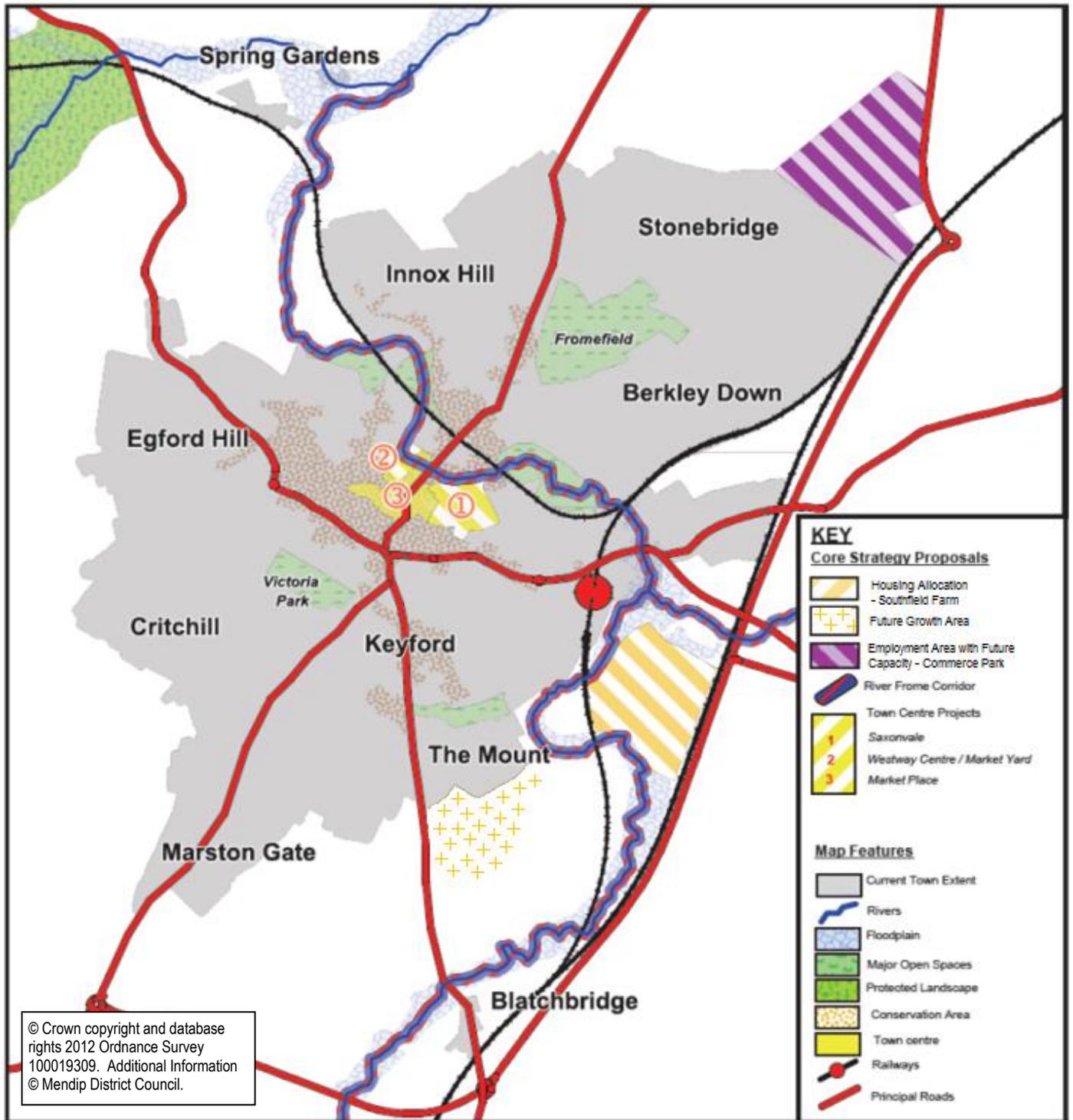
- A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the town will:
  - Identify how around 8 hectares of new open space, including provision for new allotments, will be secured from new development sites and other initiatives.
  - Identify priorities for expenditure of development contributions towards improvements to the extent and quality of public open spaces and accessible natural green spaces. This will include improving access, recreation, education and wildlife opportunities along the length of the River Frome (identified as CP6D on the Proposal Map) establishing it as a linear park, as a collaborative exercise involving the Town Council, Environment Agency and local groups. Until detailed proposals are set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy (or other delivery plan), proposals affecting land adjacent the river corridor will need to demonstrate that schemes do not compromise the overall objective of securing continuous access.

In addition, the Council will work with partners, landowners and other interests, through the Frome Neighbourhood Plan and other initiatives to:

- Improve connectivity and capacity of bus and rail services
- Deliver additional accommodation for visitors to the town
- Deliver a new or substantially refurbished leisure centre
- Deliver comprehensive remodelling of the Market Place to reduce the impact of traffic and enhance its appearance and appeal to local residents, business, visitors and shoppers
- Identify priorities for expenditure of development contributions towards infrastructure to support the growing population.

# FROME KEY DIAGRAM

A graphic representation of the major features, designations and proposals of the Local Plan





## GLASTONBURY

- 5.11 Glastonbury is the most environmentally constrained town of the district with extensive flood plain to the north, west and south of the town. Development of the town has also been constrained by the topography and landscape quality of Glastonbury Tor and Wearyall Hill.
- 5.12 Consultation undertaken as part of the further issues and options stage of the Local Plan highlighted the need for appropriate employment premises in Glastonbury to meet the needs of existing and new businesses. Development on the Morlands site has begun with the development of the new Avalon Plastics factory and other units are under development to deliver workshops and small business premises. More space of this latter type is important for a town with a very strong enterprise culture.
- 5.13 The provision of housing is discussed in the adjacent box. Given the town's constraints, the level of housing apportioned is set at 1000 for the period to 2006-2028 – this equates to 50 per year. A significant proportion of this is already built or committed.
- 5.14 Glastonbury is one of the smaller retail centres in the district and mainly caters for local needs and the tourist market. It is dominated by independent shops and traders and its alternative shops are a feature of the town reflecting cultural and spiritual aspects which appeal to tourists and visitors. Residents feel that the independent shops are important to the town and reflect its personality although the latest town centres study suggests that their increasing numbers may be squeezing out more typical retail activity, reducing the overall amenity of the centre to local residents. More arcades and redevelopment of premises on the high street would provide new opportunities for retail business to tap into the trade that the town's cultural identity draws. Due to its proximity to Wells and the complementary relationship it enjoys with nearby Street the town centre is unlikely to attract significant investment from larger national chains.
- 5.15 In terms of community infrastructure, the Local Education Authority has confirmed that there is capacity within the town's primary and secondary schools to accommodate the future development proposed. In respect of open space, the main town park in Glastonbury can be found directly south of the town centre and is accessible from a large proportion of the town and a second park can be found in the south east of the town on Cinnamon Lane. The town also has three amenity spaces and two natural open spaces. There is a lack of open and play space in the northern part of the town where there is no coverage either at a neighbourhood or strategic level. Therefore to address this, along with the increase in population from the proposed new development, 3.7 hectares of new public open space are proposed for Glastonbury. However, the Sustainability Appraisal of the level of housing development has indicated there may be impacts arising from recreational pressure on the protected Somerset Levels and Moors habitat areas. In order to offset this it is essential that additional and appropriately scaled strategic recreation space is made available. A joint initiative involving Street and Walton parish councils offers the best means for a comprehensive resolution of this issue.

**In establishing an appropriate housing requirement,** the options for housing numbers ranged between around 700 homes and 1200 homes. At the lower end of the range modest levels of development limit any strong negative impacts on the town and its setting, but positive impacts were also difficult to identify as the levels of development would not generate sufficient critical mass to provide, for example, high levels of affordable housing. A higher level of housing within that range was chosen to satisfy population and strong projected job growth, of which a good deal has already been achieved. Table 7 associated with Core Policy 2 indicates that completions, commitments, expected windfall and sites within the towns existing extents can deliver almost all the required housing. As a result, Glastonbury will only require a very small amount of new greenfield land to be provided. Issues related to this are considered in the text supporting Core Policy 2.

<b>Summary</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History, culture, spirituality – International ‘Glastonbury’ brand</li> <li>• Uniqueness/distinctiveness</li> <li>• High levels of self employment and small businesses</li> <li>• Distinctive landscapes/environment</li> <li>• A strong ‘local’ retail centre</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental/landscape limits development</li> <li>• A need for diversification of the economy</li> <li>• Lack of affordable housing</li> <li>• Limited retail appeal</li> <li>• HGV traffic through the town on the A361 especially Chilkwell St</li> <li>• Lack of leisure facilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To maximise the tourist potential of the town</li> <li>• To take full advantage of the complimentary relationship the town has with its neighbour Street</li> <li>• Active and diverse small business culture in need of appropriate premises</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change – flooding is a serious threat to parts of the town.</li> <li>• Need for development versus impact of development on the setting of the town</li> </ul>

## **Vision**

***Glastonbury by 2028:*** local people are benefiting from a vibrant, diverse locally-based economy. Home-grown businesses are supported and encouraged and there is a good supply of suitable, affordable premises. The Morlands site is complete and offers a range of jobs.

*The town has a good range of shops and services that reflects its unique character and role as a local centre. Glastonbury enjoys a complementary relationship with nearby Street which offers a good range of comparison shops.*

*The town's culture, history and distinctiveness provide a special environment for local people and visitors alike. Its tourism potential has been realised and provides those visiting not only a good range of facilities but also a real Glastonbury "experience".*

*The town has a range of adaptable community and leisure facilities offering a more diverse range of activities for all ages. There is an excellent network of cycle paths and footpaths that allow easy, safe access in and around the town along with connections to the surrounding rural area and the Somerset Levels. All the allotments in the town are being used to their full potential.*

*Brownfield land has been effectively used to ensure no further encroachment onto the floodplain. It has been sensitively used to ensure that the town does not feel "over developed".*

## **Core Policy 7: Glastonbury Town Strategy**

**Glastonbury is designated as a principal settlement serving a market town role to a wider rural catchment and, drawing on its historical and cultural connections, stimulates tourism in the area. During the lifetime of the Local Plan the overarching aim is to accommodate new development within the town and coordinate new development, given limited availability of unconstrained land, with that taking place in nearby Street. The following developments are proposed:**

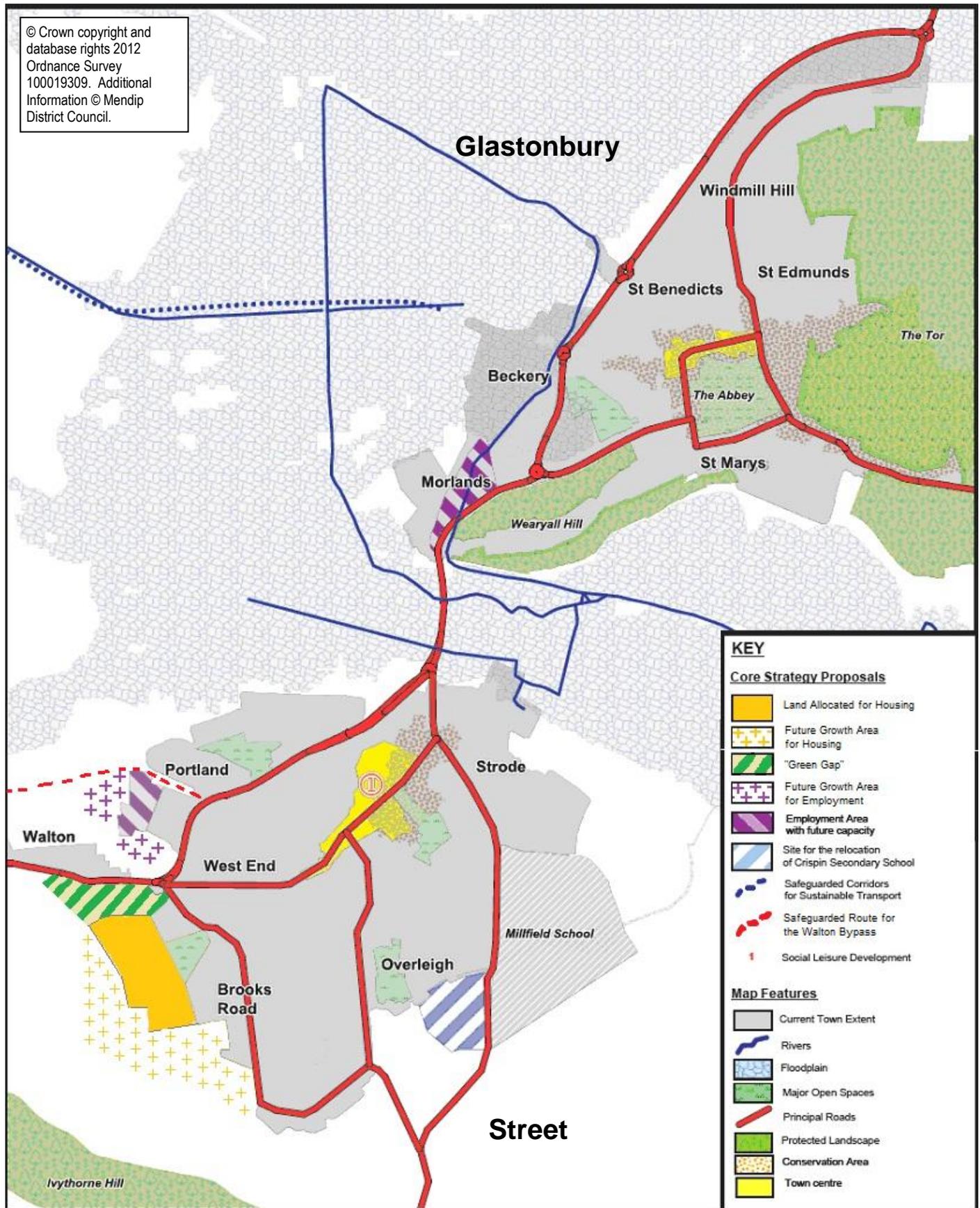
- 1000 new homes will be delivered in line with population growth and job creation
  - Most provision will arise from committed sites or other urban land within the town's existing Development Limits in a manner which respects and enhances the town's character which is considered to be under threat from overdevelopment.
  - Provision of greenfield land to address any shortfall in housing delivery or under delivery on currently identified development sites within the town will be determined at the time of the Local Plan Part II : Site Allocations process including the consideration of making provision at nearby Street if appropriate provision cannot be made on the limited supply of land around the town.
  
- Provision for between 1,050 and 1,200 new jobs will be made
  - on existing land at Morlands which will continue to offer flexible, serviced space for a variety of employment needs.
  - on other fringes of the town where proposals bring forward additional land which deliver flexible modern workspace.
  - through mixed use redevelopment of redundant employment sites within the town where they arise, to deliver affordable, flexible premises able to support small business formation and incubation.
  
- Development in the town centre will make provision for:
  - More small scale shopping space to maintain the range of everyday retail for the local community and sensitively extend trade of goods arising from tourism.
  - A proportion of the 4000sqm of office space requirement (see Table 10) as part of mixed use developments.
  
- A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the town will:
  - Identify how around 3.7 hectares of new open space, including provision for new allotments, will be secured from new development sites and other initiatives.
  - Identify priorities for expenditure of development contributions towards improvements to the extent and quality of public open spaces and accessible natural green spaces. This will include the provision of strategic open space to offset the impact of new development on the protected Somerset Levels and Moors habitats.

In addition, the Council will work with partners, landowners and other interests to

- re-route heavy traffic currently using Chilkwell Street.
- promote improved tourist facilities,
- improve the network of cycle paths and footpaths around the town including parts of a multi-user path fully linking Walton, Street and Glastonbury,
- identify priorities for expenditure of development contributions towards infrastructure to support the growing population.

# GLASTONBURY AND STREET KEY DIAGRAM

A graphic representation of the major features, designations and proposals of the Local Plan



## STREET

- 5.16 The *village* of Street is the second largest settlement in the district with a population of just over 11,000 people. Despite its status as a village, it operates as a market town and provides similar services and facilities as the other market towns in Mendip. However, its attraction extends beyond this with the Clarks Village retail development attracting shoppers from well beyond Mendip District's boundaries.
- 5.17 The economy of Street was formerly based around shoe making, with the Clarks' brand being synonymous with the town. This has declined since the 1980s having a considerable effect on the local economy. Clarks' business in Street is now based at its Houndwood headquarters, from which significant stock storage and distribution is coordinated. During the 1990s the former Clarks' premises were regenerated and Clarks Village, an outlet shopping centre, was created. This has become popular as a sub-regional shopping destination, employs a large number of local people and provides a good range of comparison goods for residents of Street and nearby Glastonbury. When originally opened Clarks Village was seen to have a detrimental effect on High Street trade. However, a town centre assessment undertaken in early 2010 suggests that the extended area and links through to the High Street arising from it have better integrated the two shopping areas. Whilst the vibrancy of shopping activity has returned, consultation and the Town Centres assessment suggest that opportunities exist to improve food, drink and evening uses in the vicinity of the High Street, notably along Farm Road which offers potential to capture trade from shoppers at the adjacent Clarks Village.
- 5.18 Along with education, retailing and distribution activities dominate the local economy. Other sectors are represented in the village, but are generally small in scale. As a result the economic base is relatively narrow and, in the coming few years – with controls over public spending and a likely fall in consumer spending – job growth is predicted to be lowest of any of the Mendip towns. Development at the Street Business Park may see greater diversification of activity meaning that current pessimistic economic projections are bettered. A key challenge for the village is to develop other business sectors.
- 5.19 Strode College, Crispin School and Millfield School are all located within the town. Crispin School is currently located next to Strode College, however it retains ambitions to relocate to land made available for this use at Overleigh. The relocation of Crispin School would also allow for the expansion of Strode College, thereby better meeting the needs of both establishments. The expansion of the town by 1,300 new homes will also give rise to the need for a new 14 class primary school.
- 5.20 In terms of open space and play space there is an issue in Street in terms of accessibility. The main gap in provision at a neighbourhood level relates to the west of the town. Approximately 7 hectares of open space will need to be provided in order to meet the needs of the growing population arising from the level of development in the plan period. However, the Sustainability Appraisal of the level of housing development has indicated there may be impacts arising from recreational pressure on the protected Somerset Levels and Moors habitat areas. In order to offset this it is essential that

**In determining an appropriate housing requirement**, Street is a net importer of employees and this generates travel into the town although not to the extreme observed in Frome. Household growth and upper expectations for job growth are both predicted to generate needs for around 1100 new homes. In order to improve the self containment of Street, it is considered that housing growth should be in excess of this figure at 1300 homes. Alongside the self containment point, further demand can be expected from the Hinckley Point Nuclear development workforce as well as pressure that will arise from the restraint on new development – imposed by landscape and environmental constraints - at nearby Glastonbury.

Around 250 new homes can be delivered in Street on brownfield land and around 750 had been completed or granted consent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. This leaves a deficit of around 400 homes over the plan period that will need to be delivered on greenfield land on the edge of the town. The Sustainability Appraisal process indicates that the most advantageous direction for growth is to the west of the village on land within the parish of Walton. Development in this area would more readily deliver some of the outcomes identified for Street, notably affordable housing and new strategic open space. However, given the proximity of this area to the village of Walton, a key consideration in master planning for the site will be to prevent the coalescence of the two settlements and ensuring that residents of Walton also benefit from the nearby development.

additional and appropriately scaled strategic recreation space is made available. A joint initiative involving Glastonbury Town Council and Walton Parish Council offers the best means for a comprehensive resolution of this issue.

- 5.21 In light of concerns about the volume of traffic travelling through Walton and road safety concerns at Ashcott, Somerset County Council identified a route for a potential bypass. The likelihood of Government funding being made available for this is likely to be limited in the short to medium term. However any loss of key parts of the route, notably on the western side of Street, will undermine the integrity of the route and as a result the Proposals Map contains the route corridor for potential future use.

<b>Summary</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarks Village as a sub-regional destination</li> <li>• Good education provision – Strode College, Crispin School and Millfield School</li> <li>• Community facilities - Greenbank pool, Strode swimming pool &amp; theatre, fitness centre</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor offer of cafes, restaurants and pubs</li> <li>• Lack of activities on offer, especially for young people</li> <li>• Poor town centre food shopping</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement of night time economy</li> <li>• Renovation of Crispin Hall as a venue</li> <li>• Further linkages into Clarks village</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economy very dependent on a few sectors – especially retailing</li> <li>• Increased recreation pressure on adjacent Somerset Levels and Moors protected habitat areas.</li> </ul>

## Vision

**By 2028 Street** is renowned for the quality of its education. Strode College offers a wide range of courses and acts as a hub of education within the county. Crispin School now occupies a new site that meets its space requirements. A new primary school has been provided to meet the growing educational needs of Street.

The fields and open spaces within the village, that are so fundamental to its character and valued by local people, are extensively used. An extension to the village provides new homes, jobs, a primary school and playing pitch provision and facilities. This high quality environment includes multifunctional green spaces and networks, including natural green spaces.

Street has a diverse economy with a good supply of employment land and a range of quality office space in suitable locations within the town centre. This has led to the village retaining more of its home-grown businesses as appropriate accommodation is now available.

The High Street has emerged as one of the most stable in the district, the shops are fully occupied and a better convenience retail offer is available. The town centre environment is attractive and pedestrian friendly and public spaces are often used for events and the centre has an improved leisure offer in the form of places to eat, drink and socialise.

Crispin Hall has undergone extensive renovations now operates as a multi-functional community space for the whole village to use and enjoy.

## Core Policy 8: Street Parish Strategy

**Street is designated as a principal settlement serving a market town role to a wider rural catchment area and is a regional shopping destination. During the lifetime of the Local Plan the overarching aim is to improve self containment by delivering more housing to reflect employment opportunities locally as well as diversifying the local economy. Both of these aims can be achieved through greater coordination of development taking place in nearby Glastonbury. The following developments are proposed:**

- 1300 new homes will be delivered in line with the objective of improving the balance of homes and jobs and meeting the predicted growth in households,
  - A high proportion of housing will arise from previously developed sites in a manner which respects and enhances the town's character,
  - Greenfield land, identified as CP8A on the Proposals Map, will be required to accommodate 400-500 new homes. A broad location considered appropriate for this growth is to the west of the village, lying in the parish of Walton. Development in this area will deliver well designed new housing along with strategic scale open space (including a "Green Gap" to ensure physical separation of Street and Walton), a distributor road, a new primary school and other community facilities which would be reasonable to provide on the site to support the growth in population. A Development Brief for the site will be prepared and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide the development of the site,
  - Further land to the south and west of the allocated land area is identified as a Future Growth Area. This area represents additional suitable land for housing development that builds in flexibility in the supply of land should it be required to maintain the delivery of housing. Any release of this land will be made through the Site Allocations process, through proposals in any Neighbourhood Plan that might be prepared, or in line with provisions set out in Core Policy 2.
- Provision for between 850 and 1,050 new jobs will be made,
  - on land being brought forward at the Street Business Park (identified as CP8B on the Proposals Map) which will offer flexible, serviced space for a variety of employment needs. Additional land to the west and south of this area is identified as a Future Growth Area for additional employment. Any release of this land will be subject to the approval of a comprehensive development proposal that relates to either or both identified areas addressing its physical infrastructure, landscaping, broad uses and appropriate environmental controls. Impacts on the Bullmead Ditch Local Wildlife Site will also need to be addressed, and where required, mitigated.
  - on other fringes of the town where proposals bring forward additional land which deliver flexible modern workspace.
  - through mixed use redevelopment of redundant employment sites where they arise, to deliver affordable, flexible premises for small businesses.
  - As part of the development mix on land to the west of the village in Walton Parish (identified as CP8A on the Proposals Map) where uses are compatible with a residential setting.
- Town centre development should deliver
  - Improved foodstore provision in a location which reinforces the role of the town centre and encourages linked trips.
  - Up to 2,500sqm of additional non food retail floorspace
  - A proportion of the 7,100sqm of office space (see Table 10) as part of mixed use developments.
  - A wider range of food, drink and leisure uses in the vicinity of Farm Road to improve the appeal of the town centre to residents, shoppers and students as well as further enhancing the links between the High Street and Clarks village

- A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the parish will
  - Identify how around 7 hectares of new open space will be secured from new development sites and other initiatives.
  - How current deficiencies, particularly for formal sports pitches, can be remedied.
  - Identify priorities for expenditure of development contributions towards improvements to the extent and quality of public open spaces and accessible natural green spaces. This will include the provision of strategic open space to offset the impact of new development on the protected Somerset Levels and Moors habitats
  - Promote a network of open spaces across the parish
- The route of the Walton Bypass (identified as CP8C on the Proposals Map) is safeguarded from development that would prejudice its delivery in the long term.
- The relocation of Crispin School to the identified site at Overleigh as identified as CP8D on the Proposals Map

In addition, the Council will work with partners, landowners and other interests, to

- promote the refurbishment of the Crispin Hall, or provide a replacement community venue,
- deliver a multi-user path fully linking Walton, Street and Glastonbury,
- identify priorities for expenditure of development contributions towards infrastructure to support the growing population.

