Local Development Framework

CORE STRATEGY
Incorporating the Recommended Changes of the Inspector

Shaping the Future of Sedgemoor 2006-27
September 2011
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These are exciting and challenging times for Sedgemoor. Boosting our economy to provide more jobs, providing good quality housing so that everyone has a decent place