**KEY DIAGRAM** - see composite diagram at the end of the Glastonbury Town Strategy section

## SHEPTON MALLET

- 5.22 Shepton Mallet, located in the heart of Mendip, is the second smallest town in the district with a population of 9,700. Despite its heritage and attractive appearance, the town's image remains poor with a number of prominent areas in need of significant investment.
- 5.23 Shepton Mallet's town centre is the smallest in the district and it has been in decline for many years. The relocation of the town's main foodstore from a peripheral location on Fosse Lane to the Townsend Retail Park to the south of the town centre in 2007 was seen as a means to deliver regeneration to a derelict employment site and help to boost trade in the centre. Townsend Retail Park has delivered large format retailing which was absent in the town, as well as a large Tesco store offering a range of non-food goods. This development has improved the retention of spending in the town as a whole, however, according to an assessment in 2010, the benefits of higher footfall are not being translated into gains on the high street. Whilst there has been investment in a number of high street properties, stimulated by the Townscape Heritage Initiative and support to the weekly market, shop vacancy rates remain stubbornly high especially around the Market Place.
- 5.24 Further enhancements to improve the physical appearance and image of the town centre would support business investment, however it remains that a major anchor presence or specific niche retailing offer needs to be developed to maintain customers and attract new trade. The Anglo Trading Estate and Little Ostry/Commercial Road Area represent underutilised land on the town centre fringe which could provide an opportunity for new and refurbished space for knowledge based businesses or creative activities. This would bring workers into the heart of the town, thereby having the potential to revitalise the town centre economy.
- 5.25 Shepton Mallet contains the second largest concentration of employment land and premises in the district. The land and premises available is of varying quality but the views of local businesses has suggested that a proportion of cheaper, lower quality premises are valued as they support business formation and keep costs down. Current employment land is mainly concentrated to the east of the town, with significant transport and warehousing firms to the south. Job growth projections point towards a good level of new employment in the town of 1300-1500 jobs in the period to 2028. The District Council is promoting an innovative initiative that will see its Cannards Grave Road site emerge as a public sector hub within which district and county council services, police and other organisations will be concentrated. This may release development opportunities in the town. Attention is also being given to the creation of an Innovation Centre to stimulate new business development.
- 5.26 Regeneration proposals at the Bath and West Showground, two miles south of the town, include the earmarking of just over 10 hectares of new employment land. Covenants on the showground site will restrict the uses able to be accommodated there to those with a rural economy focus which would include the food and drink sector. Estimates suggest 450 jobs could be expected on this site in initial phases with as many as 1500 jobs on site in the longer term. The close proximity of this development to the town, the potential level of employment emerging and likely housing needs arising from it warrant being reflected as issues which should be reflected in Shepton Mallet's wider setting. Discussions have already agreed that the Bath and West site will need to improve its linkage to the town (in terms of, for example, communications, community/leisure roles) in order that advocated spin-off benefits for Shepton can actually be realised. After 3 years of work, the scheme remains an exciting possibility, but delivery has undoubtedly been hampered by the wider national

### Determining an appropriate housing requirement

Shepton Mallet has more jobs than the available workforce can supply and so there is a net flow of people into the town. Projected household growth is expected to be in the region of 1100 whilst job growth, will be in the order of 1300-1500. Building in some caution reflecting progress to date of employment creation at the Bath and West Showground site, a figure of 1300 homes is proposed. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 around 650 of these new homes had been built or granted consent. Capacity for a further 200 homes exists on brownfield sites within the town indicating that a greenfield site would be required to deliver the remainder – 450 homes. Land to the south of the town represents the most suitable location to accommodate this growth with the only major constraint, drainage, needing to be addressed through the delivery of a comprehensive sustainable drainage system. The policy identifies an area for the needs of this plan period but gives a clear signal that future growth should be planned for in a comprehensive manner on adjacent land.

economic climate. The Council will need to keep job growth under review as this will have implications for future housing provision.

- 5.27 A clear risk arises from reliance on this site to deliver new economic development. The limitations on end users will mean that land to accommodate the needs of other sectors may be constrained. In response to this, the Council through the Local Plan Part II: Site Allocations process, or emerging work being commenced by Shepton Mallet Town Council, will look to make further provision. Land south of Cannards Grave offers opportunities which are well served by the road network and which would seem to have the least landscape impacts than on other fringes of the town.
- 5.28 The town is well served by schools – it has four primary schools and Whitstone Community School which provides secondary education on-site and sixth form education at Strode College in Street. The level of development proposed in the town will, however, require a further primary school to be built and would be expected to be provided as part of the southern greenfield extension to the town. Discussions with other service providers have, at this stage, not confirmed any additional community infrastructure shortfalls that would arise from this level of development, although new open space in the order of 6.5 hectares, to be planned for as part of a proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy for the town, will be needed.
- 5.29 It should be noted that Shepton Mallet Town Council, with support from the district council, is bringing forward a formal Neighbourhood Plan. This plan is intended to set out a number of specific policies applicable to applications for development in the town.

<b>Summary</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central location within the district as a whole</li> <li>• Heritage and character, although in need of care</li> <li>• Cheaper housing relative to the rest of the district</li> <li>• High level of jobs compared to the working population</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town image is poor</li> <li>• Limited retail offer and high vacancy rates in the heart of the town centre</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underutilised land for substantial redevelopment in and around the town centre</li> <li>• Investment in the nearby Bath and West Showground</li> <li>• Extensive development area to the south of the town able to meet a range of development needs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dominance of the Townsend Retail Park over the town centre</li> <li>• Increased surface water flooding arising from new development and climate change</li> </ul>

## Vision

*By 2028 Shepton Mallet is a revitalised market town with a vibrant shopping area focused on meeting local needs. The northern end of the town centre is regenerated, lively and attractive, and redevelopment opportunities at Little Ostry, Commercial Road and at the Anglo Building have delivered space for business and services. Tourism activity has grown and has exploited the town's heritage and cultural draw, encouraging demand for visitor accommodation.*

*A southern extension to the town, providing homes, jobs, a primary school and substantial amounts of open space - including land to accommodate the annual Mid Somerset Show - has been created. The well-designed sustainably constructed homes meet the needs of local people and the workforce. The area has been integrated into the rest of the town with multifunctional green spaces, pedestrian and cycle links. Employment space, provided as part of the development, provides opportunities for small business creation as well as more dedicated commercial areas on the fringes which take advantage of the road network.*

*Employment and trade has been stimulated by the release of new employment land on the fringes of the town as well as regeneration proposals at the Bath and West Showground. These ventures have attracted businesses offering higher skilled and higher paid work. The Bath and West Showground, adjacent to Shepton Mallet and lying in a central geographical position away from major centres, also provides leisure facilities and visitor accommodation serving the central and western parts of the district. The wider network of cycleways and footpaths provide links from the site into the town encouraging healthier lifestyles and reducing reliance on the car.*

*Flooding is less of a threat to the town and to communities downstream along the River Sheppey, with storm-water capacity problems having been addressed and new development having incorporated Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.*

## **Core Policy 9: Shepton Mallet Town Strategy**

**Shepton Mallet is designated as a principal settlement serving a market town role to its wider rural catchment area. During the lifetime of the Local Plan the aim is to realise its redevelopment potential to improve its image and its prosperity. The following developments are proposed:**

- 1300 new homes will be delivered in line with the needs of the local market
  - Most provision will arise from previously developed sites and other land within the Development Limits of the town, as defined on the Proposals Map, in a manner which respects and enhances the town's character.
  - Land is allocated, as identified by CP9A on the Proposals Map for about 500 new homes adjacent to the western side of Cannards Grave Road. This area will deliver mixed use development incorporating housing, substantial areas of open space (including the broad retention of open land on the northern part of the site - identified as a Green Gap on the Proposals Map), a comprehensive sustainable urban drainage, a new primary school to meet the needs of the growing population, small business space compatible with a residential setting, and land to accommodate the annual Mid Somerset Show. A Development Brief will be prepared and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to consider the arrangement of land uses and connections to the surrounding area. It will guide the housing allocation and inform the future phased release of adjacent land to maintain housing supply.
  - Further land is identified as a Future Growth Area to the west of the allocated area. This area represents additional suitable land for housing development that builds in flexibility in the supply of land should it be required to maintain the delivery of housing. Any release of this land will be made through the Site Allocations process or through proposals in any Neighbourhood Plan that might be prepared
- Provision for around 1300 new jobs will be made:
  - On 10 hectares of land identified on the Proposals Map as CP9B at the Bath and West Showground within sectors related to the rural economy, including the food and drink industry, as agreed in principle for development by the Council in an adopted Development Brief.
  - Through the delivery of flexible office space for a wider range of Public and Voluntary sector users on Mendip District Council's office site at Cannards Grave Road
  - On other fringes of the town where proposals bring forward additional land which deliver flexible modern workspace. Sites may be formally allocated through the Site Allocations process or the proposed Shepton Mallet Neighbourhood Plan.
  - Through mixed use redevelopment of redundant employment sites where they arise, to deliver affordable, flexible premises for small businesses.
- Regeneration of the town centre should deliver through mixed use development:
  - Up to 5,000sqm of additional non food retail floorspace with the clear priority on development which supports the renaissance of the town centre and reintegrates its activity with Townsend Retail Park.
  - Public realm improvements
  - Around 5,500sqm of office/studio space to facilitate small business formation and growth.
- A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the town will:
  - Identify how around 6.5 hectares of new open space, will be secured from new development sites and other initiatives.
  - Identify priorities for expenditure of development contributions towards improvements to the extent and quality of public open spaces and accessible natural green spaces. This will include establishing new cycleways and footpaths linking parts of the town to key locations on its fringes including Cannards Grave and the Bath and West Showground, and assessing the potential for integrated Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to further address risks arising from storm water runoff in the town and communities downstream.

In addition, the Council will work with partners, landowners and other interests, through the Shepton Mallet Neighbourhood Plan and other initiatives to deliver:

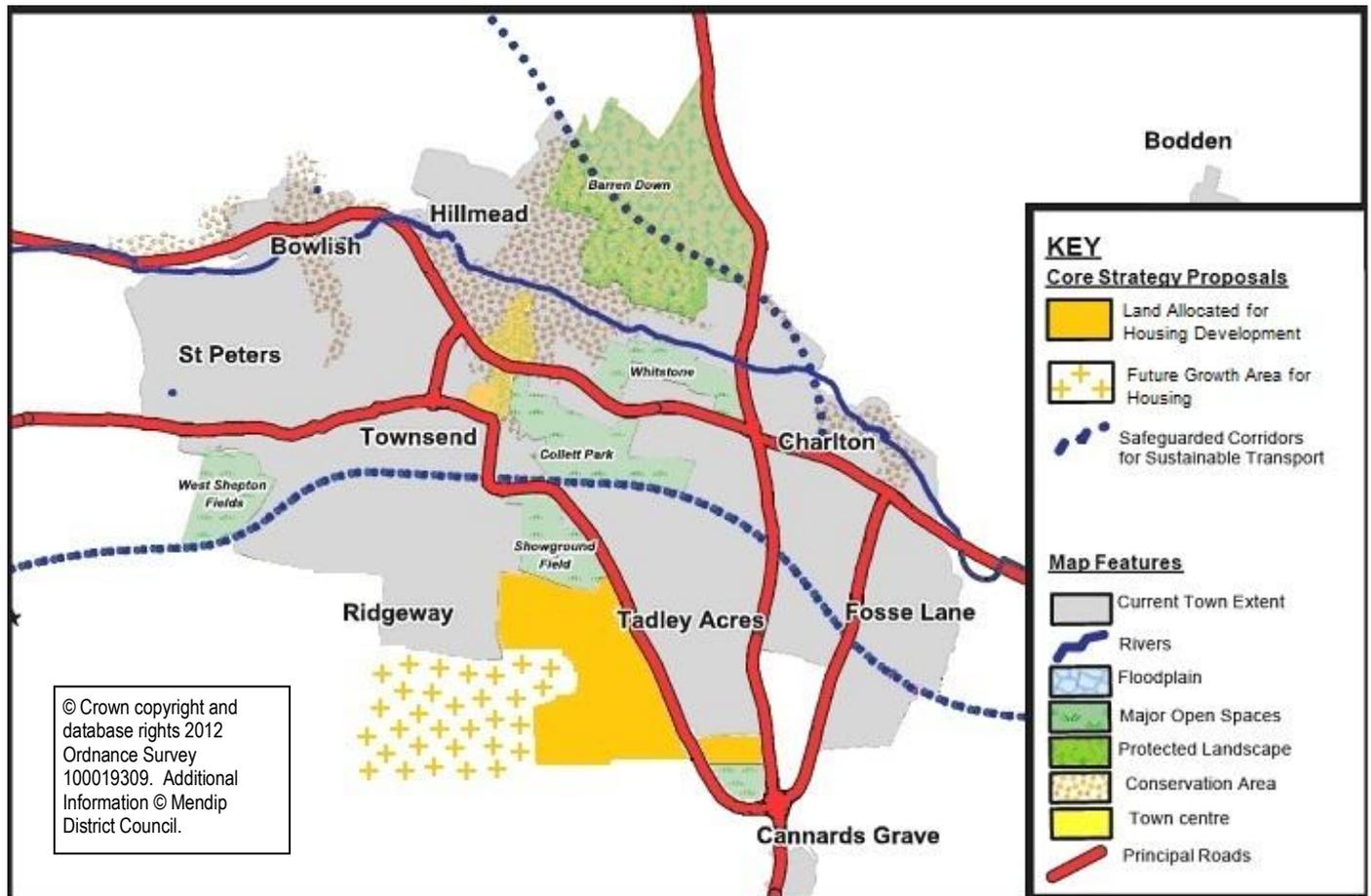
- the multi-user path from Shepton Mallet to Wells
- a marketing and tourism strategy to showcase the town's historical and cultural attractions in a more coordinated and structured manner to draw people and spending into the town.
- priorities for expenditure of development contributions towards infrastructure to support the growing population.

## **IMPLEMENTATION: LAND AT CANNARDS GRAVE ROAD**

- 5.30 The plan making process has concluded that the land south of the town to the west of Cannards Grave Road represents the most appropriate direction for growth over the longer term. An area of land is allocated for development and will be subject of a Development Brief to be adopted by the Council. A further adjacent area, referred to as a Future Growth Area in the policy, is also identified in the policy and on the proposals map as being a logical extension to this development area, able to be released in the longer term to satisfy future housing demands. Any release will be subject to the criteria set out in Core Policy 2. A third area – termed a Green Gap – is also identified on the Proposals Map. This area encompasses what is known locally as the Showground Field and adjacent land. Consultation made it clear that the openness of this area was an important feature to retain in this part of the town.
- 5.31 The council has been mindful that the southern extension of the town, incorporating land to the west of Cannards Grave Road is a long term proposal capable of meeting housing needs beyond this plan period to 2028. Furthermore the use of land allocated will be the subject of extensive further planning through a Development Brief to ensure that what emerges there creates a successful neighbourhood in its own right as well as carefully integrating with existing development. In this regard there are two specific issues that will need to be resolved.
- 5.32 Firstly, there is a need to provide a long term solution to the siting of the Mid Somerset Show, an important annual one day agricultural and rural life event whose growing support is generating increasing land demands. In principle, agreement has been reached between The Mid Somerset Agricultural Society and landowners to accommodate the show's needs on land to the south of the new development area close to Cannards Grave. However, until firm details are established in a Development Brief for the area there is a need for some flexibility which may include land swaps between the allocated area and the Future Growth Area which would be allowed for under the provisions set out in Core Policy 2.
- 5.33 Secondly, the existing Showground Field, identified as a Green Gap on the Proposals Map, is part of the overall scheme. Whilst the council accepts, in principle, that this area should remain broadly open in character, this should not preclude the use of fringes of the land from built development for community and leisure uses associated with the space. Furthermore, in the pursuit of a successful and integrated pattern of development, housing development on the western edge of the green gap is not ruled out in that properties could provide advantages, for example, in the offering passive surveillance of what will still be substantial open spaces. Ultimately, the council sees this area evolving as part of what was initially proposed as a "Green Lung" serving this part of the town, offering accessible natural green space, formal open space and contributing to the residential amenity of the new development area. The most appropriate solution will be for the Development Brief process – involving extensive public engagement – to conclude.

# SHEPTON MALLET KEY DIAGRAM

A graphic representation of the major features, designations and proposals of the Local Plan



## WELLS

- 5.34 The City of Wells is a vibrant local centre. Located on the southern edge of the Mendip Hills, it owes its city status to the presence of the imposing Wells Cathedral. This, along with its classic historic town character, magnificent landscape setting and pleasant town centre environment makes it an important tourist destination. Maintaining the heritage value of the city's historic core is a clear priority and an updated Conservation Area Character Appraisal was published in October 2011 setting out measures to help protect and enhance the buildings and the character of the city.
- 5.35 As an economic centre, Wells is, arguably, the most successful of all the Mendip towns. The city has a broad base of employment, a workforce with skills levels above regional and national averages and significantly more jobs than the local economically active population can support. During the 2000s the city has seen the closure of industrial scale employers, although during this same period there has been growth in service sector firms which have broadly maintained overall employment levels. The city retains a range of specialist professional practices, a public school and a range of health sector jobs as well as small businesses and retail activity aimed at visitors, the local population and surrounding communities. Serviced employment land for office, commercial and light industrial uses is available and being promoted at Cathedral Business Park whilst further land within the former Dulcote quarry offers potential for a wider array of employment activity in a location that is shielded from the city's wider landscape setting. As a result, no additional employment land allocations are considered necessary in the period to 2028. The city's economic potential over the plan period is therefore strong, however realising that potential depends upon business having access to a suitable workforce.
- 5.36 Demographic analysis indicates that Wells' greatest challenge is its ageing population. Wells has always held an attraction as a place for retired and pre-retired groups on account of its heritage, generally level terrain and local services. This long term pattern has pushed the average age of the local population significantly higher than the other Mendip towns. Ongoing demand for housing from older (and generally more affluent) in-migrants combined with their likelihood of longer lifespan in retirement is reducing limited supply of housing as well as adding a premium to housing values. These impacts further disadvantage the ability of first time buyers and working families to compete in the local housing market.
- 5.37 The strong local economy combined with a shortfall in local labour to meet demands has consequences for commuting patterns and pressure on the local highway network. Available data in Tables 1a and 1b suggests a net shortfall of around 1500 workers compared to jobs, although given that there is a flow of workers out of Wells for higher paid jobs in greater Bristol and Bath, the gross shortfall is higher.
- 5.38 The paragraphs above capture the dilemmas in planning for Wells. On the one hand, its heritage, landscape and compact character suggest that restraint should be exercised in planning for new development. However, on the other, the social dynamics at work mean that restraint would exacerbate the social and economic stresses that the city has to endure. Population displacement (to lower value housing market areas) and workforce shortages which are drawing people (often the same people) back in are creating significant impacts which in themselves threaten the city's character and sense of community.
- 5.39 Wells as a retail centre is healthy with a strong independent presence and some national chains. With two new foodstores in development at Whiting Way and on the former Clares site, no additional convenience provision is required in the plan period. The successful weekly markets in the Market

Wells is highly constrained being surrounded for the most part by protected landscapes, heritage designations and flood risk areas. However, the adjacent paragraphs underline the need for housing to support the local economy. These factors have influenced the conclusion that 1450 new homes is the most appropriate level of provision for the city to 2028. That said this level of provision will only contribute to a marginal improvement of 200 in the current workforce shortfall of over 2000.

There is a good supply of available brownfield land and other development opportunities within the city's current boundaries – notably three redundant employment sites. Together with smaller sites, and counting development since 2006, around 1000 homes could be secured. Developable options for greenfield development around the city are limited and the locations to the south west and west of the city (in St Cuthbert Out parish) are considered the least constrained in terms of their impact on the setting of the city. Careful planning is required, particularly on the land to the west of Wells to integrate development in the landscape and to link new development to the facilities and services in the historic core.

Place and regular indoor markets within the Town Hall attract people from considerable distances. The most significant long-term issue facing the retail centre is maintaining the city's offer by sensitively creating new space for new retailers, many of whom are unable to invest in the city on account of the limited flexibility of premises available. Responses from retailers and residents during consultation indicate there is potential for the city to reinvigorate its offer to its local and visitor catchment. Extending the retail area in the vicinity of Princes Road/Priory Road remains the most realistic opportunity to deliver space in a location that is well connected to public transport and that makes use of underutilised land. Modest incremental developments adjacent to the High Street, making use of some backland areas, are also not ruled out as a more organic means to secure growth.

- 5.40 Community facilities in the city are good. The Priory Health Park continues to offer a range of health and care services including minor surgical procedures. There are high quality schools with Wells Cathedral School offering private education (from infant to A level age groups) whilst the Blue School offers a well resourced and highly regarded state education, now governed under academy arrangements. Primary level education is offered at two primary, one infant and a junior school.
- 5.41 Secondary school capacity can be extended with appropriate development contributions from new development as required. The capacity of primary level education to accommodate future growth is limited and the Education Authority has indicated that a new 7 class Primary school would be necessary. Given the growth on the western fringe of the city and the lack of provision there, the land allocated includes a requirement to provide a site to accommodate this need which can be developed in response to the projected need using development contributions (including future Community Infrastructure Levy monies) and education authority funding. A school on the southern edge of this area would be well placed to serve new, existing and longer term residential development on this fringe of the city.

<b>Summary</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic character crowned by the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace</li> <li>• Mendip Hills and eastern parkland landscape settings</li> <li>• Strong shopping and tourism draw</li> <li>• A major centre of diverse local employment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordability of housing to local people and the workforce</li> <li>• Local workforce shortfalls</li> <li>• Limited stock of affordable housing</li> <li>• Declining retail offer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement of the range of town centre shopping; plenty of retailers looking for units of the right size.</li> <li>• Brownfield sites (for housing and retail development) and available supply of less constrained greenfield land</li> <li>• To address the issue of affordable housing and keep younger people and those with families in the city</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ageing population</li> <li>• Ability of employers to access a local workforce will worsen</li> <li>• Undersupply of housing</li> <li>• Traffic flows and parking</li> </ul>

## **Vision**

*By 2028, Wells offers a wider range of housing, employment and community facilities which meet the needs of all sections of the community. The city continues to be celebrated for the quality of its landscape setting and built environment with new development, mostly provided for on previously developed land, being well designed and responsive to its surroundings.*

*The potential of the local economy has been realised. New employment space to the south of the city has allowed room for local firms to grow and new enterprises to be established, however the city as a whole continues to offer a range of premises to meet the needs of business, particularly in the professional, technical and knowledge based sectors. At the heart of the city centre, retailing and tourism remain as core parts of the local economy. To the south west of the High Street, redeveloped land now offers an improved range and choice of shopping to compliment that already available whilst the development as a whole has rejuvenated this important gateway to the city with design and architecture that makes effective links with the historic core.*

*The geography of the city has lent itself to the ongoing development and use of walking and cycling networks allowing more local people to gain access by these means to social, cultural and employment destinations, in turn contributing to healthier lifestyles.*

## Core Policy 10: Wells City Strategy

**Wells is designated as a principal settlement serving a market town role to a wider rural catchment area and is a significant tourist and cultural destination. During the lifetime of the Local Plan, the overarching aim is to deliver new housing development to meet the needs of the workforce and local people as well as to maintain the aesthetic and economic health of the city for its residents and visitors. The following developments are proposed:**

- 1450 new homes will be delivered to accommodate a greater share of the local workforce in the city.
  - Around 1000 new homes will come forward from already consented development sites and previously developed land (including the former Clares, Thales and Nutricia sites) and other sites within the Development Limits defined on the Proposals Map. All proposals will be delivered in a manner which respects and enhances the city's historic core.
  - 350 new homes will be delivered on two greenfield areas as set out below. Both sites will be the subject of separate Development Briefs which will be adopted by the Council prior to any planning permission being granted.

### Land South of Glastonbury Road – identified as CP10A on the Proposals Map

- Land south of Glastonbury Road is allocated to provide up to 150 new homes. As a southerly second phase to the redevelopment of the Nutricia site it will be essential that the development is fully integrated with the preceding development area and sensitive to the prominent ridgeline which will define the southern edge of the site.

### Land West of Wells – identified as CP10B on the Proposals Map

- Land West of Wells (located between the A371 and Wookey Hole Road) is allocated to provide about 200 new homes, a site for a new 7 class primary school and public open space.

The southern portion of the area, capable of delivering a further 100-150 new homes is identified as a Future Growth Area which will be released for development during the Site Allocations process to maintain the supply of housing land unless deliverable alternative sites emerge. If so, the area will be retained until a subsequent review.

In response to concerns about urban coalescence with nearby Haybridge, the amenity value to which local people attach to the area and the findings of a Habitats Regulations Assessment, the diagram on the following page identifies the broad extent of the developable areas and indicative residual areas which will be safeguarded as a Local Green Space. A Development Brief will define in detail the extents, however for habitat offsetting purposes a minimum of 1.22 hectares for the Northern Development Area (NDA), and 4.1 hectares for the Southern Development Area (SDA) area north of the A371, will be required to be provided as managed habitat to offset the loss of foraging area available to horseshoe bats in the North Somerset and Mendip Bat SAC.

- Provision for around 1,500-1,950 new jobs will be made through:
  - delivery of employment space, within the already consented sites at Cathedral Business Park and at Dulcote Quarry
  - mixed use redevelopment of redundant employment sites where they arise, to deliver affordable, flexible premises for offices and small businesses.
  - granting of consent of modest employment areas on other fringes of the city which deliver flexible modern workspace in a manner that is responsive to the city's setting.

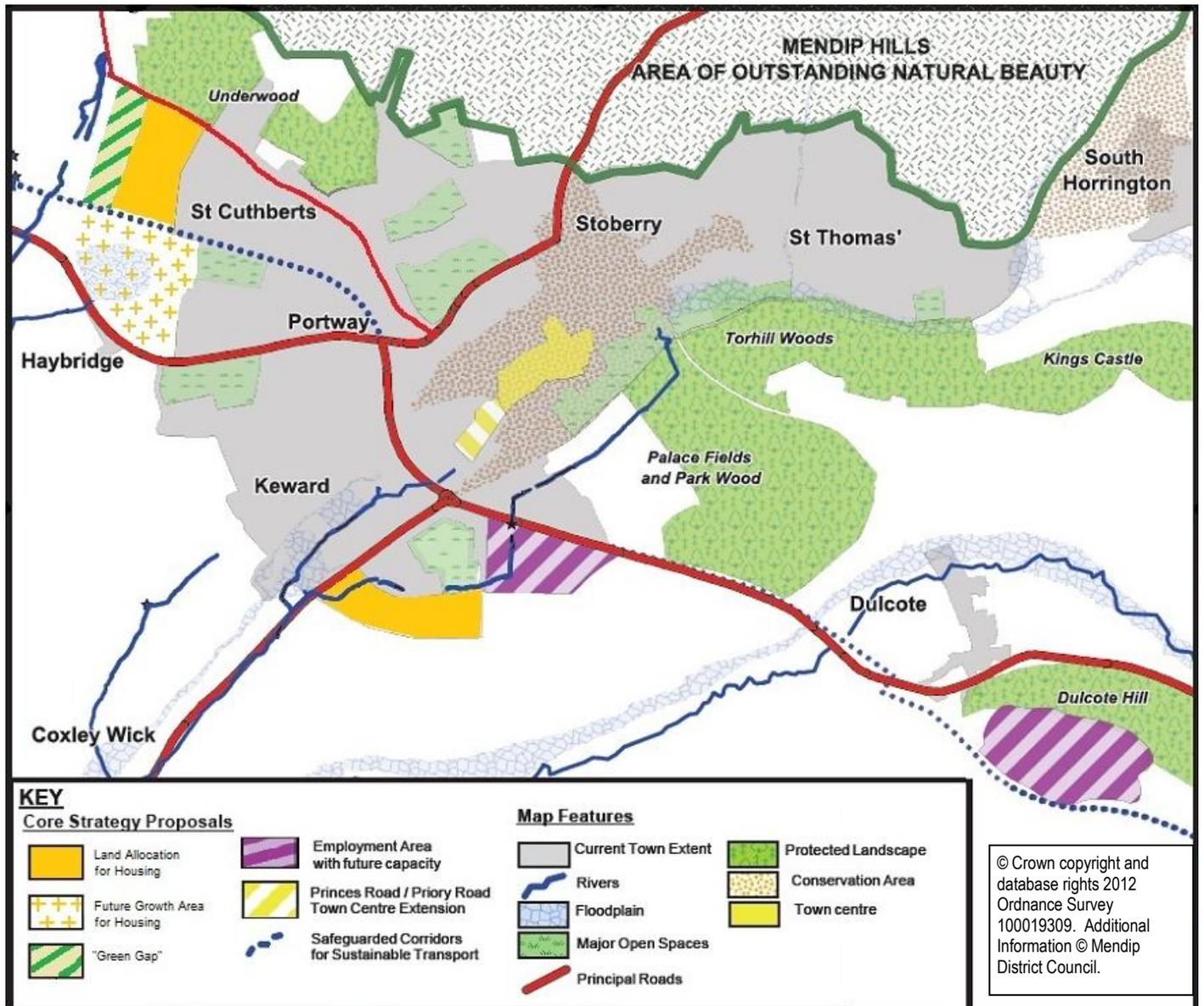
- Sensitive town centre development which complements the city's historic core should deliver
  - up to 7,500sqm of new non-food retail floorspace through:
    - Redevelopment of land at Princes Road/Priory Road identified as CP10C on the Proposals Map.
    - Changes of use of premises on Union Street and St Johns Road in response to higher levels of shopper footfall arising from new supermarkets at Whiting Way and Southover.
    - Smaller scaled shopping arcades through careful redevelopment of premises on both sides of the high street providing space for small retail businesses
  - A proportion of the 9,750sqm of office space requirement (see Table 10)
- A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the city will be prepared to:
  - Identify how around 4.5 hectares of new open space, will be secured from new development sites and other initiatives.
  - Identify priorities for expenditure of development contributions towards improvements to the extent and quality of public open spaces and accessible natural green spaces. This will include promoting best use of the network of open spaces across the town for multiple benefit including, for example, recreation, wildlife and improved accessibility

In addition, the Council will work with partners, landowners and other interests to deliver:

- The multi-user path from Shepton Mallet to Wells and from Wells to Cheddar.
- Provision of additional car parking to serve the needs of visitors and users of the city centre
- Further enhancement of the Conservation Area and wider setting of the city's historic core.
- Identified priorities for expenditure of development contributions towards infrastructure to support the growing population.

# WELLS KEY DIAGRAM

A graphic representation of the major features, designations and proposals of the Local Plan



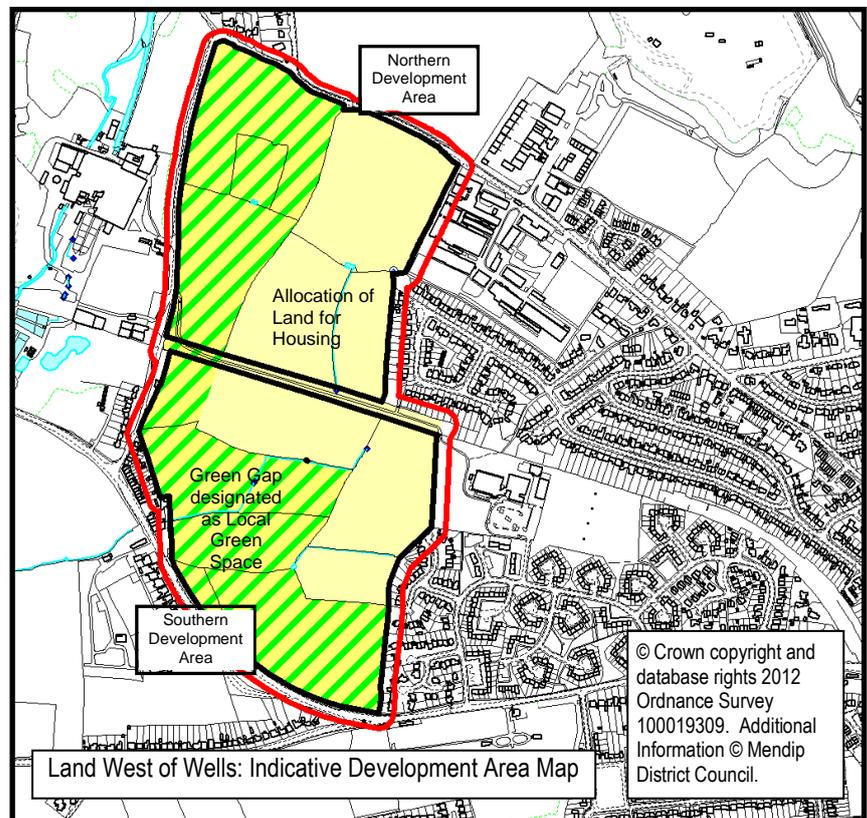
## IMPLEMENTATION: LAND WEST OF WELLS

### Phasing

- 5.42 As set out above, the council is mindful of the city's setting, no more so than on the west of the city. This locality has seen much of the post war growth although, since the 1980s, the overall need for greenfield development has been diminished through policies aimed at the re-use of previously developed sites. Whilst this plan proposes the majority of new homes on brownfield and infill sites around the city, it remains that these will not be sufficient to deliver the homes needed. However, whilst needing to offer clarity about where housing will be delivered, the council is mindful that during the lifetime of the plan other sites may emerge which represent better development opportunities and so intends that a phased release policy is applied to part of the West of Wells development area as set out in Core Policy 10.
- 5.43 In practical terms, the council will not grant planning permission for the development of the West of Wells area south of the former railway line until a review of land supply is undertaken as part of the Site Allocations process. Given that current deliverable and developable sites indicate land supply sufficient to deliver around 70-80 homes per year until 2021, there is no urgent need for the land. The Site Allocations process will need to make provision for the remaining 100 homes, although any surplus or shortfall of completions will also be factored in. Where deliverable alternative sites can be identified the council may choose to allocate these based on findings from a site based Sustainability Appraisal.

### Development Area

- 5.44 The Wells Key Diagram identifies the manner in which new land being proposed for housing is made. This is shown in definitive detail on the Proposals Map. In response to concerns about the coalescence of Wells with the settlement of Haybridge to the west, as well as issues raised in respect of foraging patterns of protected bat species, the adjacent diagram gives an indication of the extent of development in this area **if** all the land, whether in the medium or long term, is released for development.



- 5.45 Working broadly within boundaries defined by well established hedgerows, the developable area represents one which could deliver 300 to 350 new homes. 200 of these, and the new school site, would arise from the Northern Development Area. The residual green striped area (which includes land area subject to flood risk in the Southern Development Area) will be safeguarded as a Local Green Space providing a mix of managed habitat (in response to findings from the Appropriate Assessment), open land in agricultural use and public open space subject to the outcome of any legal agreements related to the development areas.
- 5.46 A development brief will also need to secure agreement from Natural England in relation to the design and use of lighting around the site on bats and their prey as well as the form of any new access road that may be required to service the Southern Development Area (SDA) which will need to be unlit and lined with hedgerow. Furthermore, the development brief should consider suggestions that the Northern Development area sets aside an appropriate strip of land adjacent Wookey Hole Road to preserve a perception of openness on this approach to the city.



## 6.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

### National Planning Policies and the Local Plan

- 6.1 This Local Plan, which over time will be supplemented with additional parts as described in section 1, is prepared within a legislative regime that gives it primacy in the determination of planning applications made relating to land and buildings in Mendip District.
- 6.2 This part of the plan now goes on to set out a series of policies that will be used to manage all proposed development in a manner that ensures new development is responsive to local needs and conditions. In line with the **Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development** set out in the introductory section of this Local Plan, where a particular matter is not addressed by policies within this plan, applicants should have regard to the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) to ensure that proposals do not have adverse impacts (that outweigh potential benefits) when assessed against its policies. The Council may also have regard to other Material Considerations in reaching decisions on cases.

### Development Management

- 6.3 In recent years, the regulatory function of Local Planning Authorities has shifted. Previously, their role was, broadly, to allow applications which conformed with policies and reject those which did not. This system put in place an adversarial arrangement which was akin to pitting the applicant against the authority and there appeared to be little flexibility.
- 6.4 In more recent times, and in response to the emergence of more flexible development policies (at national level) able to take into account a broader range of issues (rather than simplistic 'black or white' tests) the role of the Planning Authority has moved to one of manage development through its regulatory role to deliver wider outcomes rather than just decisions on individual policies. To this end the Council's Development Management service now actively engages applicants to help them shape development proposals towards wider goals affording a more balanced use of policies and material considerations to deliver development that the area needs. This is not to suggest that the Council is any less thorough in considering poor quality or badly conceived development proposals as it will still reject such proposals. However, where benefits outweigh minor drawbacks it is inclined to take a more pragmatic view. This is now reinforced in the National Planning Policy Framework's Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development.

### Local Development Policies

- 6.5 The policies in the remaining part of section 6 are those which the Council considers necessary to put in place to give a better local dimension in its regulatory role as Local Planning Authority. In preparing this limited suite of policies the Council has had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is satisfied that the content of it currently offers sufficient safeguards to manage matters not addressed in this plan. However, depending upon political and technical influences, the NPPF is likely to be subject to change over time and so the Council will keep under review its local policies and bring forward new policies where national intentions are not considered to be sufficient to make decisions that reflect local conditions or needs.
- 6.6 The policies are grouped together in sections reflecting specific themes. Within each section, relevant issues and links to associated guidance and information are provided. Applicants are hereby warned that the sources are not exhaustive, and that, over time, changing regulation or best practice may mean that the sources become less relevant or should otherwise be disregarded.
- 6.7 Appendix 1 includes a group of **Saved Policies** (explicitly called Saved Policies and prefixed by "SP") from the last Local Plan which are still considered to have relevance and application in light of a review undertaken during the plan making process and again following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework. The council will review these as part of the Local Plan Part II: Site Allocations process.

6.8 The local Development Policies that will be used to consider development proposals are grouped as follows:

<b>Protecting Distinctive Character and Promoting Better Development</b>	Development Policy 1 - Local Identity and Distinctiveness Development Policy 2 - Open Areas of Local Significance Development Policy 3 - Heritage Conservation Development Policy 4 - Mendip's Landscapes Development Policy 5 - Biodiversity and Ecological Networks Development Policy 6 - Bat Protection Development Policy 7 - Design and Amenity of New Development Development Policy 8 - Environmental Protection Development Policy 9 - Transport Impact of New Development Development Policy 10 - Parking Standards
<b>Providing Places to Live</b>	Development Policy 11 - Affordable Housing: General Development Policy 12 - Affordable Housing: Rural Exceptions Development Policy 13 – Accommodation for Rural Workers Development Policy 14 - Housing Mix and Type Development Policy 15 - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
<b>Local Infrastructure</b>	Development Policy 16 - Open Space and Green Infrastructure Development Policy 17 - Safeguarding of Community Facilities Development Policy 18 - Safeguarding Corridors for Sustainable Travel Development Policy 19 - Development Contributions
<b>Maintaining Economic Potential</b>	Development Policy 20 - Reuse of Employment Sites Development Policy 21 - Managing Town Centre Uses Development Policy 22 - Reuse and Conversion of Rural Buildings

## PROTECTING MENDIP'S DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER AND PROMOTING BETTER DEVELOPMENT

- 6.9 This section sets out a group of policies aimed at ensuring that the natural, cultural and built assets of the district are safeguarded, whilst seeking to ensure that all development is of a high quality in terms of its regard to its setting and the quality of its design. The section also addresses site specific transport considerations in terms of access, safety, transport alternatives and parking provision. These facets are essential in ensuring that new development, which may be present for a lifetime or more, is responsive to its surroundings and the needs of users, both now and in the future.

### Development Policy 1: Local Identity and Distinctiveness

- 6.10 The district has a wealth of natural, physical, cultural and historical assets as is detailed in the [Portrait of Mendip](#). The Proposals Map will set out the locations and physical extents of protected sites, designated areas and other assets which exist within Mendip district. Throughout the consultation that has been carried out on the Local Plan many contributors highlighted that the area and its constituent communities enjoyed and benefited from a clear sense of place and identity. This sense of place and identity is evident from the high number of natural and heritage assets within the area, and also the range of protective designations present which have been introduced to safeguard these qualities of the physical and historical environment. It is also clear, particularly in the towns that the physical environment and range of activity combine to create distinct identities and a real sense of place.
- 6.11 In terms of backdrop, the landscapes of the Mendip Hills AONB, the Somerset Levels, and transitional areas around them provide a diverse and highly attractive rural setting which historically has influenced the dispersed settlement pattern of the area. This backdrop has also influenced the variety of habitats and wildlife present, as well as the nature of rural land use which in itself has shaped the character of the countryside for hundreds of years.
- 6.12 The Mendip towns, the primary centres of activity, each have their own functional and cultural identities which, over time, have been cultivated and promoted to generate distinctive senses of place. Rural communities also have their own distinctive character, although given their limited functional role this character arises more from historic and aesthetic influences along with the vibrancy of community life. Despite the decline in local employment, services and ongoing change in the structure of the population, it is important that locally driven need for employment – advocated through the Local Plan process – is sensitive to the complex interaction of countryside, heritage, habitats, remaining economic activity and social networks.
- 6.13 The following policies are designed to ensure that the distinctive character and diversity of places within Mendip is considered maintained and where possible enhanced. They also give a clear steer to community groups – in line with Core Policy 5 – that the Local Planning Authority encourages community groups and other interests to undertake characterisation exercises (such as Village Design Statements, Design Guides and Context Studies) to define and improve awareness of local character and identity. Where their preparation is properly informed, consulted upon amongst the community and where relevant is in accordance with guidance and other plans and policies such assessments will be formally adopted by the Council. In doing this, the Council will use these sources as material considerations in determining development proposals in the relevant locality to better inform the application of national policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

**DP1: Local Identity and Distinctiveness**

1. All development proposals should contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local identity and distinctiveness across the district.
2. Proposals should be formulated with an appreciation of the built and natural context of their locality recognising that distinctive street scenes, townscapes, views, scenery, boundary walls or hedges, trees, rights of way and other features collectively generate a distinct sense of place and local identity. Such features may not always be designated or otherwise formally recognised.
3. Where a development proposal would adversely affect or result in the loss of features or scenes recognised as being distinctive, the Council will balance up the significance of the feature or scene to the locality, the degree of impact the proposal would have upon it, and the wider benefits which would arise from the proposal if it were approved. Any decisions will also take into account efforts made by the applicant to viably preserve the feature, avoid, minimise and/or mitigate negative effects and the need for the proposal to take place in that location.

**Development Policy 2: Open Areas of Local Significance**

- 6.14 Over successive plan periods the Council has identified a multitude of open spaces which make a significant contribution to the quality of the built environment. These spaces may provide views out of an otherwise built up street scene, allow views of significant local features or buildings beyond them, enhance the setting of the settlement, create a sense of space or otherwise contribute to the locally distinctive character of an area. In some cases the areas are also designated as formal sports or recreation spaces under Development Policy 16.
- 6.15 Communities have made it clear that these areas warrant continued protection and that additional areas should be identified. The Council will therefore retain the current areas previously designated under Policy Q2 of the previous Local Plan. However, Part II of the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans prepared in the interim will specifically review the ongoing appropriateness of protection for existing areas and provide an opportunity for new areas to be identified. At that time the Council, in discussion with communities and landowners, will also consider whether some or all of the retained sites should be designated as Local Green Spaces as provided for under paragraphs 76-78 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

**DP2: Open Areas of Local Significance**

**Permission will not be granted for development which would harm the contribution to distinctive local character made by Open Areas of Local Significance as identified on the Proposals Map.**

## Development Policy 3: Heritage Conservation

### Local Context

- 6.16 The district of Mendip has a wealth of historic buildings and places which contribute greatly to the character and appearance of the local environment and form part of a distinctive and cherished local scene. In terms of principal Heritage Assets, the district contains:
- Almost 3000 listed buildings: 92 being of the highest Grade 1 importance; 210 Grade II\* and 2655 Grade II
  - 27 designated Conservation Areas
  - 11 Registered Historic Parks & Gardens (1 – Grade I, 4 – Grade II\* and 6 Grade II)
  - 231 Scheduled Monuments
- 6.17 Information about these and other aspects of our local heritage are contained within the [Somerset Historic Environment Record \(SHER\)](#) maintained by Somerset County Council.
- 6.18 The historic fabric and significance of these buildings and places and their character is, however, a fragile resource and one which is an irreplaceable and unique record of our cultural heritage. The preservation of our historic built environment (as well as our designed landscapes) is important not only as it provides a link with the past, but because the heritage assets themselves enhance the appearance of our towns, villages and countryside reinforcing their sense of place. Hence, in considering all proposals and initiatives affecting Heritage Assets the Council will be seeking benefits in terms of improvement in the quality of the historic built and landscaped environment, stimulation of high architectural quality in new buildings, creation of a stronger local identity and sense of place, increased sustainability, encouragement of local and traditional building craft skills, and the exploitation of the potential for heritage assets to contribute towards education, tourism and the local economy.

### Overarching Heritage Strategy

- 6.19 Local Authorities are ‘custodians’ of the historic environment and have a duty to ensure that heritage assets are conserved and, where possible, enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance. However, the responsibility of stewardship of the district’s heritage is shared by everyone and it is recognised that there needs to be broad public support and understanding of the issues relating to the preservation of historic buildings and places.
- 6.20 In addition to giving great weight to the conservation of a heritage asset when considering development proposals that will impact upon the asset’s significance, the Council will, in the pursuit of conserving and promoting enjoyment of the areas historic environment, focus its activities in the following areas:
- a) Continue to keep under review the extents of designated [Conservation Areas](#) within the district and undertake a rolling programme of **Conservation Area Character Appraisals** for these areas. Existing Character Appraisals will be reviewed every 5 years and two new ones will be completed each year until there is full coverage. The Council will also monitor the effectiveness of existing heritage based **Article 4** directions through physical surveys every 3-4 years and will explore the need and potential for similar directions in additional areas.
  - b) The Council will maintain its very successful **Heritage at Risk Register** and will target resources to those most vulnerable assets. The Register will be continually monitored and will be available electronically through our [website](#). A more thorough review will take place every 5 years with the next scheduled review in 2016. The Council will use all powers available and necessary when addressing heritage assets that have fallen in to disrepair or have been deliberately neglected. In addition, the heritage conservation team will continue to work closely with **enforcement** colleagues and take a robust approach when dealing with unauthorised work which has a detrimental impact upon the significance of heritage assets.
  - c) There are a large number of heritage assets in Mendip that are of local architectural or historic interest and importance. Whilst these buildings and structures are not currently considered to be of sufficient interest to merit a formal statutory listing by English Heritage, they undoubtedly add to the richness of the local built environment. In recognition of this interest, and in order to

ensure that the character of these buildings is respected by development proposals affecting them, the Council, in conjunction with the local town councils and amenity societies, will continue to pursue the production of a **Local List of Assets of Historic or Architectural Importance**. The status and processes associated with the administration of a local list will be confirmed through the production of a [Local List](#) Supplementary Planning Document.

- d) The Council will continue to provide **advice and guidance** on all aspects of the historic environment to members of the public and professional colleagues. This free and accessible advice will be provided on request as well as via online material in the form of written guidance or links to other sources of information. In addition, the heritage conservation officers will continue to provide and arrange historic environment related **training** opportunities for staff, elected members and professional colleagues to improve and update awareness of relevant issues. Also, following a successful event in April 2012 the service will investigate the potential for making the Heritage Conservation Agents Seminar a regular event.
- e) The Council has an admirable record of delivering successful **area based grant** aid partnerships. Over the past 30 years numerous schemes have been administered in both Frome and Shepton Mallet in partnership with other local councils and national agencies such as English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The current Townscape Heritage Initiative in Shepton Mallet is entering its final year and the Council will continue to investigate opportunities to deliver similar schemes in the district.
- f) From time to time the heritage conservation team will undertake **other project work** related to the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment. This may include small scale enhancement schemes and site or heritage asset specific ventures. One key project will be our continuing role to support the creation of a list of local heritage assets in partnership with a network of local volunteers.

6.21 This strategy will utilise where appropriate the suite of historic environment policies, good practice guidance and evidence that is available from national agencies such as English Heritage, Historic Towns Forum and National Amenity Societies such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). This will include the [Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide](#) produced by English Heritage, DCMS and CLG.

### **Heritage Conservation Policy**

6.22 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government's policies regarding the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. The following policy complements the national policy approach but sets out how applications affecting Heritage Assets will be approached by the Council, and measures to ensure that heritage assets are safeguarded or enhanced for the future, both for their own heritage merits and for the wider benefits they bring.

6.23 In addition to the policy below, the Council is keen to work positively with developers and landowners to ensure that local heritage gains wider appreciation and can be used to gain a greater understanding of the past and to inform future decisions regarding it. For example, where, as a result of implementing an existing consent a new Heritage Asset is discovered, or new discoveries are made about an existing asset, there is an expectation that a developer will work with the local planning authority to seek a solution that protects the significance of the new discovery, so far as is practical within the permitted scheme or that a new scheme that better respects the asset is considered/submitted.

### **DP3: Heritage Conservation**

**Proposals and initiatives will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance and setting of the district’s Heritage Assets, whether statutorily or locally identified, especially those elements which contribute to the distinct identity of Mendip.**

- 1. Proposals affecting a heritage asset in Mendip will be expected to:**
  - a) Demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the Heritage Asset and/or its setting by describing it in sufficient detail to determine its historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest to a level proportionate with its importance.**
  - b) Justify any harm to a Heritage Asset and demonstrate the overriding public benefits which would outweigh the damage to that Asset or its setting. The greater the harm to the significance of the Heritage Asset, the greater justification and public benefit that will be required before the application could gain support.**
- 2. Opportunities to mitigate or adapt to climate change and secure sustainable development through the re-use or adaptation of Heritage Assets to minimise the consumption of building materials and energy and the generation of construction waste should be identified. However, mitigation and adaptation will only be considered where there is no harm to the significance of a Heritage Asset.**
- 3. Proposals for enabling development necessary to secure the future of a Heritage Asset which would otherwise be contrary to the policies of this plan or national policy will be carefully assessed against the policy statement produced by English Heritage – Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places.**

## **Development Policy 4: Mendip’s Landscapes**

### **Local Context**

- 6.24 Mendip district has rich and varied landscapes. The district’s name arises from the prominence of the [Mendip Hills](#) which run across the northern edge of the district which, for the most part are designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). However, the transition from this upland area down to the equally distinctive Somerset Levels and Moors on the western side of the district creates a wealth of visually and culturally significant landforms, most prominently represented by Glastonbury Tor. To the east of the district the landscape is equally as important with the north eastern corner marking a transitional area between the Mendips and the Cotswolds. To the south east, a modest portion of the [Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB](#) falls within the district. In the heart of the district, the district’s countryside is valued for its intrinsic value although its character is very much a working one, shaped by human activity dating back hundreds and thousands of years.
- 6.25 Within the AONBs, a general policy of development restraint is implied with any new development being limited to that necessary to support the specific social and economic needs of local communities falling within the designated area. Proposals for major development which are within the wider public interest will be determined in line with policy set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#).
- 6.26 Whilst the AONBs represent the highest quality landscapes present in Mendip, away from these areas there are specific features including Glastonbury Tor and Palace Fields (Wells) which make an outstanding contribution to the scenic quality of the district or have a historical or cultural significance. Previous local planning policy established Special Landscape Features to recognise the value of these landscape elements these areas and their extents were reviewed in the [“Assessment of](#)

[Special Landscape Features](#)” (2012). The Special Landscape Features can be found marked on the Proposals Map.

- 6.27 In terms of the wider countryside, the [Landscape Assessment of Mendip District \(1997\)](#) continues to provide a broad characterisation of the district, dividing it into eight principal Landscape Character Areas based on their distinct physical, natural and cultural influences. These are:
- |      |                          |       |                          |
|------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| i.   | The Central Mendip Hills | v.    | Batcombe Downs & Valleys |
| ii.  | The East Mendip Hills    | vi.   | Lias Lowlands and Ridges |
| iii. | The Frome Valley         | vii.  | The Moors                |
| iv.  | The Cotswold Edge        | viii. | The Wookey Islands       |
- 6.28 Further assessments of landscape also exist for the five towns and their fringes which have been used to understand constraints on growth considered in Core Policies 6-10. The findings of these assessments can be found in the Strategic Landscape Appraisal of the Main Towns (2006) and the Landscape Assessment of the Fringes of the Towns in Mendip District (1996) respectively. These assessments should also be used to inform applications for other development that might come forward in the assessed areas.
- 6.29 Across the district there are a number of areas designated as **Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)** which are examples of scientifically valuable or educationally important rock formations and landforms. These do not restrict development however where development is proposed in close proximity to such sites applicants will need to ensure that the qualities of the recorded feature are not compromised.
- 6.30 Whilst not a landscape designation, a small area of the **Bath and Bristol Green Belt** lies in the extreme north eastern corner of the district. Development in this area is restricted by national policy as set out in section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework. This is the only area of statutory Green Belt within Mendip and its extent is shown on the Proposals Map.
- Local Landscape Policy**
- 6.31 Section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the Government’s policy on the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. Within Local Plans, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to set criteria based policies against which development proposals on or affecting landscape areas will be judged. The following policy is therefore designed to ensure that the most significant parts of our landscape are shielded from all but the most essential forms of development and that elsewhere the intrinsic value of the countryside is maintained whilst allowing forms of development that contribute to the social and economic health of the district.
- 6.32 An important aspect of the policy is the consideration of impacts of schemes both individually and cumulatively. Individual schemes may give rise to limited impacts which, when balanced against other matters, may be set aside. However, a number of schemes in the same area all raising those small individual impacts may, collectively, result in a more significant impact that will change the character of the landscape.
- 6.33 In response to approaches to the Council in relation to wind turbine development, the Council will be preparing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) outlining its approach to wind turbine development when considering proposals in relation to this policy and others including DP3-DP8. Specific matters to address will include current best practice, the need for clear landscape and visual impact assessments as well as the requirement for project level Habitats Regulations Assessment to be carried out where protected species or habitats maybe affected.

## **DP4: Mendip's Landscapes**

**Mendip district is defined by its landscapes. Proposals for development that would, individually or cumulatively, significantly degrade the quality of the local landscape will not be supported. Any decision-making will take into account efforts made by applicants to avoid, minimise and/or mitigate negative impacts and the need for the proposal to take place in that location.**

**The following criteria will be applied in relation to particular landscape designations present in the district:**

- 1. Within the nationally designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) shown on the Proposals Map the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage will be the primary consideration in the determination of development proposals. New developments will be supported where:**
  - they foster the social or economic well-being of the communities within the designated area or promotes the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB - provided that such development is compatible with the wider purpose for which the area was designated, and
  - the site concerned, having regard to alternative options, offers the most appropriate means to limit or mitigate against any negative visual impact on the immediate locality and longer distance panoramic views, and
  - the design and appearance of the proposal is responsive to its context and where visible within the wider landscape make a positive contribution that reinforces the character of the AONB.

**Proposals in areas adjacent to the AONB will, depending upon their prominence in the wider landscape, be expected to demonstrate that their location and form do not compromise the setting of the designated area.**

- 2. Proposals for development which lie within or which would affect the setting of Special Landscape Features (as defined on the Proposals Map) will be determined with regard to their impacts upon their specific qualities as described in the 2012 "Assessment of Special Landscape Features."**
- 3. Outside of designated landscape areas, proposals should demonstrate that their siting and design are compatible with the pattern of natural and man-made features of the Landscape Character Areas, including cultural and historical associations, as detailed in the "Landscape Assessment of Mendip District."**
- 4. Proposals affecting Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) should seek to ensure that the integrity of the area designated is not compromised.**

## **Development Policy 5: Biodiversity and Ecological Networks**

### **Local Context**

- 6.34 Mendip has a biologically diverse natural environment, with many examples of internationally and nationally scarce species and habitats. There is a wide array of designated areas consisting of 38 nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 6 National Nature Reserves and 422 locally to nationally significant Local Wildlife Sites.
- 6.35 Of the highest ecological value are 3 internationally important Natura 2000 sites, the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) designated under [Article 4 of the 1979 EC Birds Directive](#) and two Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the [1992 EC Habitats](#)

[Directive](#) (Mells Valley SAC and North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC) which relate to bat populations. The Somerset Levels and Moors is also designated as an internationally important wetland under the Ramsar Convention. In preparing this plan, the Council has worked with specialists at Somerset County Council and Natural England in considering the impacts of development proposed on these areas. Applicants making applications affecting these designated areas will be under similar obligations to explore the impacts in consultation with Natural England.

- 6.36 Mendip has a large number of locally designated [Local Wildlife Sites](#) – over 400 of these exist across the district. The Local Wildlife Sites system is designed to complement the network of nationally and internationally designated sites in the county. Selection is based on assessing a site's ecological importance in a local context, in terms of the habitats and species the sites support. Those Local Wildlife Sites present in Mendip can be found on the Proposals Map and many form part of the Somerset Ecological Network. The district also contains one Local Nature Reserve '[Street Heath](#)' which lies to the north west of Glastonbury, the extent of the reserve can be found on the Proposals Map. The setting up of Local Nature Reserves will be considered including local participation in developing and managing a site so implemented. Mendip also has a [Biodiversity Action Plan](#) (BAP) which outlines which important species and habitats have been prioritised in the district for protection and enhancement. There are five important habitats which have been identified and three species. For each of these an action plan has been developed.

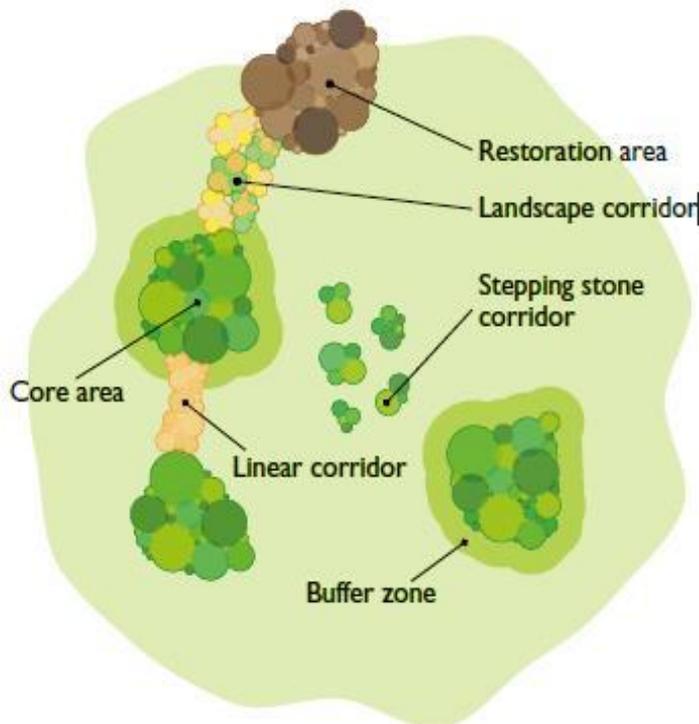
### **National Planning Policy**

- 6.37 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports a step change in the way in which biodiversity is to be addressed in future. There are two principal strands which take proactive and reactive stances as considered under the headings below.

### **Ecological Networks**

- 6.38 The long standing approach of safeguarding designated areas has preserved particular habitat areas, however intensified use of land around these areas, for example, has increasingly isolated these areas. Hence, whilst an area like Mendip might have a rich assortment of wildlife habitats, they exist across the district in patches rather than continuous swathes of good quality habitat. This presents a number of problems to animals and plants. Isolated patches make dispersal of individuals to breed or colonise new areas difficult or impossible. Preserving existing fragments of habitats and isolated protected sites alone will not be sufficient to conserve biodiversity.
- 6.39 The new approach advocated in the NPPF calls for the establishment of an ecological network. An ecological network is a connected group of natural and semi-natural habitats which are large enough and sufficiently joined-up to enable the survival of viable populations of flora and fauna species. Ecological networks are managed with the objective of conserving biodiversity, and maintaining and restoring ecological function in the natural environment.
- 6.40 [Somerset's Ecological Network](#) is a plan of existing and potential strategically important ecological infrastructure located across the county. It identifies existing as well as new opportunities for biodiversity, and the linkages required to ensure connectivity between these elements. It is the basic infrastructure that will aid the recovery of biodiversity from recent declines, and deliver socially and economically important ecosystem services. Somerset's Ecological Network does not aim to identify all resources of importance to the conservation of the natural environment, and therefore the protection of specific sites remains important.

## The components of ecological networks



**Core Areas** are existing areas, features, or resources of importance for biodiversity, often made up of existing designated sites.

**Corridors** are existing linear features providing structural connectivity between Core Areas and into the wider landscape. Types may include **linear** corridors (e.g. substantial well established hedgerows) **landscape** corridors (e.g. scarped unproductive land) or **stepping stones** (e.g. copses within a wider area of arable land that provide stop over points in transit between core areas).

**Restoration Areas** are areas, features or resources with the potential to become future Core Areas, or to improve connectivity, if they are enhanced or restored.

All of these components are either enclosed by a **Buffer Zone** (Core Areas) or have a buffered element included within them (Corridors and Stepping Stones) which reduces the potential for indirect disturbance.

- 6.41 To facilitate sustainable growth within the district, Somerset's Ecological Network will be used to:
- identify development siting constraints
  - advise on pre-application to master-planning identify opportunities for new development
  - to generate a net gain for biodiversity through habitat enhancement, restoration or creation on the local ecological network.
- 6.42 Sustainable development in the district will avoid direct and indirect impacts to Somerset's Ecological Network. Through sensitive site location and master-planning, sustainable development will not lead to the loss, damage, deterioration or disturbance of Core Areas, Corridors or Stepping Stones, and will generate a net gain for biodiversity by enhancing Restoration Areas and Buffer Zones.

### Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity - "No Net Loss" and Habitat Offsetting

- 6.43 Ecological networks are a long term, proactive, multi party approach to addressing the decline in biodiversity. However, development pressures will continue to generate applications that will impact directly or indirectly (i.e. in terms of loss, damage, deterioration or disturbance of such features) upon biodiversity resources. Such development, whether affecting designated areas as part of the Somerset Ecological Network or not, is not sustainable. The default position is that biodiversity resources should be safeguarded from development. However, there will be circumstances where the development will be deemed necessary resulting in impacts on biodiversity. Exceptions will only be made on a "no net loss basis" where the 3 criteria in the policy below are satisfied. A net gain will be sought where possible. The NPPF sets out a number of other criteria specific to particular habitats.
- 6.44 In order to achieve 'no net loss' of biodiversity in the district as a result of future development, where a proposal is considered to have the potential to cause an adverse effect on protected sites, species or habitat, mitigation and/or compensation measures, including offsetting, will be sought. Offsetting measures required as a result of a development proposal will be determined in line with Somerset County Council's [Biodiversity Offsetting](#) methodology.
- 6.45 Further guidance on the ecological network and the biodiversity offsetting methodology referred to in the policy can be found in the Ecological Networks and Biodiversity Offsetting Supplementary Planning Document which will be adopted by the council in 2013/14.

## DP5: Biodiversity and Ecological Networks

The Council will use the local planning process to protect, enhance and restore Somerset's Ecological Network within Mendip.

1. All development proposals must ensure the protection, conservation and, where possible, enhancement of internationally, nationally or locally designated natural habitat areas and species.
2. Proposals with the potential to cause adverse impacts on protected and/or priority sites, species or habitats are unlikely to be sustainable and will be resisted. Exceptions will only be made where,
  - a) the impacts cannot be reasonably avoided,
  - b) offsetting/compensation for the impacts can be secured,
  - c) other considerations of public interest clearly outweigh the impacts, in line with relevant legislation.

Offsets as mitigation or compensation required under criterion b) will be calculated using Somerset County Council's Biodiversity Offsetting methodology.

## Development Policy 6: Bat Protection

- 6.46 Mendip district contains two Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) which have been designated for their value as habitats for Horseshoe Bats. These areas are the [Mells Valley SAC](#) and [North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC](#) (incorporating a sizeable part of the Mendip Hills) which also have links to the [Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC](#) providing roosting and foraging areas. As the 'competent authority' under the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2010 (the 'Habitats Regulations') Mendip District Council is required to carry out a 'test of likely significant effect' on planning applications that potentially affect the conservation objectives of these sites.
- 6.47 Horseshoe bats rely on a number of environmental features in order to maintain their populations, the conservation objective of the SACs, including hedgerows and buildings used as night roosts and loss or alteration to these features from removal, change in habitat, alteration to structures and the introduction of street lighting may result in permanent reductions in the amount of habitat required to maintain the population.
- 6.48 Applications occurring within the Bat Consultation Zone (identified on a map available from the council's evidence base webpage) will require the Council to carry out a 'test of significance' under the Habitats Regulations. The Bat Consultation Zone shows areas in which Horseshoe Bats are known to be and are likely to regularly use for commuting and/or foraging and in night roosting. The mapping is drawn from radio tracking studies and aerial photographic interpretation of habitat used by bats, which are features of the SACs.
- 6.49 This policy is a result of recommendations made in the [Habitat Regulations Assessment](#) of those parts of the Mells Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC which lie within Mendip. In order to preserve the integrity of these internationally designated sites the assessment recommended that a policy was required.
- 6.50 In addition to the Bat Consultation Zone, British bat species can be found across the district and may be using habitats and roost sites anywhere in the administrative area. As a 'competent authority' under the Habitats Regulations the Council is responsible for ensuring that populations and distribution of bats are maintained at a 'Favourable Conservation Status' as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive.
- 6.51 In order to aid the district council in reaching a decision on an application that potentially affects bat populations applicants must provide all necessary information including any necessary survey work, reports and avoidance/mitigation measures with the application.

**DP6: Bat Protection**

**Planning Applications for development on sites within the Bat Consultation Zone will require a ‘test of significance’ under the Habitats Regulations to be carried out.**

**Applicants must provide, with their application, all necessary information to enable compliance with the Habitats Regulations (or their successor), including any necessary survey work, reports and avoidance / mitigation measures.**

**Development Policy 7: Design and Amenity of New Development****Overview**

- 6.52 Good architecture and urban design contribute to making places both functional and attractive to residents, users and visitors. While architecture is about the design of buildings, urban design is about the relationships between the buildings, the roads and spaces that they front, and the people who make use of them. The outstanding building projects are those that are not only visually stimulating, but are also sensitive and respectful of their surrounding developments and environment. A well-designed place takes into consideration the important relationships between buildings, spaces, functional needs and the wider context within which the planned building or structure sits.
- 6.53 The testament of a good design will ultimately be the direct spin-offs it generates in terms of economic, social-cultural and environmental benefits. A well designed new house may command a higher value, have lower running costs and emissions and perhaps contribute to the diversity of the streetscape. At a larger scale a well designed town centre development can redefine the role and function of a whole town bringing in new businesses, increasing visitor footfall, creating jobs, enhancing civic pride and improving the overall quality of life.

**Local Context**

- 6.54 Mendip has seen exemplar developments. Lime Tree Square in Street, Tadley Acres in Shepton Mallet and The Piggeries in Frome are examples of schemes within our small rural district which, with attention to detail by architects and designers, commitment by developers and craftsmanship from builders, have all gained national awards or accreditation over recent years. The Council will continue to require high quality design standards from all forms of new development and encourage the use of assessment techniques such as [‘Building for Life’](#) during negotiation in the formulation of development proposals by applicants.

**Sustainable Construction and Design**

- 6.55 The majority of buildings, particularly new houses, which will be built during the lifetime of this plan, are likely to remain fixtures within our towns and villages for at least 70 years. During that period natural resources, such as water and energy can be expected to become less abundant and more expensive. It is important that the buildings we are designing now have an eye to the future. The Council is also seeking to ensure that new development built now is sustainable for the long term. Water efficient fittings, high levels of insulation and micro scale renewable energy technology (e.g. solar thermal or photovoltaic) are all means by which occupants can, throughout the building’s life, minimise the use of natural resources and reduce running costs.

- 6.56 The Council has considered policy requirements for higher standards of sustainable construction and design. However, at a national level the government has already set the bar high with targets for all residential buildings to be zero-carbon by 2016 and all non-residential buildings to be zero-carbon by 2019. Nonetheless, the Council will, in the lead up to those national targets challenge developers to build in measures which minimise resource use and

**Sustainable Buildings**

Some examples of design future proofing

- Recycling : dedicated space for bin storage
- Broadband – remote domestic controls, home working, reducing travel needs
- Water - efficient fittings, rainwater recycling, sustainable drainage
- Renewable energy - solar hot water or photovoltaic panels
- Higher than standard levels of Insulation
- Car charging points (16amp minimum)

beyond 2016 will continue to promote new techniques, technologies and features that make further strides towards reducing the use of natural resources.

- 6.57 Sustainable drainage is particularly important to mitigate against known flood risk and water quality issues which exist in various parts of the district as well as ensuring that the capacity of existing systems is not overwhelmed. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems can also provide an important opportunity for the creation of wildlife habitat.

### **Local Design Guidance**

- 6.58 As described above, good design can yield a range of benefits for individuals and the wider community, however good design flows from an understanding of the needs of users and the integration of development within its context.

- 6.59 The Council has considered the introduction of a district wide Design Guide to help improve urban and building design standards in response to obvious examples in our communities of bland and poor quality design. However, the counterview of this is that a single design guide has the potential to stifle originality and promote uniformity.

#### **Useful sources of information**

- [Somerset Waste partnership - Developer Guidance](#)
- [By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System – Towards Better Practice](#)
- [Design Council/CABE publications](#)
- [Village Design Statements](#)

- 6.60 The Localism Act reinforces the role that community derived guidance and policies can play in improving design quality. Village and Town Design Statements have always offered a means for local people to highlight the buildings, spaces and features that are important and valued in their communities. Commitments set out in Core Policy 5 now reinforce the previous uncertain status these forms of guidance have had.

### **Development Briefs and Masterplans**

- 6.61 Large scale development has the ability to transform the character, appearance and use of areas within our towns and villages. Development Briefs or Masterplans provide a collaborative means for interests, including local communities, statutory and technical consultees, landowners, developers and any other relevant parties, to shape how a development should come forward and make a positive contribution to the locality. They can enable complex policy issues to be resolved prior to the preparation of proposals and can help in the delivery of sites which have difficult issues to address.
- 6.62 Where development sites are allocated through the Local Plan, all proposals will be preceded by the production of a Development Brief or Masterplan. Other significant sites, in addition to those allocated as part of the Local Plan, will also come forward for development. In such cases it is even more important that Development Briefs and Masterplans are prepared given that these sites will not have enjoyed the scrutiny that allocations have been subjected to.
- 6.63 Development Briefs and Masterplans are different. A Development Brief will be more appropriate for major development sites where there are a range of competing issues to resolve or explain and the need for more detailed technical description of how the layout, phasing and infrastructure needs to be achieved. In contrast, for smaller and less complex sites a Masterplan will normally be a diagrammatic representation of the scheme design accompanied by clear development principles. Both offer a means for statutory and community groups to understand the broad elements of the development and agree principles which will then shape a subsequent planning application.
- 6.64 A guidance note will be prepared to set out the procedures involved in the production, consultation and adoption of Development Briefs and Masterplans.

## **DP7: Design and Amenity of New Development**

The Local Planning Authority will support high quality design which results in usable, durable, adaptable, sustainable and attractive places.

1. Proposals for new development should demonstrate that they:
  - a) are of a scale, mass, form and layout appropriate to the local context
  - b) protect the amenity of users of neighbouring buildings and land uses and provide a satisfactory environment for current and future occupants
  - c) optimise the potential of the site in a manner consistent with other requirements of this policy
  - d) incorporate all practical measures to achieve energy efficiency through siting, layout and design
  - e) maximise opportunities for:
    - i. The use of sustainable construction techniques
    - ii. The use of sustainable drainage systems
    - iii. Renewable energy generation on site
    - iv. The use of water efficiency measures, recycling and conservation
    - v. New residents to minimise, re-use or recycle waste
  - f) use locally sourced or recycled materials wherever practically possible
  - g) meet the access needs of a wide range of users
  - h) incorporate appropriate crime prevention measures
  - i) undertake construction in a manner that makes efficient use of materials and minimises waste
  
2. For sites allocated in the Local Plan and other significant development sites (as advised by the Local Planning Authority), the preparation of, consultation on, and formal adoption of Development Briefs or Masterplans will be required prior to the determination of planning applications.

## **Development Policy 8: Environmental Protection**

### **Overview**

- 6.65 New development must aim to ensure that the environment is not exposed to pollution and that it does not impose burdens on natural systems or human health that would be detrimental to their wellbeing. The sections below explore some of the main impacts the Council and other statutory agencies aim to manage. It should be emphasised that the policy that follows is one element of the regulatory process. In order to satisfy some of the policy criteria, assessments, licensing and other arrangements necessary under specific legislation outside the planning system may be required. Applicants are urged to engage in pre-application discussion with planners and environmental protection officers well in advance of submitting any planning application to ensure that all background information is provided in support of the case.

### **Air Quality**

- 6.66 Air quality in Mendip is generally good with monitoring showing that pollutants do not exceed established standards. There are no Air Quality Management Areas where air quality objectives cannot be met. The Council will seek to ensure impacts from localised sources of air pollution are managed and controlled.

### **Water supply and treatment**

- 6.67 A sizeable supply of water in the district is sourced from groundwater boreholes. Development in Source Protection Zones shown on the proposals map will be required to demonstrate there will be no adverse impact on groundwater.

- 6.68 New development must ensure that any effects such as increases in sewage effluent discharges can be achieved without detriment to water quality. The operation of this regulation sits within the wider operation of the EU Water Framework Directive whose aim is to prevent deterioration in water status and improve water quality to ‘favourable condition.’ The Infrastructure Delivery Plan that accompanies this plan describes particular constraints in relation to sewage treatment capacity and the need for future investment which will be achieved through upgrades and replacement of water company facilities.
- 6.69 The operation of sewage treatment works results in some localised nuisance impacts, primarily related to odour. As a result, treatment facilities are generally located at distance from residential areas. Any development proposed within defined cordons on the proposals map will be subject to consultation with the water companies to ensure that the amenity of existing and future residents is not compromised.

### Light Pollution

- 6.70 Lighting is important within our communities for the purposes of public safety and security. Light sensitive areas include the urban fringe and the wider rural area where more lighting arising from new development can, individually and cumulatively, have a significant impact on local amenity and character. This impact can create nuisance where commercial or other large scale light sources affect domestic amenity. On a larger scale, extensive and unfocused lighting can contribute to an impression of a larger urban extent than actually exists.
- 6.71 Many villages in Mendip do not have street lighting, which contributes to part of their character, whilst remoter rural areas, particularly the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) still also possess dark night skies. Lighting can also have effects on the activities and foraging patterns of nocturnal species, notably bats. Development proposals in a rural setting and especially those in designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), should make all reasonable efforts to minimise noise and light pollution impacts.
- 6.72 Applicants should first consider whether lighting is absolutely necessary. Where it is, proposals will be assessed to determine whether the lighting proposed is appropriate to the setting, of the right wattage for the purpose, and designed in a fashion to direct light where it is needed. In advising applicants and considering proposals, the Council will apply the guidance prepared by the Institution of Lighting Engineers (‘Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01’) unless there are demonstrable reasons to deviate from these illumination levels.

#### Useful sources of information

- [NPPF : Section 11](#)
- [Noise Policy Statement for England](#)
- [Mendip Contaminated Land Strategy](#)
- [Development of Potentially Contaminated Land](#)
- [Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive light](#)

- Noise**
- 6.73 Noise is a form of pollution which can give rise to significant adverse impact on health and quality of life. Sources of noise will arise from a whole range of uses ranging from that arising from external play by children at a nursery school, to road noise and industrial processes. Development proposals and uses of land will need to consider likely noise levels arising from new activities with the aim of reducing these to a minimum and mitigating against any residual impacts. The Council will use planning conditions to ensure noise impacts are managed within standards. Assessment of noise levels and mitigation measures will be considered against the standards in BS4142<sup>12</sup> and BS8233<sup>13</sup> as well as any locally adopted guidance.

### Contaminated Land

- 6.74 Human activity, and in some cases natural processes, can leave land in a state where its use for a particular purpose is compromised. The Council will require appropriate site investigation and this should be undertaken by a competent person, to provide a clear understanding of the nature of ground conditions and risks arising from its composition. Where deemed necessary, appropriate remediation measures will be required to be carried out prior to development with careful validation of that activity to ensure that the measures taken are properly expedited prior to development and subsequent occupation.

<sup>12</sup> **BS4142**, British Standard BS4142:1997: “Assessment of Industrial Noise in Mixed Industrial and Residential Areas”, BSI

<sup>13</sup> **BS8233**, British Standard BS8233:1999: “Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings - Code of Practice”, BSI.

- 6.75 The potential for contamination should be considered at an early stage. Where contaminants are known or discovered, the Council will require the submission of an appropriate method statement to show how decontamination will be undertaken. Remediation should remove unacceptable risk and make the site suitable for its new use. As a minimum, after remediation, the land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under the relevant regulations.
- 6.76 The policy below states that proposals should minimise all kinds of pollution and where possible seek to reduce emissions and other pollution in order to protect the natural environment. The Council intends to prepare and adopt supplementary guidance to give additional detail on the issues to be considered when examining individual planning applications. The weight given to each criterion will depend on the particular circumstances and relevant pollution control authorities will be consulted as required.

## **DP8: Environmental Protection**

**All development proposals should minimise, and where possible reduce, all emissions and other forms of pollution.**

- 1. Development (either cumulatively or individually) will be required to demonstrate that it does not give rise to unacceptable adverse environmental impacts on:**
  - ambient noise levels;
  - air quality;
  - the quality of water resources, whether surface river or groundwater;
  - biodiversity
  - light pollution
  - land quality and ground stability;
  - residential amenity; and
  - public health and safety
- 2. Development proposals must include an assessment appropriate to the type and extent of impact and any associated risks to the satisfaction of the relevant environmental body. Any proposed solutions or mitigation measures should comply with relevant EU and British Standards, EA guidance and national limits or guidelines and take account of any locally adopted standards and supplementary guidance.**
- 3. Development proposals, particularly those in a rural setting and especially those in designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), should make all reasonable efforts to minimise noise and light pollution impacts.**
- 4. Development proposals which are on or adjacent to land which may have been subject to contamination will need to demonstrate that measures can be taken effectively to mitigate the impacts of land contamination on public health, environmental quality, the built environment and amenity. Proposals will only be permitted where the impact and risks are, or can be mitigated appropriately for the proposed use. Appropriate mitigation and remediation will be secured through planning conditions on the development.**
- 5. Development will not be permitted within Sewage Treatment Works Consultation Zones as defined on the proposals map unless it is demonstrated that the environment provided for future users will not be adversely affected.**

## Development Policy 9: Transport Impacts of New Development

6.77 A primary planning consideration is to ensure that development proposals are well located and achieve a suitable connection to the highway or other rights of way that are safe for pedestrians, cyclists and occupants of vehicles. Equally important is the need to ensure that the functioning of the road network is not prejudiced by poor planning which can lead to increased risks in terms of road safety, air pollution and impacts on the ability of non car users (e.g. public transport delays, permeability of routes by walkers and cyclists). As a result, where deemed necessary by the Highway Authority, a Transport Assessment and/or Travel Plan will need to be submitted by developers in support of new development proposals.

### Encouraging Alternatives to the Car

6.78 The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation's 'Manual for Streets' (2007, 2010) contains guidance on design of streets and roads and encourages a shift of priority away from motorists and towards pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. It makes a distinction between roads and streets – streets should be inclusive for all and attractive places in their own right rather than just corridors for traffic. Developers should have regard to this guidance and seek to create environments that are attractive and encourage travel by modes other than the car. This type of stance also has spin-off benefits for public health because better designed and safer environments will encourage walking and cycling.

6.79 Relevant national planning policy can be found in section 4 of the NPPF. The government encourages local authorities to support a pattern of development which facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport, where reasonable. It also gives a requirement for Transport Statements/Assessment to accompany large scale development proposals and highlights that for all developments that generate significant amounts of movement Travel Plans will need to be produced.

6.80 Travel Plans will be required in support of development proposals, where appropriate, to demonstrate how the transport impacts of the development will be managed and how sustainable modes of travel will be encouraged (including walking, cycling, the use of public transport and car sharing). There will, however, be circumstances where a site is already served by a range of transport means or, in rural areas, where private car use may be the only realistic alternative. The spatial strategy is based on consolidating most development in places where there are transport choices. The need to consider the use of sustainable forms of transport will therefore not be required for all development proposals. When producing Travel Plans, consideration should be given to Somerset County Council's emerging Supplementary Planning Document entitled 'Enabling Smarter Travel through Travel Planning in Somerset'.

#### Useful sources of information

- [Streets For All: South West](#)
- [Design Manual for Roads & Bridges](#)
- [Somerset's Future Transport Plan 2011-2026](#)
- [Somerset County Council Travel Planning Guidance](#)

6.81 In considering proposals, Development Policy 18 also sets out that the Council will facilitate the implementation of sustainable transport routes making use of former railway corridors and, where relevant, encouraging the delivery of new links to encourage travel by walking and cycling.

### Highway Safety

6.82 The National Primary and County Routes in Mendip (as shown on the Somerset County Council's Local Transport Plan and/or Network Management Plan) accord with the routes identified in the local Highway Authority's (Somerset County Council) route hierarchy. Proposals that involve a new direct access onto these roads outside the designated settlements will not be permitted, in order to avoid any adverse implications for traffic flow and road safety. Exceptions will only be made where the type of development proposed is such that it requires a high order (of route hierarchy) route location, such as road side service stations or freight transfer facilities.

6.83 Access to development that will connect to rural roads carrying relatively high speed traffic should be designed according to the need for drivers and other road users to be able to enter safely into such traffic. The advice and guidance in the 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' (Department for Transport) will be appropriate in these environments. This is particularly likely to be applicable to developments related to farm diversification or proposals for tourist attractions specific to rural locations.

## DP9: Transport Impact of New Development

1. Where appropriate, development proposals must demonstrate how they will improve or maximise the use of sustainable forms of transport (particularly by means other than the private car), and shall include, where relevant, the submission of Travel Plans and/or Transport Assessments.
2. Development proposals will be supported where they:
  - a) make safe and satisfactory provision for
    - i. access by all means of travel (particularly by means other than the private car),
    - ii. emergency vehicles,
    - iii. servicing, and
    - iv. parking of motor vehicles and cycles, addressing the needs of all including those with a disability;
  - b) avoid causing traffic or environmental problems within the wider transport network or generating any requirement for transport improvements which would harm the character or locality; and
  - c) avoid direct access on to a National Primary or County Route where the proposals are outside designated Development Limits, unless access via a National primary or County Route location is essential for the type of development proposed and mitigation on and off site is fully undertaken as part of the development to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority.

## Development Policy 10: Parking Standards

### Overview

- 6.84 The availability of vehicle parking can have a significant effect on people's choice of transport. Within a predominantly rural area like Mendip, the private vehicle will remain an important transport mode allowing people to access work, services and other needs. Patterns of movement between towns and rural areas, as well as the terrain involved, limit the degree to which walking and cycling can satisfy needs, whilst limited public transport provision is often not convenient or responsive enough to needs.
- 6.85 On the other hand, providing too much parking can encourage the use of the private vehicle and contribute to the wider issues of congestion, air pollution, disturbance and road safety. The provision of excessive parking, particularly in town centre locations, can also be a wasteful use of land and contribute to localised nuisance.
- 6.86 Successive government policies have sought to strike a balance between these two conflicting positions by promoting development in locations with choices of transport and providing appropriate investment in public transport, cycleways, bike parks, footpath connectivity and so on, whilst at the same time limiting parking provision within defined standards. Current government policy can be found in section 4 of the NPPF.

### Somerset Countywide Parking Strategy

- 6.87 Somerset County Council, in consultation with the district and borough councils in Somerset, has produced countywide parking standards that are aligned with both the latest national guidance and local aspirations. These standards are set out in the [Somerset Countywide Parking Strategy](#) which forms part of the Somerset Future Transport Plan (FTP).
- 6.88 The standards in the Strategy cover both residential and non-residential development. Whilst the level of parking they specify should be provided, they are flexible enough to allow deviation from them where specific local circumstances can be justified. For example, developments in more

sustainable locations that are well served by public transport or have good walking and cycling links may be considered appropriate for lower levels of car parking provision.

- 6.89 The Strategy also recognises that, as different places need different amounts of parking, standards for the towns and rural areas should vary. This is reflected in the zoning framework set out in the document.
- 6.90 The requirements for car, motorcycle, cycle and blue badge parking are covered in the Strategy. All of these parking types will need to be considered in proposals for new development.

## DP10: Parking Standards

**New development will be supported where vehicle parking is proposed which is appropriate to the operational needs of the development.**

1. **When assessing what is an appropriate level of parking provision in relation to a development proposal, regard will be had to:**
  - a) **The objectives of reducing growth in the use of private vehicles and promoting alternative means of travel**
  - b) **The need for on-site provision to prevent problems of highway safety, congestion or visual intrusion in the vicinity of the site**

**Standards for specific types of development, whether residential or non-residential, are set out in the latest Somerset Countywide Parking Strategy. Proposals should demonstrate that appropriate parking needs are provided within any given setting that broadly accords with the Strategy.**

## The Water Environment

- 6.91 It has not been considered necessary to include specific policies on the water environment within the Local Plan as there are no locally specific circumstances that warrant deviation from national policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated supporting guidance. However, given that there are risks and resources within the district, this short section signposts applicants to appropriate sources of guidance.

- 6.92 Some areas of Mendip are prone to flooding and large expanses of floodplain exist on and around the Somerset Levels and Moors. Floodplains are defined and updated by the Environment Agency and the extent of floodplain in the district is available from the Environment Agency's website with the extents at October 2012 shown illustratively below in Figure 7. Flood zone 3 is the most significant where 1 in 100 year rainfall events can lead to the flooding of identified areas. At a local level and to inform the production of the Local Plan the Council commissioned a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in 2008 which identifies other sources of flooding which applicants should be aware of in considering development proposals. Definitive national planning policy on development and flood risk can be found in section 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework. All proposals must be in accordance with the NPPF and early engagement with the Environment Agency is encouraged where flood risk is likely.

### Useful sources of information

- [Section 10 NPPF](#)
- [MDC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#)
- [EA Flood Risk map and advice](#)
- [Technical Guidance to the NPPF](#)
- [EA - Managing and Protecting Groundwater](#)

- 6.93 On the **Somerset Levels and Moors**, activity exists in the knowledge that flooding remains a threat. For the most part, new development is therefore strongly resisted for this reason. However, agricultural activity remains a special case given that it has a role in managing the landscape through grazing which is sustained through the maintenance of the many drainage rhynes. Without this activity the special characteristics of the levels and the important biodiversity which it supports would be diminished.

- 6.94 As a result, where proposals for buildings for agricultural uses are promoted, the Council will look positively on such schemes in consultation with the Environment Agency, where measures have been taken to mitigate the impacts of potential flooding on new and existing structures or the safeguarding of livestock, machinery or other facets of the business from flood risk.
- 6.95 **Groundwater** is an important resource in the district and needs to be protected both in terms of quantity and quality. The Environment Agency has defined a number of Groundwater Source Protection Zones and these are protected by the Agency's Groundwater Protection Policy. Some of these zones lie within Mendip and are indicated on the Proposals Map. Development proposals falling within these areas will be required to demonstrate no adverse effects on groundwater in accordance with Development Policy 8.

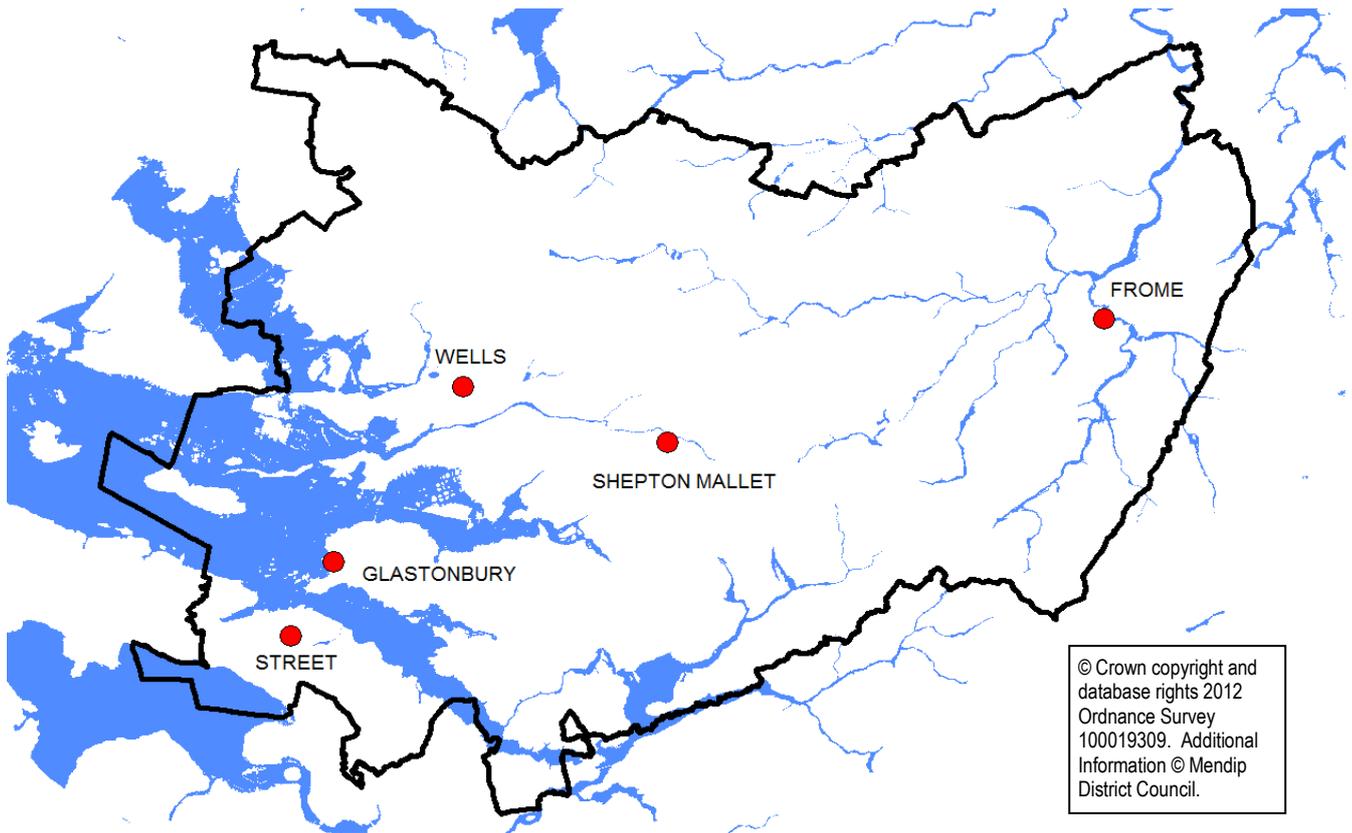


FIGURE 7: Indicative map of areas within Mendip District classified as lying within a designated Floodzone (zones 2 and 3)  
(Source: Environment Agency flood mapping, 2012)

## PROVIDING PLACES TO LIVE

- 6.96 This section sets out a group of policies aimed at delivering and maintaining a housing stock which meets the needs of our communities. New development in Mendip has consistently been delivered on target in the last two decades. However, in looking forward the Council, in partnership with house builders, housing associations, landowners and other interests, has ensured that the homes being built better reflect the needs of the local community. More affordable homes, a greater proportion of adaptable housing to meet a range of needs (notably the aging population), and careful stewardship of the rural housing stock are key policy aims. This section also puts in place a policy to consider site proposals from Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in order that the Council can make decisions rather than relying on planning appeals or legal judgements to force solutions which may not be within the wider community's best interest.

### Development Policy 11: Affordable Housing

#### Local Context

- 6.97 Information in sections 2 and 4 of this document have summarised the overwhelming problem facing the district with regard to affordability in the housing market and set out the Councils intention to maximise affordable housing provision by seeking a contribution to affordable housing from every residential development. This section and the policies that flow from it set out how the Council aims to achieve this.

The Glossary of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) defines what is meant by Affordable Housing.

The NPPF specifies that Local Planning Authorities should use their evidence base to ensure the Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in their housing market area and in response to this should set policies to deliver affordable housing. However, paragraph 174 expects local authorities to be mindful of development viability over the plan lifetime, understanding the cumulative effects of obligations on overall delivery.

#### Principles

- 6.98 As set out in relation to Core Policy 2 the Council will seek to maximise the provision of affordable homes. In considering how the overall level of affordable homes can be increased, the following principles were seen by the Council as central to a future policy approach. These also address in part the principles which national policy puts in place as set out in the adjacent box.

#### a) Affordable housing provision will be made on the basis of no public subsidy

*Public funding for housing can no longer be expected to deliver the volumes of affordable homes that are needed. In the medium to long term public finances will remain constrained and, in response to the overall lack of housing supply, it is likely that housing need will continue to grow. In response, Councils and government have had to look at alternative means to deliver more affordable homes. During the last two decades the uplift in values of housing land have been harnessed to cross subsidise affordable housing and many Councils, including Mendip, have secured a significant number of affordable homes on that basis. The Council, in common with other local authorities, will continue to pursue this approach and seek to secure more from development values. Public subsidy has in many cases helped to support delivery however, it has been the case that uncertainty over the availability of subsidy has held back. Hence, in future, where public funding can be secured it will be used to increase provision on sites. For landowners and developers, this is an important point to note in housing land purchase/option agreements. The Council is mindful that market viability must be maintained in order that the delivery of homes continues, and that the effect of other obligations (e.g. infrastructure delivery, zero carbon housing, design standards) will also have a bearing on what can be secured.*

#### b) As many homes as possible will be secured on large development sites

*The 2002 Mendip District Local Plan required around 22% of homes on sites to be affordable. Given the growth in housing need the Council will need to secure more from large sites, particularly greenfield sites where development value uplifts are greatest.*

#### c) The size of site upon which affordable homes will be sought will be reduced.

*In examining the range of housing developments which have taken place across Mendip in the last decade it is clear that a significant proportion of the total number of homes have been brought forward on sites of less than the government's minimum qualifying threshold of 15 homes / 0.5hectares. These developments, in some cases, may have higher per unit development costs*

*than larger sites but can still be harnessed to contribute to delivering affordable homes. Work has assessed the contribution lower thresholds can make to increased affordable housing delivery based on a range of on site target percentages. The table below illustrates the level of additional affordable homes (based on actual development sites granted consent over the period 1st April 2004 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010) based on a 33.3% on site target.*

	Number of sites yielding			Affordable Housing Yield at 33.3% from sites of			Total additional Affordable Housing Yield over 6 years
	6-8 homes	9-11 homes	12-14 homes	6-8 homes	9-11 homes	12-14 homes	
Mendip	62	28	16	124	84	64	<b>272</b>
Frome	12	7	6	24	21	24	<b>69</b>
Glastonbury	9	5	1	18	15	4	<b>37</b>
Shepton Mallet	5	4	0	10	12	0	<b>22</b>
Street	7	2	0	14	6	0	<b>20</b>
Wells	6	3	2	12	9	8	<b>29</b>
Rural Areas	23	7	7	46	21	28	<b>95</b>

Table 11: Potential Affordable Housing yield from small sites based on developments since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004

*272 homes over 6 years, as illustrated in this scenario, equates to an additional annual supply of 45 new homes. Whilst there is no guarantee this pattern of site size development can be treated as a guide to the future, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>14</sup> which looks at potential sites would suggest that a yield of just over 200 would be realistic during a 10 year period – a more conservative 20 per year. Nevertheless 20 per year represents 25% of the average annual total achieved since 2006.*

**d) All housing developments will make contributions to affordable housing – whether on site or in the form of a financial contribution.**

*Small sites, including single dwellings, may vary in their relative costs of development when compared to larger schemes where economies of scale can be achieved in construction. However, whilst the Council will be mindful of overall scheme viability in these cases, small developments should also make proportionate contributions to affordable housing provision in the form of financial sums which can be used to cross subsidise higher levels of provision on other sites or enable housing providers to bring forward other sites.*

**Target Provision**

- 6.99 Paragraphs 4.27 and 6.34 have made it clear that the Council cannot hope to meet all arising housing need through the planning of new development but instead must maximise opportunities to deliver. In terms of assessing viability, the Council, in 2009 commissioned an [Affordable Housing Viability Assessment](#) which broadly concluded that there was scope for more affordable homes to be secured for development in the medium term but that in the short term, market conditions may limit any gains.
- 6.100 In light of the uncertainties that these positions impose, it is proposed that stepped targets are put in place as detailed below which over the lifetime of the plan would deliver 2,500 affordable homes.

<sup>14</sup> Based on information at 31/3/2009

Period	Basis	Annual Target or Actual Provision	Total Output
2006-2011	Historic Development secured under Local Plan policies with lower thresholds and targets	80	400
2011-2016	Transitional period when new greater provision secured under emerging policy requirements will see some increase in the output of affordable homes	100-120	500-600
2016-2028	Accelerated delivery when the new policy approach and land allocations from the Core Strategy and subsequent Site Allocations DPD will begin to deliver new homes	150	1500

Table 12: Mendip Local Plan affordable housing targets for the period to 2028

- 6.101 This stepped target will see affordable housing provision in the first half of the plan period (2006-2016) account for just over a fifth of all new homes increase to a level approaching a third in the second ten year period. However, the Council is under no illusion that this increase will not dramatically alter its ability to tackle the number of new households each year that will be classified as being in housing need.
- 6.102 The additional yield would arise from reduced small site thresholds as discussed above (estimated at 20 per year) and yields well in excess of the previous Local Plan requirement (at 22%) as obligations would increase in line with the approach considered in the following section.

### Site Size Thresholds

- 6.103 As considered in the principles discussed lower thresholds will be important in maximising opportunities for delivering affordable housing across the district. Given the level of need for affordable housing and the nature of supply, provision of affordable housing as part of a development (or an equivalent financial contribution) will be expected from all applications which propose one or more additional dwellings. For clarity, the policy would not apply to replacement dwellings. Any other exceptions to this policy would be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that the Council will produce to assist in the implementation of this policy.
- 6.104 The default position under this policy is that all developments should make provision on site. Housing Associations have concluded that in practical terms any fewer than two affordable homes on a site will have disproportionate management cost implications. Accepting this, the Council has concluded that **schemes delivering 7 or more homes (or 0.25 ha in area) will make on-site provision.** It should also be noted that where there are un-met proportions of affordable homes (e.g. 8 dwellings would give a requirement for 2.3 affordable units, a development contribution will be sought to cover the 0.3) to ensure equity between schemes.
- 6.105 As considered above, the practical difficulties of securing affordable homes on small sites is accepted, however small developments – which make a substantial contribution to total dwelling completions in Mendip - are often more financially viable on account of lower infrastructure costs. In the interests of fairness to developers of larger sites, it is therefore reasonable that smaller schemes make a contribution. **As a result, on sites with 6 dwellings or less (or under 0.25 hectares), a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision will be required.** This will be secured through a s106 agreement and used to cross subsidise delivery of other affordable housing schemes. In exceptional circumstances, it may be also appropriate to consider a financial contribution instead of on-site provision on larger sites.
- 6.106 For schemes on the cusp of the threshold (i.e. 5-10 dwellings), the Council will assess proposals to ensure that land is developed in a comprehensive way and the requirements for on-site provision are not being avoided. It should be noted that the Council, through viability assessment work, is aware that sales values of market properties can be higher where schemes do not include affordable homes and so, in assessing viability, this will be a factor included within the establishment of an appropriate financial contribution.
- 6.107 Contributions in lieu of development will be calculated on the basis of the formula set out in the housing viability study on a per unit basis. This is based on the financial contribution to the land costs of the relevant dwelling plots that would have been made available for on-site affordable housing. Further information is set out in supplementary guidance on Affordable Housing.

### Proportion of Affordable Housing

- 6.108 A [viability study](#) undertaken in 2012 – representing a period when development values appear most depressed – concludes that the Council is reasonable to establish a **general 30% requirement** (in terms of gross dwellings) for the provision of proportion of affordable housing whether delivered on site or provided in the form of a commuted sum. This 30% level should be achievable on most development sites during the lifetime of the plan.
- 6.109 However, the viability study concludes that there are parts of the district where there is scope for a higher proportion of affordable homes (or equivalent value in the form of contributions) to be sought.
- **Wells** – development values in Wells indicate that a **40%** affordable housing requirement should be routinely achievable. Furthermore, the socio economic dynamics considered under Core Policy 10, backed by evidence of housing need, warrant this being a valid approach to apply to the city. The 40% requirement will also be applied in negotiating financial contributions in lieu of on site provision for small sites in the city and on its fringes (subject to the same development viability considerations set out above).
  - **Rural Areas** – In rural areas there is the potential for many sites to deliver higher levels of affordable homes however given their scale it is unlikely that on site provision will be routinely secured based on the thresholds above. As a result, in making allocations of land in the Primary and Secondary villages as indicated under Core Policy 2, the Council will explore site viability on a site by site basis. **Where such assessments underline that viability can support a level of 40% affordable housing, this will be built into the policy requirements in the Site Allocations Development Plan document.** Sites coming forward in advance of that part of the plan will be subject to the same assessment. The use of commuted sums (paid in lieu of on site provision from other small sites as set out above) will be utilised to improve viability where evidence suggests a scheme may be marginal.

### Affordable Housing and CIL

- 6.110 Development Policy 19 sets out the Councils intention to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy. Current legislation excludes affordable housing as a type of infrastructure supported through CIL which means that contributions in lieu will be in addition to CIL. This has been taken account of in the viability study. However, the position of affordable housing and CIL is under review and may offer an alternative and more efficient mechanism for contributions from small sites. This will be considered further if legislation is amended.

### Tenure Requirements

- 6.111 The Housing Needs Assessment confirms that the large majority of households are seeking affordable housing for rent with only a limited proportion able to afford intermediate products such as Shared Ownership/Homebuy. In addition, the newly introduced Affordable Rent product is not considered to be a realistic option for most households in housing need in the district. The Council therefore aims to deliver 80% of all new affordable housing in Mendip as Social Rented housing and the remaining 20% as intermediate housing.
- 6.112 The starting point for negotiations will be to deliver the 80 / 20% tenure split. Variations from this requirement will need to be justified by local circumstances or local needs, for example:
- where a scheme is proposed to meet a specific affordable housing need (for example the need for extra care affordable housing);
  - where the total number of affordable units provided on the site is too small to realistically deliver a mix of tenures; or
  - where updated and / or more local evidence of need and the relative affordability of different tenure types suggests that a different tenure split would better meet identified needs.
- 6.113 As set out in the policy, planning permission will be subject to a planning obligation to ensure that the affordable housing is provided and retained for eligible households in perpetuity. There are however mechanisms that exist for tenants to buy out their properties (e.g. Right to Buy, or full buy out of Shared Ownership properties). The planning obligation associated with any scheme will allow for this eventuality but ensure that capital receipts accruing from such sales are reinvested within the district to deliver more affordable homes.

**Development Viability.**

- 6.114 The Council is mindful that in setting a district-wide target, the characteristics of individual sites and local market conditions can impact on site viability. Where specific viability issues are identified, and evidenced by an applicant in relation to individual development proposals, this will be taken into account when considering that proposal. Where the applicant cannot fulfil the policy requirements set out in this policy (in respect of on-site provision or contributions), the applicant would need to demonstrate that viability is a consideration through the preparation and submission of a financial appraisal. This will usually take the form of a residual valuation making use of a recognised toolkit or financial appraisal model as advised by the Council's housing officers.
- 6.115 In subsequent negotiation, the Council will have regard to the financial appraisal to determine whether the development is viable within normal cost and value parameters including any abnormal site conditions, the range of planning obligations sought and a reasonable rate of developer return. The council will engage a consultant to independently assess the appraisal, the cost of which will be met by the developer. Where this assessment concludes that a proposal is not viable the Council will adopt the following approach,
- Consider alterations to the mix and design of the scheme in order to overcome significant cost burdens, without detriment to any relevant design or heritage considerations
  - Pursue or encourage pursuit of the potential for public subsidy – including available commuted sums secured from small sites gathered under this policy - whilst recognising that this may lead to delays in delivering the housing
  - Alter the tenure split of the affordable housing element within the development
  - Reduce the proportion of affordable units required on the site, with or without an in lieu financial contribution.
- 6.116 The Council is mindful that the housing market is subject to rises and falls in profitability and that this can impinge upon the delivery of housing by house builders or result in under delivery of affordable homes where market conditions have improved since the planning obligation was agreed. If the full policy quota cannot be secured due to market conditions at a particular moment in the economic cycle, the Council will seek other provisions within a planning obligation including phasing, the deferral of affordable housing obligations and reappraisal to allow future viability to be assessed at a later stage.

**Local Occupancy**

- 6.117 The Council's primary aim is to increase the level of affordable housing available to meet the needs of the local resident population. Within the towns this priority will be pursued, but the Council must also ensure that provision is made that supports the ability of local businesses to access a workforce that can help sustain economic prosperity and enables the Council's statutory housing obligations to be provided.
- 6.118 In rural areas, new affordable housing provision will be sought to provide for the needs of the immediate community or specific employer needs and appropriate occupancy controls would be included in legal agreements to ensure "*households with a local connection*" in the first instance would be offered the housing. The term '*households with a local connection*' is defined as those where a member of the household meets one of the following criteria
- (i) has immediately prior to such allocation been ordinarily resident within the Parish, or
  - (ii) has strong local connection with the said Parish through
    - (a) family associations of such person or persons in the said parish.
    - (b) any periods of ordinary residence (being a continuous period of not less than twelve months consecutive months) of such person or persons in the said parish
    - (c) permanent employment of such person or persons in the said parish.
- 6.119 Where households qualify under these criteria cannot be met the qualifying criteria will be broadened with homes being let or sold subsequently to those households with a connection to adjoining parishes and, beyond this to those households with a connection to any Parish within Mendip. Ultimately, the Council cannot create a situation where properties are kept vacant on account of occupancy controls.

## **Design**

- 6.120 The quality and design of all types of housing remains a key consideration for the Council in appraising development proposals. Affordable housing should normally be designed to at least the Homes and Community Agency's minimum standards. The Council will also pay particular attention to mixed tenure proposals to ensure that affordable and market housing units are not unduly segregated and the approach to both design and materials should support this policy objective. The Council accepts that clusters of affordable dwellings units within larger schemes may be the most effective design and management solution, but such clusters of affordable dwellings should not usually be in groups larger than 10 units.

### **DP11: Affordable Housing**

**The Council will negotiate the provision of a contribution towards meeting the district's housing need from all housing proposals.**

- 1. Proposals will contribute through either,**
  - a) on-site provision, (or a combination of on site provision together with a development contribution) on sites of a size greater than 0.25 hectares or which involve 7 or more dwellings, or**
  - b) the payment of a commuted sum in lieu of equivalent on site provision on sites below 0.25 hectares or providing up to 6 new homes**
  
- 2. Proposals will make provision for 30% of the total number of new homes to be provided in affordable tenures.**

**In Wells, and developments on its fringes, proposals will make provision for 40% of the total number of new homes to be provided in affordable tenures.**

**In making other allocations in subsequent parts of the Local Plan, the Council may include within policies requirements for levels of affordable housing provision in excess of 30% where this is justified and financially viable.**

**Equivalent financial contributions in lieu of on site provision will be negotiated.**
  
- 3. Provision on site will be made by the applicant, or negotiated with the Council, on an initial basis that**
  - Delivery is not predicated on any additional public subsidy**
  - A tenure split of 80% social rented housing, 20% intermediate housing is provided**
  - The affordable housing is fully integrated through the overall scheme design with associated market housing**
  
- 4. Planning permission will be subject to a planning obligation to ensure that the affordable housing is provided and retained for eligible households in perpetuity.**

**Where proposals cannot viably deliver (as set out in a detailed financial appraisal to be prepared by the applicant and submitted to the Council) the Council will negotiate on matters of tenure, subsidy design and amount of provision.**

**A Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared to outline detailed matters related to the implementation of this policy and affordable housing delivery including the calculation of commuted sums and the resolution of viability issues.**

## Development Policy 12: Rural Exception Sites

- 6.121 There are particular difficulties in securing an adequate supply of affordable housing for local needs in rural areas as was considered in relation to Core Policies 2 and 4. Despite measures set out in Development Policy 11, there are likely to be few developments, in certain villages, which are of sufficient scale to secure appropriate numbers of affordable homes to meet local needs. As an exception to normal policy therefore, and where it can be demonstrated that a proposed development will meet a particular locally generated need that cannot be accommodated in any other way, the District Council may be prepared to permit small scale residential development outside but adjoining the Development Limits of any rural settlement.
- 6.122 In facilitating the delivery of these schemes, applicants should work with Housing Associations to secure any public subsidy to support schemes of this nature. As funds permit, the Council will also apportion development contributions secured from small developments under Development Policy 11 to cross subsidise schemes. The use of these funds will be prioritised on an annual basis in line with, for example, overall value for money secured from competing schemes and the level of need that a scheme can satisfy in a given location. It should therefore not be assumed that schemes will automatically gain any financial support from this source of funding. Full details of this regime will be set out in the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document which will be adopted alongside this Local Plan.
- 6.123 In line with additional criteria set out in the policy below, the Council will work collaboratively with parish councils, developers and landowners to bring forward exception site development that includes open market housing on the same site that cross-subsidises affordable housing to meet specific local needs. The basis for the four additional criteria is as follows,
- That schemes are either identified by or clearly supported by the local community through an appropriate resolution secured by the relevant Parish Council.  
*(this builds in a requirement to ensure that schemes are brought forward collaboratively with communities to ensure that the focus is on meeting local needs as well as giving community leaders responsibility in pro-actively supporting the housing needs of their parishioners.)*
  - That schemes include only sufficient market housing required to cross subsidise affordable homes which must make up the majority of the total number of units proposed.  
*(this ensures that focus is upon securing affordable homes which remains the fundamental basis for the wider rural exceptions policy)*
  - That no additional public subsidy is required to deliver the affordable homes  
*(this is in response to the fact that public money is likely to be scarce and that which exists will be prioritised towards meeting housing need in the most sustainable villages. It also implies that land values for sites cannot be expected at typical open market values.)*
  - That new market housing will be covenanted to be primary residences  
*(this addresses concerns over the loss of properties to second home buyers).*
- 6.124 In essence, the applicant would need to secure community buy in and demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that a mixed tenure scheme was essential to the delivery of the development, so removing the need for public subsidy. It should be emphasised that affordable homes – across tenures able to meet identified local needs - will be expected to make up the overwhelming majority of the total number of dwellings brought forward under such schemes. A full open book financial appraisal will be required to accompany any application.

## **DP12: Rural Exception Sites**

- 1. As an exception to normal policy for the provision of housing set out in Core Policies 1 and 2, affordable housing for local people may be permitted in locations adjoining existing rural settlements on small sites where development would not otherwise be permitted where:**
  - a) the development will provide affordable homes that meet a clearly identified need for affordable housing as identified in the latest Local Housing Needs Assessment specific to that settlement; and**
  - b) the need cannot reasonably be met within in any other way on a site where housing would be permitted under normal policies; and**
  - c) the development satisfies other policies in this Plan, with particular regard being given to its integration into the form and character of the settlement and its landscape setting**
- 2. All Exception Sites approved under this policy will be made subject to a planning obligation to ensure that**
  - a) all initial and subsequent occupiers of the affordable dwellings will be eligible local people, in the first instance, and**
  - b) affordable homes secured under the policy are retained in perpetuity for occupation by those in housing need.**
- 3. The inclusion of market housing will be supported where any such scheme meets all the criteria in the preceding parts of this policy, and**
  - a) which has clear support from, the local parish council, as expressed in a formal resolution made by that council.**
  - b) demonstrates, through detailed financial appraisal, that the scale of the market housing component is essential for the successful delivery of the development.**
  - c) ensures no additional subsidy for the scheme and its affordable housing delivery is required.**
  - d) Ensures that that any new market housing approved on this basis should be for occupation as a principal residence.**

## **Development Policy 13: Accommodation for Rural Workers**

- 6.125 The National Planning Policy Framework makes it clear that Local Planning Authorities should avoid granting permission for isolated new homes in the countryside. One of the few circumstances where such development may be justified is where accommodation is required to support the operation of an agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise.
- 6.126 In most cases, it will be as convenient and more sustainable for such workers to be accommodated in existing dwellings in nearby towns or villages. However, for purposes such as business security and animal welfare, new dwellings will be considered. The Council will scrutinise all applications for new occupational dwellings against the criteria in the policy to ensure this concession is not abused and to prevent speculative development in the countryside<sup>15</sup>.
- 6.127 In the case of new enterprises, whether on an existing land holding or a newly created subdivision, the Council will only consider granting consent for a temporary accommodation for a period of three years.
- 6.128 For established businesses and those with consent for temporary dwellings, applications for permanent rural workers dwellings will be considered where the enterprise is able to demonstrate

<sup>15</sup> Applicants will need to justify that all options within a suitable search area have been explored and that flood risk implications have been taken into account, particularly in the Somerset Levels

profitability and a sound financial footing for the foreseeable future in line with the provisions of the policy below.

- 6.129 Changes in the scale and character of farming or other rural enterprises may affect the long term requirement to retain an occupancy condition. Removal of conditions will be considered on a case by case basis and will need to be supported by documentary evidence. The Council will prepare a guidance note to outline what steps applicants should make to show they have made “reasonable attempts” to make the property available for other rural workers who may be in need of such a property. Consideration will also be given to the capability and suitability of the unit being occupied as a permanent residential unit together with any changes in circumstances which mean the restriction is no longer applicable.

### **DP13: Accommodation for Rural Workers**

#### **1. Proposals for permanent or temporary accommodation outside of defined Development Limits which are necessary to support agriculture, forestry or other rural enterprises will be supported where:**

##### **a) It can be demonstrated that:**

- i) the dwelling and its proposed location are essential to support or sustain the functioning of the enterprise;**
- ii) there is a need for permanent occupation which relates to a full-time worker or one who is primarily employed by the business;**
- iii) all alternative accommodation options have been explored and no satisfactory alternative means of providing accommodation has been identified;**
- iv) the size of the proposed dwelling is commensurate with the established functional requirement for the enterprise**
- v) the siting of the proposal does not conflict with the intentions of Development Policy 5, particularly in relation to Natura 2000 sites.**

##### **b) For new rural enterprises, in the first instance the Council will only grant permission for temporary accommodation for a 3 year period. Applications for temporary accommodation will be supported where:**

- i) the nature of the accommodation means it can easily be dismantled or removed;**
- ii) clear evidence, through a business plan or other assessable proposal, shows a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise on a sound financial basis**

**Conditions may also be applied to ensure land is restored where, after the expiry of the 3 year period, a continued need for the accommodation cannot be shown or where a permanent dwelling is subsequently granted permission on a different site. Extensions to three year permissions for temporary accommodation will not normally be granted.**

#### **2. The Council will support proposals for permanent rural workers' dwellings where:**

- i) the enterprise has been established on the site for at least three years;**
- ii) business accounts for the preceding 3 years indicate that at least one of those years has been profitable, and that the enterprise is currently financially sound and has clear prospects of remaining so;**
- iii) The criteria in clause 1a) continue to be satisfied**

**Where permission is granted under this policy or a preceding policy with the same overall intention, a condition will be imposed which limits occupation of the dwelling to a person solely, mainly or last working in a local rural enterprise, or a widow, widower or resident dependants of such a person.**

**3. The removal of agricultural occupancy conditions will be supported where:**

- a) The dwelling is genuinely surplus to the current and foreseeable future agricultural needs of the holding;
- b) There is no evidence of a continuing need for housing for persons employed or last employed in agriculture in the locality; and
- c) The dwelling has been widely marketed on terms reflecting its occupancy condition normally for at least 12 months or an appropriate period as agreed with the local planning authority and no interest in occupation has been indicated.

**Development Policy 14: Housing Mix and Type****Local Context**

6.130 Consultation informing the Local Plan has picked up an issue, particularly within rural communities, that there is an apparent mismatch between the types of housing which are being built and the need which is evident within the local communities. This policy therefore responds to one of the stated objectives of the strategy.

6.131 In terms of the information available there are some clear observable patterns which arise from various social trends which have emerged in the last decade, the current operation of the housing market, as well as the fact that longevity is increasing. For example, in 2001, approximately 28% of households in the district comprised of one person, with half of these single person households consisting of persons who were of pensionable age. Households containing two or three people made up about half of the total number of households. Demographic and household formation data, collected for the [West of England Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#) (SHMA) (June 2009), reveals that, by 2028, there will be a significant increase in the number of smaller person households (reflecting in part the ageing population). This will apply to the pattern of occupation in relation to both market and affordable housing.

**National Policy Background**

National planning policy is set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) and aims to achieve the Government's key objective of ensuring that everybody has the opportunity of living in a decent home and states that local authorities should encourage an appropriate size and mix of housing to reflect identified local need..

6.132 The most recent information on housing need within the district can be found in the council's [Housing Needs Assessment](#). The table summarises the district wide picture at the beginning of 2012.

Unit Size	Market Housing	Affordable Housing
1 Bedroom	5%	20-25%
2 Bedroom	30%	45%
3 Bedroom	50%	25%
4 Bedroom	15%	5-10%

6.133 It is important that all persons engaged in or interested in housing development within Mendip appreciate the impact and importance of these statistics, and that this evidence is then used to inform decisions about the types of housing development proposed within the district. It is not the intention of the Council - via this policy - to prescribe absolute targets for specific types and sizes of homes. However, this policy will ensure that in negotiation on particular schemes, the Council will use evidence - whether in the form of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (including future revisions of it), or local needs assessments (and the local housing register in the case of affordable housing schemes) - to argue for the securing of housing schemes with a mix of dwelling types that better reflects need in the local market. In accordance with the evidence identified above the emphasis will, however, be on seeking the provision of smaller units - particularly two or three bedrooms - that can provide flexibility in accommodating single persons, couples or small families.

**Other sources of information**

- [West of England Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#)
- [Mendip District Council Housing Needs Assessment](#)
- [Town Portraits](#)
- [Local Needs Assessments](#)
- [Local Housing Register](#)

- 6.134 In addition to unit size, unit type is equally important. Flats have a place in response to certain needs and may be suited to particular locations. However, their flexibility is limited when addressing the needs of young families and older age groups. Traditional housing will remain in greatest demand. In addition, the ageing population will increasingly generate particular housing requirements, specifically for units capable of adaptation, sheltered homes and, beyond this, homes with a greater emphasis on in-house care. Every scheme will be different and components of individual development proposals must necessarily be balanced against specific site characteristics, design issues and, where appropriate, viability considerations.

### **DP14: Housing Mix and Type**

**Proposals for residential development will be required to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes. This mix should reflect identified local need in Mendip (both within the district as a whole and within identified sub-market housing areas) - including for small family sized units and housing suitable for older people - as set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other local evidence, particularly Local Housing Needs Assessments in rural communities.**

**This requirement will apply to both market and affordable housing, and in the case of the latter, will also have regard to the Councils Housing Waiting List.**

## **Development Policy 15: Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

### **Local Context**

- 6.135 Mendip is an area of considerable importance for the travelling community, primarily due to its geographic location and the large number of festivals that take place within its boundaries.
- 6.136 A [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment](#) (January 2011) has been prepared for the five local authorities in Somerset. This identified the need for:
- 93 additional residential pitches within Mendip by 2020 (69 between 2010-15 and 24 between 2015-20);
  - 80 additional transit pitches within Mendip by 2015; and
  - at least 4 Showmen's yards within Somerset by 2015.
- National Policy Background**  
Government policy on this matter is set out in the Department for Communities and Local Government's [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#) and requires local authorities to set out criteria for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites within their Plans as well as making provision for needs.
- 6.137 To meet the need for additional pitches in Mendip sufficient sites will be allocated through the Local Plan Part II - Site Allocations document.
- 6.138 The criteria set out in the policy below will be used to:
- assess sites that are put forward before the Local Plan Part II is in place, as well as to act as a guide for the identification of suitable sites within it; and
  - assess planning applications for sites that are not identified in the Local Plan Part II (following its adoption)
- 6.139 The criteria, for convenience, restate the main expectations set out in other policies of this plan. To satisfy Habitat Regulations Assessment requirements, the final criteria seeks to ensure that site selection is mindful of impacts on Natura 2000 sites including proximity impacts on habitats, such as semi dry grasslands and scrubland and lime-maple woodlands, which are also sensitive to recreational pressure in combination with other policies in the Local Plan.
- 6.140 Although it is recognised that sites for Travelling Showpeople require greater storage and maintenance space for associated equipment, the same criteria will need to be met by all groups

regarding accommodation provision. Further guidance on site specific issues set out in [Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites](#) published by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

### **DP15: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

- 1. To meet the need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in Mendip, as identified in the latest Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, sites will be allocated in a Site Allocations document.**
- 2. Planning applications which relate to sites not identified in the Site Allocations document, or which are submitted prior to the adoption of that document, will be granted permission where the following criteria are clearly met. Sites should:**
  - **meet an identified need, having regard to any alternative, available, affordable, acceptable and suitable sites elsewhere in the district (either built or with permission) that could meet the needs of the intended occupants;**
  - **have regard to access, by a range of transport modes, to essential local services and facilities (including health services, shops and schools);**
  - **have safe and convenient access to the road network, with adequate provision for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles on-site;**
  - **not be located in any area deemed to be at high risk of flooding;**
  - **be compatible with surrounding land uses; and**
  - **not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape, character, built heritage and appearance of the surrounding area, or detrimental impact on biodiversity, including features which ecologically support the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites outside the designated sites boundaries.**
- 3. Existing authorised Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites will be safeguarded unless they are no longer required to meet identified need.**

## LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- 6.141 This section sets out how the Council will ensure that new development makes contributions towards infrastructure needs that will arise in light of growth. In the towns, the Core Policies set out in section 5 of this document itemise the larger scale community infrastructure needs and in due course, when the Council considers development needs in rural communities a similar exercise will be undertaken. Other needs will arise and the Council will plan for these.
- 6.142 Policies in this section also address premises accommodating existing facilities and services to ensure they are not lost without proper consideration of the potential for re-investment in them or that alternative uses or functions have been fully explored.

### Development Policy 16: Public Open Space and Green Infrastructure

- 6.143 Open spaces are important parts of our everyday community infrastructure offering a range of social, environmental and health benefits as well as making areas more physically and aesthetically attractive. Creating, protecting and enhancing these spaces is a vital part of making neighbourhoods more attractive and more enjoyable places in which to live.

- 6.144 The term ‘open space’ can incorporate many different types of areas, ranging from formal recreation spaces like sports pitches and play areas; civic spaces like parks and ornamental gardens; functional areas like allotments, cemeteries and churchyards; linear routes such as footpaths, cycle paths, and river corridors; as well as incidental spaces like railway embankments, verges and landscaped areas within developments. Open space is normally considered to be public space.

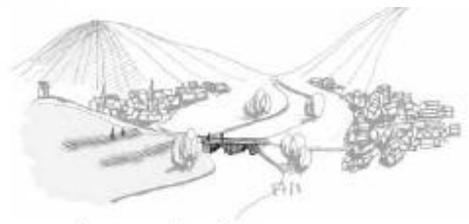
**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** states that it is necessary for Local Planning Authorities to outline in their policies how they will provide for new open space of a variety of types, including space for wildlife, to meet a range of needs. Open Space is important to health and wellbeing and a critical part of sustainable communities. Planning for maintenance of green networks or green infrastructure also needs to be covered which includes collective management of spaces in an area involving specific safeguarding and good maintenance.

#### Green Infrastructure

- 6.145 In the past, spaces have been looked at on a more individual basis, being owned and managed for specific purposes. However, for a range of reasons this has resulted in some of our spaces, like school playing fields and incidental spaces being lost without appreciation for their wider benefits. These spaces can double as space for wildlife, natural drainage, noise amelioration (where trees are also present) as well as providing opportunities for parts of the education curriculum to be delivered outside of the classroom. In river corridors, informal recreation can be delivered whilst maintaining flood storage areas. Through appreciation and active management of our green infrastructure we can improve the use of what is available in our communities and ensure that new development makes well considered additions to our open space stock. Green infrastructure also encompasses the protection, enhancement and creation of priority UK BAP habitats such as ancient and native woodland



Habitat provision and access to nature



Landscape setting and context



Access, recreation, movement and leisure



Flood attenuation and water resource management

#### Green Infrastructure Strategies

- 6.146 The district council will be encouraging the development of Green Infrastructure Strategies in each of the five towns in order to encourage a co-ordinated approach to effective open space provision and management. These strategies will allow communities to get involved in highlighting ‘spaces of local importance’ that may need protection under the provisions set out in relation to Development Policy

2, along with open spaces that could be improved and what improvements might be most effective. New potential areas for open space provision could also be indicated through these strategies. These strategies will identify specific open space priorities and provide a basis for the expenditure of development contributions collected. In rural areas parish councils will be encouraged to prepare their own strategies, more akin to management plans, to help inform how development contributions will be spent.

- 6.147 The green infrastructure strategies will be used to inform whether on-site provision of open space is appropriate as part of a development, or whether a financial contribution to be used to provide a larger area off-site, or improve the quality of existing open spaces within the settlement, would be more appropriate. This should ensure that good quality spaces are provided for communities in the most appropriate locations to ensure the best usage of them. In addition, the Council will also make strategic provision through dedicated land allocations as informed by the proposed Green Infrastructure Strategies.

### **New Open Space Provision**

- 6.148 New development brings new demands for open space as pressure on existing areas grows. The National Playing Fields Association's long-standing standard of 2.4ha of new space per additional 1000 people will remain the benchmark level of new provision sought within Mendip.

### **Other sources of information:**

- [Fields in Trust: Planning & Design for Outdoor Sport & Play](#)
- [Mendip Open Space Study 2012](#)
- [Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance](#)
- ['Nature Nearby' Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance](#)

- 6.149 Information concerning the levels of new provision required place by place is set out in the Mendip Open Space Study and the Open Space Technical Paper and will also be informed by the Green Infrastructure Strategies for each town when they are produced.
- 6.150 Work done as part of the Habitats Regulations Assessments has highlighted that it is expected that there will be increased recreational pressures resulting from a rise in the district's population on sensitive habitats and species within protected areas. Therefore there is a need for 'wild' or 'natural areas' that are open to the public and accessible from urban areas where people have an opportunity to interact with wildlife, walk the dog and where people can play informally. The health and social benefits of such access are well documented. Assessment and provision of accessible natural greenspace, to Natural England's criteria set out in 'Nature Nearby: Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance', should be included with every development of over 25 dwellings to help offset potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites. Supplementary Planning Guidance will be prepared by the Council with more detailed information on how developments will be expected to contribute to open space and greenspace provision along with an assessment of existing accessible natural greenspace provision. This guidance will make links to the Green Infrastructure Strategies for the five towns discussed in the previous section.

### **Safeguarding Open Spaces**

- 6.151 The Council's default position is that playing fields and other public open spaces are safeguarded from development. However, opportunities and circumstances sometimes arise where development proposals do seek to make use of public open spaces and the wider community benefits may be worthwhile. In such circumstances, the Council will ensure that the overall estate of public open space is not diminished to a level where local standards are not met, or in a manner that means the accessibility of varied types of open space to the local community falls short of play strategy standards.
- 6.152 The open spaces of which the Council is aware are shown on the Proposals Map. Development Policy 16 will also apply to new spaces that come forward.

## DP16: Open Space and Green Infrastructure

- 1 Development resulting in the loss of existing open, sport or recreational space, including allotments will not be permitted unless:
  - i. It can be demonstrated that there is an excess of recreational or open space in the settlement and the proposed loss would not result in a current or likely shortfall during the plan period; or
  - ii. suitable alternative recreational or open space, which is adjudged to be of equal or greater benefit to the community as compared with the space which is to be lost, is provided in an accessible location. If acceptable, such alternative provision will be required to be made available prior to the commencement of development
- 2 All new residential development will make a contribution towards the provision of new open space, including accessible natural greenspace, to meet the needs of the growing population.
- 3 Where appropriate, the required open space contribution will take the form of on-site provision. Such on-site provision will require appropriate long term management arrangements to be agreed between the Council and the developer. Where on-site provision is not appropriate, or deemed to be more suitably provided elsewhere, a financial contribution toward off-site provision or enhancements will be required. The level of contributions for off-site provision and management arrangements will be calculated in accordance with a guidance note which will be produced by the Council.

Expenditure of financial contributions will be prioritised in line with Green Infrastructure Strategies for each 'town' and equivalent arrangements put in place by rural parish councils within Parish Plans or other formal mechanisms.

## Development Policy 17: Safeguarding Community Facilities

### Local Context

- 6.153 The Council wishes to ensure that future development within the district is sustainable. This means that, as much as possible, people should be able to access the services and facilities they require, as close to home as possible. If this objective is achieved, it will avoid an increase in the need for people to travel. The loss of services can threaten the viability and vitality of rural communities, and severely affect some groups such as the low paid, young, elderly and those without a car, thereby increasing rural isolation.
- 6.154 The main driver for this policy is to limit rural isolation within Mendip's rural area by, as far as is possible, retaining services and facilities within the villages. However, this is equally applicable in an urban setting where local community facilities also serve neighbourhoods and contribute to creating a sense of community. Development values within the district are such that significant gains can be made from the re-use of such properties without regard to their wider community benefit.
- 6.155 Services and facilities can be broadly divided into two categories. There are those services which are provided such as schools and doctors surgeries that are essentially of a non-commercial nature. This policy is attempting to ensure that where there is still a recognised need for that service within a village, it should not be permitted to be lost to another use unless the equivalent provision is made within the same locality. The second category is those facilities of a commercial nature such as

### Other sources of information:

- [Pubs and Places – the social value of community pubs](#)
- [Rural Settlement Role & Function Study](#)
- [Town Portraits](#)

village shops and pubs. Due to changing consumer patterns over the past few decades many of these have been lost from Mendip's villages. The intention of this policy is to retain facilities such as these within villages where they are considered to still be viable enterprises.

- 6.156 Where it can be reasonably demonstrated that a facility is not viable for its current or an alternative community use, change of use or redevelopment will be permitted. The Council will prepare a guidance note to outline what steps applicants should make to show they have made "reasonable attempts" to improve viability or make the premises available for an alternative community use.

### **DP17: Safeguarding Community Facilities**

**Development proposals that would result in the loss of sites or premises currently or last used for local facilities and services will not be permitted unless:**

- 1. Suitable alternative provision is being made in the locality and will be available before development or change of use can commence; or**
- 2. The maintenance of the existing use would perpetuate existing amenity, highway or other environmental problems; or**
- 3. If the service or facility is of a commercial nature (including pubs and neighbourhood shops), and there is no likelihood of a viable community use.**

## **Development Policy 18: Safeguarding Corridors for Sustainable Travel**

### **Local Context**

- 6.157 The likely availability and use of public transport is a very important element in reducing the need for travel by car. The availability of safe, coherent and easy to use footpaths and cycle routes can also have a significant impact on people's choice of transport mode.
- 6.158 To this end, national policy encourages local plans to protect and exploit opportunities to deliver sustainable transport, including the re-opening of rail lines. Former railway land can also be used to provide multi-user paths for activities such as walking and cycling (sometimes as an interim measure prior to the introduction of rail services).
- 6.159 For a considerable period the county and district councils have engaged local stakeholders about making best use of former railway routes and a number of proposals remain realistic and deliverable. The Frome to Radstock route has seen partial investment to deliver a multi user path, community groups and Sustrans are committed to delivering the Strawberry Line route running from Cheddar to Wells and then onwards to Shepton Mallet. Whilst aspirational in the current climate, there remains the possibility of Shepton Mallet seeing a reinstatement of its position on the railway network making use of the active mineral line which extends as far as Cranmore. Other former railway corridors present opportunities although there are no current firm plans.
- 6.160 Whilst it can be argued that the Local Plan process is concerned with promoting certainty and delivery through the planning process leaving no room for such schemes, the Council, supported by the Highway Authority, believes that to allow the incremental compromise of these routes is to take a very short term view and puts barriers in the way of future opportunities to deliver these routes for more sustainable patterns of movement.
- 6.161 This policy also seeks to safeguard opportunities for transport related development at the district's only railway station at Frome. Land exists adjacent the station, including former sidings which provide an opportunity to deliver a more comprehensive travel interchange.
- 6.162 On a broader level, the Council will seek to facilitate the delivery of sustainable access networks to encourage walking and cycling, particularly within and radiating from the towns. A number of routes featured in the previous Local Plan are shown on the Proposals Map and others may be identified in the Site Allocations process.

## **DP18: Safeguarding Corridors for Sustainable Travel**

### **Railway Land**

**Former railway land will be protected from development that would be prejudicial to the re-use of railway, or other sustainable transport links and facilities, in the following locations (as identified on the Proposals Map):**

- **land between Mendip Vale and Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet;**
- **the Frome to Radstock railway;**
- **land adjacent to Frome station;**
- **land between Coxley Wick and Wells;**
- **all other former railway land identified on the Proposals Map**

### **Land for Multi-User Paths**

**Land will be safeguarded from development which would prejudice the construction or potential function, convenience or attractiveness of a cycle and/or pedestrian and/or other appropriate path along the alignments shown on the Proposals Map. Where it is decided to permit development which cannot be sited or designed to avoid an adverse effect on a safeguarded alignment, the developer will be required to make satisfactory alternative provision.**

## **Development Policy 19: Development Contributions**

### **Impacts, Mitigation and Infrastructure**

- 6.163 The role of the planning system is to balance up competing interests and where impacts have to be accepted, measures can be taken to minimise those impacts and where possible mitigate against their effects.
- 6.164 Much of the focus in recent decades has been on mitigating the effects of individual development through Section 106 Agreements. Section 106 agreements are so named after Section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act and are legal tools which record and require signatories to undertake a course of action which is linked to the granting of a planning permission. For example, compensatory land, additional works or money is secured from a developer to address a development impact. Whilst Section 106 agreements can be effective in dealing with clear issues affecting a site and its immediate surroundings, their use to address impacts that may be cumulative in nature, or compensatory measures remote from the development site have been open to question. Furthermore the costs of administering agreements has meant that small development schemes make little or no contribution, whilst bigger strategic developments can seem overburdened.
- 6.165 During this same period, public funding for key infrastructure has, generally speaking, declined. There is less money available to, for example, fund and improve the quality of schools, provide and run community facilities or reroute flows of traffic which existing roads were never designed to cope with. Quite fairly, communities question how local services and facilities will cope with new development.

### **Towards a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

- 6.166 Since 2007, successive governments have been promoting the introduction of what is called a [Community Infrastructure Levy](#) or CIL which is intended to address the matters considered above. As a mechanism, it will mean that all forms of development covered by the CIL will pay a one off per square metre charge following the granting of planning permission. So, an application for, say, a single dwelling will make a contribution, pro rata, equal to a scheme for 100 houses. This funding will then be built up by the Council to fund local infrastructure. For developers, there should be more certainty as to what they will be expected to contribute, thus speeding up the development process, and that the money raised from developer contributions should be spent in a way that developers will feel worthwhile - namely on infrastructure to support development set out in this development plan.

6.167 The list of local infrastructure that will be funded in Mendip district is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which accompanies this plan and will be updated during its lifetime. The list of infrastructure is informed by the views of statutory providers such as the education and highway authorities, water companies, the health authority and also by local communities in respect of social and community facilities. Some of this infrastructure will be funded through existing sources of money (e.g. water companies will use water bills to upgrade their facilities) but a great deal of it will not. CIL offers a funding stream, alongside, for example, lottery, government or other charitable sources, that can be used to deliver key infrastructure that is necessary to deliver alongside new development which will maintain and improve the quality of life in communities. However, whilst CIL is a new funding stream it will not be able to fund all the infrastructure needs in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and so priorities have to be established.

Following the adoption of this Plan, the Council will prepare what is called a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule which will determine the gap in funding available from other sources which is needed to fund the list of local infrastructure. From here the Council can set a per square metre charge to be levied on development. In setting the charge, which can vary across uses such as housing, retail, employment and so on, the Council must be mindful of development viability. Set the charge too high and nothing will be built and no CIL will be gathered. Having established an appropriate and viable level of CIL the Council, with the relevant infrastructure providers, will need to understand the likely annual income from CIL and make decisions about what is funded and in what order of priority.

#### **What do we mean by Infrastructure?**

6.168 The government has been keen to make sure that the term infrastructure is not unduly constrained in order that CIL money can be used to fund a whole range of projects from new sewers to playgrounds. However, what the list of infrastructure needs in a given area will depend upon what is needed to support new homes, businesses and other land uses. The use of CIL must be justified and to enable transparency for developers and communities the Council will need to publish an annual statement accounting for the CIL income and its expenditure in line with the priorities set out in its infrastructure list.

#### **Site Specific Effects**

- 6.169 CIL will enable councils to more fairly and effectively deal with the cumulative effects of development on the area and enable essential and priority infrastructure to be delivered. However, where a specific development site imposes a particular impact that needs to be mitigated, Section 106 legal agreements will still be needed. The government has made it clear that after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, Section 106 agreements will be limited in scope to address those impacts which are 'directly relevant and related to the site' – far more tightly than the manner in which that phrase is currently applied.
- 6.170 The policy below therefore sets out the Council's approach to securing development contributions outside of the Community Infrastructure Levy arrangements which the Council will be aiming to adopt by the spring of 2014.

**The Council will support the delivery of local infrastructure in line with new development and mitigate or compensate for the effects that new development may have,**

- 1. Through the introduction and operation of a Community Infrastructure Levy which will enable the collection of money with the objective of investing in local infrastructure - as detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan – in order to support new development set out in this plan and in response to other agreed priorities as set out in an annual statement.**
- 2. By the use of legal agreements (or other appropriate mechanism) where the implementation of a development would result in,**
  - specific or direct impacts on a site, its surrounding area or local infrastructure (including amenities and facilities), or**
  - a need to compensate for loss or damage caused by a development.**

**Contributions will be directly, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development.**

- 3. On major development sites identified in the Local Plan (or subsequent parts of it) through Development Briefs or Masterplans which will establish the infrastructure requirements and other contributions to be secured from a legal agreement in a subsequent planning application as well as any justified subsidy of infrastructure that might be appropriate from CIL.**

**The timing and detail of all contributions will be carefully considered in order to ensure that appropriate infrastructure or mitigation measures are delivered and put in place before the development is completed and/or occupied.**

## MAINTAINING ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

- 6.171 Core Policies 3 and 4 as well as the Town Strategies in section 5 set out a positive local policy framework to encourage business investment and job creation in the district. However, in certain circumstances the Council needs to put in place policies to manage change to ensure that economic vitality is maintained and that patterns of development provide a range of opportunities for business in all parts of the area.

### Development Policy 20: Reuse of Employment Sites

#### Local Context

- 6.172 Between 1991 and 2006 around 10 hectares of net additional employment land (within B class uses) was developed within the five Mendip Towns. This has made a positive contribution to extending the range of business and employment opportunities in the district. However, this net figure hides the fact that during the same period some 23 hectares of existing employment land was lost.
- 6.173 There is no doubt that the changing nature of the local economy – largely through the loss of manufacturing and an increase in levels of employment within the service sector– has resulted in some surplus land requirements. This surplus land, in each of the Mendip towns, has created the potential for other forms of development, notably housing, to be delivered without the need for excessive new greenfield expansion. Furthermore, higher land values associated with residential development have made significant contributions towards the costs of carrying out necessary works for remediation of areas of contaminated land and have helped to limit the presence of eyesore derelict sites and decaying buildings.
- National Planning Policy** is set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) which seeks to encourage a strong, competitive economy. Its Core Planning Principles prioritise the reuse of brownfield sites for development which is supported by the Council. It also states that councils should not seek to impose long term protection policies for sites where there is little prospect of their use for this purpose and where land could be put to better use.
- 6.174 The redevelopment of former employment sites has therefore given rise to positive effects, improving quality of life in some adjacent residential areas. However, this ongoing urban change is also resulting in less desirable effects which were raised strongly during consultation.
- 6.175 First, speculative housing developments have, in a number of cases, precipitated the loss of a number of areas of viable employment land which could be used for other employment generating uses. National policy in recent times, considered as part of appeals on local proposals has been seen to afford greater weight to the delivery of housing rather than the maintenance of a range of employment uses. Given the strong level of small business creation and self employment in Mendip it is important that there is a stock of available middle and lower end market premises to enable these types of activity to emerge and grow.
- 6.176 Secondly, the losses of employment sites within or close to settlements are eroding the inherent sustainability of these settlements by creating separation between employment and housing uses, which gives rise to an increase in the need to travel, typically through the use of the private car. In turn, this trend is increasing the potential for peak time congestion on key routes and with this comes negative impacts on people living in these areas. In terms of balance, there is recognition that some employment sites within predominantly residential areas cause their own negative impacts. However, given the nature of modern employment, not being confined to factories, warehouses and workshops, there is no reason why former employment sites cannot be reused in part to provide jobs, and even at levels of the former user, as part of well planned mixed use development.
- 6.177 Hence, in order to maintain a wide range of activity and economic productivity within, rather than at the peripheries of the Mendip towns, the Council will consider proposals for the redevelopment of sites currently or last used for employment having regard to the following policy.

## DP20: Reuse of Employment Sites

Proposals for the development of land or buildings previously or currently used for, or currently allocated for, activities falling within Use Classes B1, B2 or B8 will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) the re-use for non-B class employment generating uses or for mixed-use schemes will deliver comparable employment generation (based on number of jobs created) or wider economic benefit, and;
- b) the proposal would not prejudice the Council's wider employment land strategy as summarised in Core Policy 3.

In determining any application for planning permission for such a proposal, the Council will balance the application of this policy against the need to secure wider regeneration objectives in that area and the need to overcome any local environmental impacts (including those related to transport) of employment uses in the vicinity of the site concerned as considered under Development Policies 8 and 9 of this Local Plan.

## Development Policy 21: Managing Town Centres

### Local Context

6.178 Town Centres are attractive places to visit and do business because of their concentrations of retail, hospitality, service and cultural activity. Town centres also perform many other functions. The convenience for customers, employees and visitors of having all these activities in one place means that single trips can satisfy a range of needs whether that trip is made by foot, car or public transport. The Town Strategies set out in previous sections outline specific proposals and measures in each centre to maintain and enhance their roles throughout this plan period.

6.179 The principal role for planning policy at a local level is to effectively manage existing centres. Design and character is a matter that can be managed using policies set out elsewhere in Development Policies 1 and 7 drawing on the overall approach set out in the Town Strategies as well as any other considerations that are material. The only remaining area where policy is appropriate is managing the mix of uses present. In order to do this the Council, again taking policy cues from the National Planning Policy Framework, has defined areas and frontages within and around the centres of the Mendip towns which can be used to manage development. The extents of these areas are set out on the proposals map. The purpose of the defined areas is set out below.

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) provides the main policy basis to consider new town centre development. The principal focus in this policy is on reinforcing the roles of existing centres by requiring a sequential test (to ensure new sites are as best integrated with existing town centre activity) and an assessment of impacts (to ensure that local decision making is fully informed by the wider benefits and drawbacks of particular schemes).

- **Primary Frontages** – those street frontages in town centres where there is a predominance of shopping premises. Typically these are the principal 'high streets' where there is a dense mixture of national and independent retailers, punctuated to a very limited degree by banks and some food establishments.
- **Secondary Frontages** – those parts of town centres surrounding primary frontages described above where there is some shopping activity but the diversity of other commercial uses, like financial services, professional offices, pubs, bars, takeaways, is more apparent.
- **Primary Shopping Area** – a collective term for the Primary and Secondary frontages, as well as any wider extents, where retail is present but may be as part of a mix with leisure, service and cultural uses.
- **Town Centre Area** – a broader boundary within which the widest extent of town centre activities is contained and can normally be defined to be within 300m of the Primary Frontages – representing a reasonable distance over which customers and other town centre users might range in their visits – or the limit within which the built character and function is orientated

towards town centre activity. Broadly speaking this line defines the extent of what can be considered the ‘edge of centre.’

6.180 The following policy sets out how the Council will manage uses in these defined areas.

### **DP21: Managing Town Centre Uses**

**The vibrancy of town centre uses will be maintained and enhanced:**

- 1. within the defined Primary Frontages by retaining at least two thirds of premises in retail uses (defined as falling within Class A1 of the Use Classes order) with remaining premises being limited to within Class A**

**In applying this policy the Council will have regard to the retail concentration within primary street frontages (measured 50m either side of the proposal site) where a similar two thirds balance of A1 uses will be expected.**

- 2. within the Secondary Frontages by maintaining commercial uses (defined as falling within Class A of the Use Classes order).**
- 3. in the areas around the Primary Shopping Area by encouraging mixed development with elements of retail, leisure, office or any other uses which attract trade or activity in the wider town centre.**

## **Development Policy 22: Reuse and Conversions of Rural Buildings**

### **Local Context**

- 6.181 The rural economy has seen significant change over a long period and this will continue into the foreseeable future. Agricultural change has been the most marked with mechanisation, modernisation and production scale requiring different types of built structures to support production. Other rural activities, land based or otherwise, have also had to respond to change and collectively these trends are leaving a stock of redundant buildings in the countryside.
- 6.182 The Spatial Strategy of Mendip’s Local Plan is broadly trying to consolidate development in locations which provides good access to jobs, services and a range of other amenities in order that any growth in car use is minimised as far as possible. However, whilst encouraging the pursuit of this objective, it is acknowledged that development in more dispersed locations will still be necessary, not least to assist in the stimulation of a revival in economic activity. To this end, national planning policy supports rural and agricultural diversification where it does not impose negative environmental impacts.
- 6.183 Redundant rural buildings represent a resource that can help deliver diversification of the rural economy as well as increase employment opportunities, supplementing new build development in larger villages as proposed in Core Policy 4.
- 6.184 As set out in national policy, priority will be given to conversion for economic uses before residential uses. Economic reuse in this context can include commercial, industrial and other employment development, tourism (including holiday accommodation), sport, recreation and community uses. Not all buildings in the rural area will be suitable for reuse. Those that are considered to be incapable of adaptation without substantial reconstruction, or which are regarded as being of a scale which would promote use inappropriate to the location, or whose reuse (including associated development) would result in or contribute to an incongruous effect upon the landscape character of the wider area are examples of proposals which would normally be resisted.
- 6.185 The Council will prepare a guidance note to outline what steps applicants should make to show they have made “reasonable attempts” to secure appropriate business or non residential uses.

#### **Useful information**

- [The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice](#)
- [Architectural Building Guidelines for the Mendip Hills](#)

- 6.186 In some instances it may be apparent that a rural building would not be suitable for business and non-residential uses. In such circumstances it would be for the local planning authority to give an early indication to a potential applicant in relation to paragraph 2 of the policy below.
- 6.187 Further to the provisions of Development Policy 6, developers will need to provide full surveys and any mitigation details with the application so that Mendip District Council can fulfil its obligations in assessing the 'Favourable Conservation Status' of European Protected Species under the Habitats Regulations 2010. The adaptation or conversion of rural buildings will only be permitted where bat roosts are retained or designed into the converted building to at least the minimum environmental conditions to support a roost that was present previously. External conditions such as connecting vegetation should also be retained or re-planted.

## **DP22: Reuse and Conversion of Rural Buildings**

- 1. The reuse or conversion of a building in the countryside (outside of defined development limits) for non-residential uses will be supported where:**
  - a) the proposed use would not prejudice the use of adjacent land and premises, particularly where such use entails agricultural or other land based operations.**
  - b) the design of the building, and associated development required to facilitate its reuse, respects its surroundings and does not harm the wider landscape character of the area or have an adverse impact on the transport network.**
  - c) in the case of a traditional building, the proposal is sensitive to its fabric and character.**
  - d) the building is of permanent and substantially sound construction and is proposed for re-use and adaption in a manner which would not require major or complete reconstruction.**
  - e) any bat roost present is incorporated or replaced, and the external vegetative structure supporting is maintained or replaced within the scheme.**
- 2. The re-use and conversion of rural buildings in the countryside (outside of defined development limits) for residential use will be given favourable consideration where all reasonable attempts have first been made to secure an appropriate business or non-residential use, and where the above criteria in clause 1 above are also satisfied.**

# APPENDICES

**Appendix 1 : Saved Policies**

**Appendix 2 : Policy Monitoring Framework**

**Glossary**

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## APPENDIX 1: SAVED POLICIES

- A.1 This appendix includes a limited number of Saved Policies which are to be carried over from the existing Local Plan as they remain relevant or relate to allocations which have yet to be implemented. By including them within this Plan, there is no confusion for applicants in having to refer back to the old Local Plan which – once this plan is adopted - will no longer be part of Mendip District Council's Development Plan.
- A.2 The intention is that they will be fully incorporated into Part II of the Local Plan which will set out Site Allocations. Once that document is adopted, this Appendix will no longer be a relevant consideration.
- A.3 Varied text to update the policies in light of review is marked in ~~strike through~~ or *italic* text.

### **SAVED POLICY 1: Brookside School** ***Formerly Local Plan Policy S&W9***

A *continuing* need has been identified by the Local Education Authority for expansion of playing field provision at Brookside County Primary School *at Street*. A site has been identified adjacent to the western boundary of the school.

#### **SP1: Site for Education Use : Brookside School**

**Land is allocated for an extension to Brookside County Primary School, *in Street*.**

### **SAVED POLICY 2: Land Allocations for Education Use** ***Formerly Local Plan Policy F10***

The Education Authority has identified a *continuing* ~~the~~ need for expansion at Oakfield School and at Frome College. In both cases the land will be used for playing fields.

#### **SP2: Sites for Education Use**

**Land (*in Frome*) is allocated for education purposes at:**

- **Oakfield School**
- **North of Coalway Lane**

### **SAVED POLICY 3: Clarks Village Factory Outlet Centre, Street** ***Formerly Local Plan Policy S&W6***

Factory outlet shopping has long contributed to the robustness of Street as a commercial centre. It is considered that the strength and attractiveness of Street and its role in serving the community is best assisted by a vital and viable specialist (factory outlet) function. Clarks Village is an important source of employment and as a tourist attraction is an important part of the Mendip economy.

Clarks Village has introduced a level and quality of comparison retailing which would not otherwise be represented in Mendip and which would not normally be expected in a centre of its size. As a result, Street has assumed a secondary status as a centre of intervening opportunity to which a trip may be made on some occasions by residents of the District as an alternative to more distant, higher order centres outside the District.

Every opportunity should be taken to maximise the potential beneficial effects of Clarks Village for the Town Centre. Street can utilise its specialist factory outlet function to supplement its local centre role through capturing expenditure which would not otherwise be available to it. To assist in encouraging linkage between the two shopping destinations, measures should be taken to improve the physical, social or economic integration of Clarks Village and the Town Centre.

The various roles of Street centre should be developed in parallel within the overall objective of sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. In order to protect the local shopping function of the Town Centre, the range of facilities available within Clarks Village will be restricted to the sale of factory outlet goods. That is, the direct retailing of merchandise by manufacturers, vertically integrated retailers (who retail their own branded goods or those of a subsidiary), and retailers, who offer branded factory seconds and/or non-current lines at a discount to their original full market price.

Any proposal will need to demonstrate that Clarks Village will continue to compliment rather than compete directly with the services and facilities of the Town Centres, particularly Street Town Centre. A retail impact assessment is likely to be required to accompany planning applications, the scope of this assessment will depend on the size and nature of the proposed development in relation to Street Town Centre and Clarks Village itself, taking account of the potential for cumulative impact.

The majority of people using Clarks Village currently travel there by car. In order to reduce the number and impact of motorised journeys associated with the factory outlet centre, a modal shift target for the development towards modes other than the private car will be negotiated (and secured through a S106 agreement). Public transport improvements are likely to be key in reducing the impact of motorised journeys associated with the factory outlet centre. An increase in car-parking provision is unlikely to be acceptable, consistent with *Development Policy 9 Policy SN25*.

The Policy reflects the importance of food and drink uses in helping to sustain Street Town Centre in the future. Expansion which results in additional A3, A4 or A5 floorspace over and above the current permitted floorspace at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 of 1153 sq.m gross external is therefore not permitted by the Policy. Food and drink uses are those currently within Use Class A3, A4 and A5 of the Use Classes Order (1987).

The Council will not necessarily require minor changes of use to satisfy each criterion, however account will be taken of the potential for cumulative impact of small scale proposals or increases in floorspace. For the purposes of this Policy 'Town Centres' are defined on the Proposals Map for Mendip but may also relate to other centres outside the District. The Policy should be read in conjunction with other policies of the Plan, particularly those addressing design matters. The Policy relates to Clarks Village or subsequent in title. The creation of a separate factory outlet centre elsewhere in the District is likely to be unacceptable within the policy framework of the Plan.

**SP3 - Clarks Village Factory Outlet Centre, Street**

**Expansion of Clarks Village, factory outlet centre, Street will be permitted if:**

- 1) used only for the direct retailing of merchandise by manufacturers or vertically integrated retailers (who retail their own branded goods or those of a subsidiary), or retailers, who offer branded factory seconds and/or non-current lines at discount prices to their original full market price;**
- 2) there would be no adverse impact, either individually or cumulatively, on the vitality and viability of Street or other Town Centres;**
- 3) measures are incorporated which are designed to achieve a shift in modal split away from the private car such that it can be demonstrated that the development would not result in any additional provision of car parking spaces;**
- 4) measures are incorporated to improve the integration of Clarks Village with Street Town Centre; and**
- 5) no increase in the amount of floorspace devoted to the consumption of food or drink results.**

**Where appropriate, proposals for change of use will be considered against the above criteria**

## APPENDIX 2: POLICY MONITORING FRAMEWORK

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Monitoring will be an important part of ensuring that Local Plan and sustainability objectives are being met over the plan period. These objectives will be delivered through:

- The Spatial Strategy set out in the Local Plan
- Core policies and Town Strategy policies
- Development Management Policies
- Other parts of the Planning Framework as set out in section 1 of this document which will be brought forward in the future

This appendix sets out a framework of topics and indicators which will be collated and monitored by the council. This information along with other contextual indicators will be used to assess the outcomes of the plan as well as considering whether the adopted policies are working effectively. This framework also incorporates the objectives and additional indicators from the Sustainability Appraisal. This is to ensure that measures specified in the Sustainability Appraisal to mitigate significant environmental impacts can be monitored.

### **Monitoring Reports and Review of the Local Plan**

Many objectives/policies can be measured quantitatively and these measures are set out below. Other evidence and market intelligence will be integrated and developed provide a wider contextual understanding of issues related to the specific measures set out below. All of this information will be reported in the council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR will also include updates of progress on delivery of major sites or schemes as well as progress of associated infrastructure delivery.

The Local Plan is likely to be reviewed about 7-10 years after its adoption. However, an earlier review of the progress towards objectives and the effectiveness of policies will take place in response to monitoring. Where unforeseen impacts or changing contextual information indicates that the policy framework should be adjusted this will then be scheduled into the work programme at an appropriate time. The work programme for preparing other parts of the Local Plan is set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme

In line with the principles of spatial planning, the vision and objectives of the Local Plan will not be implemented solely via planning policies. Delivery will be dependent upon the actions of other parts of the Council and other agencies as discussed in section 1 of this plan.

Local Plan Objectives	Sustainability Objectives	Local Plan Policies	Monitoring Indicators	Targets/ Expected Outcomes	
<b>TO DIVERSIFY AND STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL ECONOMY</b>					
1	Deliver suitable employment land and premises at the towns to enable forecast job growth potential to be realised, with additional provision in Frome to promote a better balance of jobs and economically active people.	<i>SAO9: Provide sufficient employment land to meet the district's requirements enhancing its economic vitality and viability</i>	<b>CP3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Job creation by town and by sector</li> <li>➤ Change of employment land/ floorspace by type and location</li> <li>➤ Supply of employment land (allocated, serviced, implemented)</li> </ul>	✓ Employment land secured against requirements in policy CP3
2	Deliver a mixture of modern and flexible employment premises with an emphasis on supporting existing local firms, flexible/incubator space to support the establishment and growth of small businesses and office space that reinforces the vibrancy of our town centres.	<i>SAO8: Encourage and support the diversification of the district's economy</i>	<b>CP3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Job creation by town and by sector</li> <li>➤ Type and size of employment space built</li> <li>➤ Report of progress on major employment schemes/allocations and starter units/ incubator schemes</li> </ul>	✓ Provision of new floorspace within particular use classes reflecting projected and emerging demands from business.
3	Retain jobs on redundant employment sites through mixed use re-development.		<b>DP20</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Floorspace and/ or jobs retained or re-provided on former employment sites developed for alternative/mixed uses.</li> </ul>	
4	Support proposals which improve and extend tourism in across the district.	<i>SAO10: Ensure the district's tourism potential is realised</i>	<b>CP3 CP6-10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Report on Tourism projects/ facilities delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Net gain in tourist accommodation (bedspaces)</li> </ul>
<b>TO EQUIP PEOPLE AND LOCAL BUSINESS WITH SKILLS THEY NEED</b>					
5	Deliver new vocational training and skills development facilities at the towns including the expansion of Strode College in Street and expansion in secondary education facilities in Frome on a site which could also fulfil potential for further education opportunities.		<b>CP3 CP6-10 DP19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Report on progress on delivery of new school capacity, delivery of training facilities and other local economic initiatives</li> </ul>	
6	Deliver new primary/first schools in Frome, Shepton Mallet, Wells and Street and a replacement of Crispin School in Street.		<b>CP6-10 DP19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Report on progress of delivery of new school capacity in AMR and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.</li> </ul>	

	Local Plan Objectives	Sustainability Objectives	Local Plan Policies	Monitoring Indicators	Targets/ Expected Outcomes
<b>TO PROMOTE GREATER VITALITY AND VIABILITY IN OUR MARKET TOWNS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES</b>					
7	Develop and reinforce the distinctive identities and specialisms of the Mendip towns.		<b>CP5 CP6-10 DP19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Coverage and status of community planning documents</li> <li>➤ Number of applications refused against community planning documents</li> <li>➤ Report on progress of town projects in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> </ul>	✓ No refusals
8	Concentrate the majority of jobs, housing, cultural activity and services within the district's towns.		<b>CP1 CP2 CP3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Share of development across settlements</li> </ul>	✓ 80% of new homes /employment in towns,
9	Maintain and enhance town centres to make them attractive places to visit at any time of the day, and promote sensitive redevelopments, particularly in Wells and Frome, that make them the first choice shopping destination for the widest range of goods that their catchment areas can support.	<i>SAO11: Maintain and enhance the vitality of our town centres ensuring they are vibrant and exciting places to live, work and play</i>	<b>CP6-10 DP21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gains/losses &amp; net addition in Town Centre floorspace – use classes (Classes A1-A5)</li> <li>➤ Proportion of development within town centre boundaries v. edge of centre</li> <li>➤ Proportion of retail/ non-retail units in primary and secondary frontages.</li> <li>➤ Mix of multiple and local independent traders in town centres</li> <li>➤ Gain/losses in town centre office floorspace</li> <li>➤ Report on progress of major retail schemes/allocations or commercial/leisure development which supports the town centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No net loss of A class uses within Townim to achieve 100%</li> <li>✓ Aim to achieve 100%</li> <li>✓ Maintain in broad balance as observed in 2010 Mendip Town Centres Study</li> </ul>
10	Ensure that the rural population has better access to basic community facilities such as shops, schools and social venues, as well as housing to meet local needs.	<i>SAO13: Improve access to facilities and services</i>	<b>CP4 DP17</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gains/ Losses of key facilities (bi-annual survey)</li> <li>➤ Number of registered 'community assets'</li> </ul>	✓ No loss of key facilities and services in villages to other uses.
11	Support and enable diversification of the rural economy in suitable and sustainable locations.		<b>CP4 DP13 DP22 DP23</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gain/loss in floorspace for employment uses in rural areas through the reuse of rural buildings</li> <li>➤ Number of temporary and permanent dwellings approved with agricultural restrictions &amp; no of restrictions removed</li> </ul>	

	Local Plan Objectives	Sustainability Objectives	Local Plan Policies	Monitoring Indicators	Targets/ Expected Outcomes
<b>TO ENABLE PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THEIR STATE OF HEALTH</b>					
12	Deliver additional or replacement healthcare facilities in Frome, Glastonbury and Shepton Mallet.		<b>CP6-10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Report on progress in planning and delivery of facilities in AMR and further details in Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> </ul>	
13	Maintain and extend the networks of open spaces and sports facilities, particularly in the towns, to improve their use as a means to promote more active lifestyles.		<b>DP16</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Open space (by type) secured (or lost) through allocations and developments</li> <li>➤ Delivery of locally defined objectives in Green Infrastructure Strategies (when adopted)</li> <li>➤ Progress on open space projects by location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Delivery against open space study benchmarks in policies DP6-10</li> </ul>
<b>TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE LEVELS OF DECENT HOUSING WHICH IS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL</b>					
14	Deliver new housing within our towns at levels that maintain or, as in the case of Frome and Wells, improve the balance of jobs and economically active people and rural housing that is clearly related to identified local needs.	<i>SAO12: Meet the district's housing requirements whilst providing suitable housing for all in appropriate, sustainable locations</i>	<b>CP1 CP2 CP6-10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Annual additional dwellings by settlement</li> <li>➤ Housing delivery against Plan and town requirements</li> <li>➤ Five year housing supply of deliverable sites</li> <li>➤ Projected housing supply (trajectory to 2028)</li> <li>➤ Report on preparation of development briefs and implementation of strategic housing sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 415 p.a. (2006-28)</li> <li>✓ As set out in policy</li> <li>✓ 5 yr supply demonstrated</li> </ul>
15	Maximise the delivery of affordable housing.		<b>DP11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Total affordable homes built by tenure and size</li> <li>➤ Projected affordable housing supply</li> <li>➤ Number of sites delivering to 30% or 40% policy target</li> <li>➤ Value of contributions from small sites</li> <li>➤ Additional homes secured from contributions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 100-150 dwellings per year</li> <li>➤ 80% social rented, 20% intermediate</li> </ul>
			<b>DP12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of homes secured on rural exception sites by tenure and size</li> <li>➤ Proportion of market to affordable housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provision v. Local needs assessments</li> </ul>

	Local Plan Objectives	Sustainability Objectives	Local Plan Policies	Monitoring Indicators	Targets/ Expected Outcomes
16	Deliver a range and mix of house types and sizes to meet the variety of local housing needs in both the open market and affordable housing sectors.		DP14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mix of accommodation by bedroom size and type (houses/ flats)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mix in line with current housing needs assessment</li> </ul>
17	Provide for sites to accommodate the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities.		DP15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Annual Pitch provision by type</li> <li>➤ Supply identified in G&amp;T housing land availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Progress against G&amp;T need survey requirements</li> </ul>
<b>TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY BY MEANS OTHER THAN THE PRIVATE CAR</b>					
18	Ensure that the majority of new developments, particularly major traffic generators, are located to be accessible by a range of transport modes.	<i>SAO7: Encourage more sustainable travel patterns</i>	DP9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of new developments within public transport corridors</li> <li>➤ Number of qualifying developments subject to a Travel Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 100%</li> <li>✓ Travel Plan agreed on all qualifying developments</li> </ul>
19	Create safe and convenient footpath and cycleway networks, ensuring that new development encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport.		DP18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintenance of safeguarded corridors for sustainable transport</li> <li>➤ Length of defined safeguarded corridors for sustainable transport brought into use.</li> <li>➤ Report progress on specific projects in the main towns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No applications which constrain or cut safeguarded links</li> </ul>
	Parking Standards		DP10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ % of developments complying with car parking standards</li> <li>➤ Number of residential spaces per dwelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 100% compliance with county standards</li> </ul>
<b>TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRIBUTE TO INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE GOALS</b>					
20	Create well designed places that are safe and responsive to their surroundings, whether built, natural or cultural, whilst maintaining and enhancing the historic environment.	<i>SAO6: Protect and enhance the district's built environment</i>	DP1 DP3 DP7 DP6-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 5 year review of major schemes built against Building for Life Criteria</li> <li>➤ Report on any appeals with implications for adopted policy.</li> <li>➤ Proportion of Conservation Areas with an up to date appraisal</li> <li>➤ Number of "Buildings at Risk"</li> <li>➤ Number of schemes recognised in the Somerset Preservation Building Trust Awards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Schemes should be 'green' on all criteria</li> </ul>

	<b>Local Plan Objectives</b>	<b>Sustainability Objectives</b>	<b>Local Plan Policies</b>	<b>Monitoring Indicators</b>	<b>Targets/ Expected Outcomes</b>
21	Deliver new development that makes efficient use of land, using sustainable methods of construction and utilising technologies that minimises their environmental running costs.	<i>SA03 Promote increased energy production from renewable sources and encourage a reduction in consumption of energy</i>	<b>DP7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number and capacity of renewable generating capacity developed in the district.</li> <li>➤ Proportion of zero carbon homes</li> <li>➤ Number of new developments incorporating SuDs schemes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Amount in MWe of renewable electricity projects in the district</li> <li>✓ Proportion of new homes meeting the national zero carbon targets</li> <li>✓ 100% of eligible developments.</li> </ul>
			<b>CP2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of homes completed / approved on brownfield land.</li> <li>➤ Density of residential development</li> <li>➤ Number of homes approved on existing residential sites (back garden development)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 60% of supply on brownfield land</li> <li>✓ Within guideline densities in local plan</li> </ul>
22	Protect sensitive wildlife habitats and valued landscapes from development and enhance biodiversity and local scenery through an integrated network of green spaces, corridors and protected areas.	<i>SA04: Protect, maintain and where possible enhance, the district's native biodiversity</i>	<b>DP5</b> <b>DP6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Area of designated wildlife site (by type) lost to development</li> <li>➤ Areas of protected wildlife habitats whose formal designated status is changed</li> <li>➤ Area of additional habitat/ ecological network created</li> <li>➤ Changes in population of selected species</li> <li>➤ Delivery of strategic open space and other specific mitigation measures to ensure habitat regulations compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No loss of designated sites</li> <li>✓ 95% of SSSI' to be in favourable or recovering condition</li> <li>✓ No decline in population of selected species</li> <li>✓ Progress v. HRA targets</li> </ul>
		<i>SA05: Protect and enhance the district's landscape</i>	<b>DP4</b> <b>DP1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ % of applications adjacent or within AONBs refused or modified on design grounds</li> <li>➤ % of applications adjacent or within SLF areas refused or modified on design grounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No unsuitable development within AONB's</li> <li>✓ No unsuitable development in Special Landscape Feature Areas</li> </ul>
		<i>SA02 To maintain and where necessary improve water quality, and provide for sustainable sources of water supply</i>	<b>DP8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of Air Quality Management Areas</li> <li>➤ Water quality indicators to be agreed with environment agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No AQMA's</li> <li>✓ To be agreed with Environment Agency</li> </ul>

	<b>Local Plan Objectives</b>	<b>Sustainability Objectives</b>	<b>Local Plan Policies</b>	<b>Monitoring Indicators</b>	<b>Targets/ Expected Outcomes</b>
23	Recognise and manage development in light of emerging climate change impacts with particular regard to the location of new development away from areas of flood risk and developments that would increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.	SA01 <i>Avoid, reduce and manage flood risk</i>	DP8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monitoring of planning permissions modified on the basis of Environment Agency advice or flooding and water quality grounds</li> <li>➤ % of dwellings approved within flood zones 2 &amp; 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No applications approved against EA advice</li> </ul>

## GLOSSARY

Unfortunately the complexity and technical nature of the planning system can be a barrier to people becoming involved, particularly the use of acronyms and confusing terminology. Whilst we endeavour to keep our documents as clear and understandable as possible, there is still likely to be some content that is unfamiliar or for which further clarification is required. To provide some assistance on this we have included a glossary of key technical terms below.

### Key Terms

- Adoption -** The final confirmation of a Development Plan or one of its subsidiary parts by a local planning authority (LPA) bringing into formal use.
- Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGst)** - a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to a variety of green spaces near to where people live.
- Affordable Housing -** Social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. A full national definition is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Allocated –** Land which has been identified in the Local Plan and shown on the Proposals Map (or inset map) for a specific form of development.
- Amenity –** Those qualities of life enjoyed by people who can be influenced by the surrounding environment in which they live or work. ‘Residential amenity’ includes, for example, a reasonable degree of privacy, freedom from unacceptable levels of noise, air and light pollution”.
- Ancillary –** Use or structure which is related to and often found in association with primary use or development. For the purposes of planning ancillary uses that are materially different would typically be tolerated up to 15% of a wider site area. For example, a trade counter (retail use) within a larger warehouse (distribution use).
- Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)** - A report on how the Council is performing in terms of the effectiveness of its Local Plan. Includes a review monitoring data to determine the success of planning policies.
- Area Action Plan (AAP) -** A type of Development Plan Document focused upon a specific location or an area subject to conservation or significant change (for example major regeneration). There are no Area Action Plans proposed in Mendip currently
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**- A statutory landscape designation to recognise, conserve and enhance landscape of national importance.
- Aquifer –** Underground layer (stratum) of rock in which water naturally occurs. Water for human use may be extracted by means of wells or boreholes.
- Biodiversity -** The range of life forms which constitute the living world, from microscopic organs to the large trees, animals, their habitats and the ecosystem in which they live.
- Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)** - An internationally recognized program addressing threatened species and habitats and is designed to protect and restore biological systems. Biodiversity Action Plans are prepared at various geographic scales. There are BAPs for Somerset and Mendip.
- Brownfield Land -** Previously developed land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure (does not include agricultural buildings and, since 2010, domestic gardens)
- Built Environment –** Surroundings which are generally built up in character. The collection of buildings, spaces and links between them which form such an area.
- Climate Change -** Natural or man made processes which result in changes to weather patterns on a global scale. The effects include changes in rainfall patterns, sea level rise, potential droughts, habitat loss, and heat stress. The greenhouse effect – arising from the build up of man-made gases in the atmosphere observed over the last two centuries – is a well recorded man made process. However, volcanic activity and permafrost melting are other examples. .
- Community Facilities –** Services available to residents in the immediate area to meet the day-to-day needs of the community. Includes village halls, post offices, doctors and dentists’ surgeries, recycling facilities, libraries and places of worship as well as commercial services and open spaces.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** - Levy on development proposed by the government but charged locally with gathered funds used to deliver infrastructure necessary to support housing and economic growth.
- Comparison Goods –** Typology of purchased goods. Also see Convenience Goods. Defined as household or personal items which are bought on an infrequent basis and typically would involve the buyer comparing alternative styles/prices/types. Would generally include products like clothing, electrical goods and furniture amongst many other things.
- Conservation Area –** Are of special historic and/or architectural interest which is designated by the local planning authority as being important to conserve and enhance. Special planning controls apply within these areas.

- Convenience Goods –** Items bought for everyday needs. Includes food and other groceries, newspapers, drink and tobacco and chemist's goods. Generally such goods are used or consumed over a relatively short period. Also see Comparison Goods
- Core Strategy -** A Development Plan Document forming the central part of a Local Development Framework under regulations that existed between 2004 and 2011. It sets out the spatial vision and strategic objectives of the planning framework for an area, having regard to the Community Strategy. This Local Plan is an evolved version of a Core Strategy.
- County Wildlife Site –** Wildlife habitat identified and designated as being of particular local interest of importance but is not of sufficient national merit to be nationally designated as, for example, an SSSI.
- Curtilage –** The area of land associated with a building. The curtilage of a dwelling house is normally its garden and the curtilage of a commercial building its ancillary open areas such as for parking/services and landscaping.
- Culturally Significant Landscape –** A landscape, modified, natural or built, that retains physical attributes of past interventions that are of significance. Examples include deer parks, deserted settlements and large-scale water management systems.
- Development –** Defined in planning law as 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over, or under land, or the making of a material change of use of any building or land' (see also Permitted Development).
- Development Brief –** A document that outlines how a large or complex site will be developed. It will set out an analysis of site context, development principles, design solutions and details about matters of implementation. It will contain maps and diagrams to articulate the issues and solutions proposed. Also see Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- Development Contribution/Commuted Payment –** Either a payment made by a developer to the local planning authority (usually secured by means of Planning Obligation) to fund provision of a facility needed to serve a development, but to be built or provided elsewhere or in some way other than by the developer, or a one off payment by a developer to another body to enable it to adopt a facility.
- Development Management Policies -** A suite of criteria-based policies to ensure that all development within the areas meets the spatial vision and spatial objectives. Mendip has decided to include these in section 6 of this Local Plan document.
- Development Plan -** A statutory document setting out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings. It is the starting point for the determination of planning applications as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Development Plan Document (DPD) -** A local planning policy document that has development plan status by virtue of being prepared subject to community involvement and independently examined.
- Early Engagement -** A very early stage of consultation and community involvement, when interested parties can help formulate and comment on aspects of the local authority's future planning proposal. Early engagement is also an important part of any development proposal in that a developer can explore local peoples views before designing a new development which it turn can then – potentially – be more responsive to local conditions.
- Employment Land (B1, B2, B8) -** Land used, with planning permission, or allocated in a development plan principally for offices, research and light industrial (B1), general industrial (B2) and storage / distribution (B8) uses.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) -** The process by which information is collected and reported on the environmental impacts of a project or proposal. This is then taken into account by the local planning authority when determining an application for planning permission. Certain types of applications for development are required to be accompanied by an EIA.
- Environmental Statement- Evidence Base -** Written statement, required to be submitted by the applicant with certain kinds of planning application. The information and data gathered by local authorities to justify the "soundness" of the policy approach set out in Local Development Documents, including physical, economic, and social characteristics of an area.
- Exception Test -** In addition to the Sequential Test and in accordance with national policy, this test seeks to consider exceptional circumstances why a particular development would be acceptable in an area that is acknowledged to be subject to flood risk.
- 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.
- Future Growth Area –** an area of land, normally greenfield in nature, identified within the Local Plan as one being suitable to accommodate housing or employment future growth but which is still subject to formal allocation as part of the Site Allocation process.
- Greenfield Land -** Land (or a defined site) usually farmland, that has not previously been developed.

- Ground Water Source Protection Zones** - An integral part of land surface zoning within the Environment Agency's Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater. In essence the zones limit the use of land for purposes which might result in contamination of water sources, or ensure that measures are in place to capture potential contaminants percolating into groundwater strata.
- Habitat Regulations Assessment** -document to determine, understand and, if appropriate, mitigate impacts on European Designated wildlife sites (Natura 2000 sites).
- Heritage Assets** Defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated assets and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process (including local listing).
- Housing Needs Survey** - Assessment of housing needs in the local area. This plays a crucial role in underpinning the planning policies relating to affordable housing and housing location.
- Infill Development – Infrastructure –** Small scale development filling a gap within an otherwise built up frontage. The network of services to which it is usual for most buildings to be connected. It includes physical services serving the particular development (eg gas, electricity and water supply; telephones, sewerage) and also includes networks of roads, public transport routes, footpaths etc. In its widest sense the definition may also include open spaces, community facilities and commercial services which sustain a community's way of life.
- Issues and Options** - Produced relatively early as part of the preparation of Development Plan Documents and used for consultation and community involvement.
- Key Diagram** - A map based diagram to illustrate the broad proposals and contents of a development plan, normally contained within the main strategy or in relation to particular places.
- Landscape Character Assessment** - Identifies areas with similar features or qualities, mapping and classifying them and describing their character. It is based on an understanding of landscape character and of the natural, historic and aesthetic factors that combine to create local distinctiveness.
- Legal Agreement – Listed Building –** see Section 106 Agreements (S106)  
A building of special historical and/or architectural interest considered worthy of special protection and included and described in the statutory list of such buildings. Also see Heritage Asset.
- Local Development Framework (LDF)** - A portfolio of planning documents required by legislation between 2004 and 2011 which collectively delivers the spatial planning strategy for the area. A former name for what is now included in the Local Plan
- Local Development Scheme (LDS)** - A document that sets out what parts of the councils planning framework are to be produced or reviewed and the timetable for their production.
- Local Nature Reserve** - Area of botanical or wildlife interest designated by a local authority.
- Local Transport Plan (LTP)** - A five-year integrated transport strategy, prepared by local authorities in partnership with the community, seeking funding to help provide local transport projects. The plan sets out the resources predicted for delivery of the targets identified in the strategy. Somerset County Council are the responsible authority.
- Major Development** - For residential - 10 or more dwellings or a site area of 0.5 hectares or more. For other uses- the floorspace to be built is 1000 square metres or more, or where the site area is 1 hectare or more.
- Mitigation Measures** - Any works or actions required to be carried out by developers to reduce or remove the impact of the development on the surrounding environment or to address particular environmental effects which would otherwise make that development unacceptable.
- Monitoring** – Regular collection and analysis of relevant information in order to assess the outcome and effectiveness of policies and proposals and to identify whether they need to be reviewed or altered.
- National Policy Statements (NPS)** - Provides national policy guidance for matters that are considered to be of importance
- Natura 2000** - An ecological network of protected areas in the territory of the European Union.
- Passive Solar Energy** - Energy provided by a simple architectural design to capture and store the sun's heat. An example is a south facing window in a dwelling.
- Permitted Development** – Certain categories of minor development as specified in the General Permitted Development Order, which can be carried out without having first to obtain specific planning permission.
- Photovoltaic Cells** - Technological component of solar panels that capture energy from the sun and transform it into electricity for use in homes and businesses
- Planning Obligations** – See Section 106 Agreements.
- Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)** - Sets out the Government's national land use planning policies (replaces Planning Policy Guidance)
- Preferred Options Document** - Produced as part of the preparation of planning document. The council sets out what it thinks are the most appropriate set of policy responses to the issues needing to be addressed. These would be consulted on to seek views as to their validity prior to refinements being made.

- Proposals Map -** A component of a Local Plan and an important part of the development plan. It shows the location of proposals in all current planning proposals and designations of land on an Ordnance Survey base map.
- Protected Species -** Any species (of wildlife etc) which, because of its rarity or threatened status is protected by statutory legislation.
- Ramsar Sites -** A term adopted following an international conference, held in 1971 in Ramsar in Iran, to identify wetland sites of international importance, especially as waterfowl habitat.
- Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) –** Strategies prepared by Regional Assemblies in the 2000s to establish a region wide patterns of development, necessary infrastructure and consistent policies for broad areas across the UK reflecting their common interests, economic potential and general characteristics. Localised issues would then be addressed in Local Plans. RSS were discredited on account of interference by one government and subsequently abolished by another. Bizarrely, the abolishing coalition government has been advised to re-establish regional scale structures.
- Registered Social Landlords -** Independent housing organisations, including trusts, co-operatives and companies, registered under the Housing Act 1996
- Renewable Energy –** In its widest definition, energy generated from sources which are non-finite or can be replenished. Includes solar power, wind energy, power generated from waste, biomass etc.
- Retail Assessment / Town Centres Study –** An assessment which may be required in connection with major retail purposes assessing the likely effect of the proposals on patterns of trades and the viability and vitality of existing retail centres.
- Saved Policies -** Plans and policies that were originally in the Local Plan but are still relevant in the current spatial environment and, therefore, remain current policy. They are included in Appendix 1 of this document.
- Scheduled (Ancient) Monument –** Ancient structure, usually unoccupied, above or below the ground, which is preserved by order of the Secretary of State.
- Section 106 Agreements (S106) -** Allows a Local Planning Authority to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation, with a land developer over a related issue (often to fund necessary improvements elsewhere).
- Sequential Approach/Test -** A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before others.
- Sequential Test (Flooding) -** A test carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework to demonstrate that certain land is appropriate to develop as has less flood risk, after alternative sites have been ruled out..
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) -** Site or area designated as being of national importance because of its wildlife plants or flower species and/or unusual or typical geological features. SSSIs are identified by Natural England and have protected status.
- Site Allocations DPD -** A Development Plan Document (part of the Local Plan) which allocations of sites for specific or mixed development uses, or which makes other designations of land for a particular purpose. Part II of the Mendip Local Plan will be a site allocations document.
- Soundness -** To be considered sound, a Development Plan Document must be justified (founded on robust and credible evidence and be the most appropriate strategy) and effective deliverable, flexible and able to be monitored).
- Spatial Planning -** Brings together and integrates policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function.
- Spatial Strategy -** A strategy which sets out the distribution and nature of development across a given area. Section 4 of this plan contains Mendip's spatial strategy.
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) -** Sites of European nature conservation importance designated under the Habitats Regulations.
- Special Protection Area (SPA) -** A site designated under the European Commission Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.
- Species Action Plan (SAP) -** A framework for conservation of particular species and their habitats.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment -** A term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European 'SEA Directive' (2001/42/EC) requires a formal 'environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use.' In the UK this is achieved through the Sustainability Appraisal.
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) -** Provides information about flood risk throughout the area of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), either individually or combined with neighbouring LPAs. The SFRA will consider the effects of climate change on river and coastal flooding, identify the risk from other sources of flooding, and consider appropriate policies for development in or adjacent to flood risk areas.
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) -** An assessment of land which is available for housing. The SHLAA does not allocate land for development but is a source of information to understand what is available when making choices about where new development should be located.

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** -An assessment of housing need and demand within a housing market area. Mendip District is considered in the West of England Housing Market Area – i.e. that centred around Bristol and Bath
- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - Sets out the standards which authorities will achieve with regard to involving communities in the preparation of planning documents and development control decisions. Where one is not produced by the council, the council must involve the community and other interests in line with basic requirements defined regulations and legislation.
- Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** - A locally adopted planning document that is prepared to give clarity and technical detail to a matter contained within the Local Plan. They can include technical guidance on a matter or set out how a development site will be laid out and serviced. SPD is subject to public consultation requirements defined in regulations and law, but are not subject to Independent Examination. All SPD must be linked to policies or proposals in a current part of the Local (Development) Plan. SPD were formerly known as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).
- Sustainability Appraisal** - An appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan undertaken throughout its preparation to enable understanding of different alternative solutions and to mitigate effects where a proposed development solution is recognised to have limited negative effects. Ultimately allows decisions to be made that deliver more sustainable forma of development. Also see Strategic Environmental Appraisal
- Sustainable Community Strategy** - A long-term vision for improving the quality of people’s lives, with the aim of improving economic, social and environmental well being of the area and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- Sustainable Development** - Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Sustainable Drainage System** – drainage system, generally incorporating natural methods of ground percolation, which seeks to minimise surface water run off without, or lessening the need for, extensive networks of municipal pipes. Systems can also include the use of natural filtration to capture and hold waterborne pollutants or suspended materials. Systems – termed ‘grey water’ systems - can also be found which recycle precipitation or other relatively clean water for non potable domestic or business uses.
- Town Centre** – the centre of larger market towns where there is a concentration of shops and other services which cater for local customers, including those from nearby settlements.
- Transport Assessment** – An assessment which may be required in connection with major development proposals which looks at how people are likely to access the development and its effects on travel patterns. It will also look at how any undesirable consequences can be mitigated. It should consider how access on foot, by cycle or public transport can be promoted and how access on foot, by cycle or public transport can be promoted and how demand for car parking can be minimised.
- Use Classes Order** - A statute that groups uses into various categories and which specifically states that permission is not required to change from one use to another within the same class:  
 A1 -Shops;  
 A2 - Financial and Professional Services;  
 A3 - Restaurants and Cafes;  
 A4 - Drinking Establishments;  
 A5 - Hot Food Takeaway;  
 B1 - Business;  
 B2 - General Industrial;  
 B8 - Storage and Distribution;  
 C1 - Hotels;  
 C2 - Residential Institution;  
 C3 - Dwelling Houses;  
 C4 - Houses in Multiple Occupation;  
 D1 - Non- Residential Institutions;  
 D2 - Assembly and Leisure.  
 Sui Generis - Certain uses that do not fall within any use class such as theatres, petrol filling stations, launderettes and nightclubs”.
- Water Framework Directive** -A European Directive that aims to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters (rivers and lakes), transitional waters (estuaries), coastal waters and groundwater.





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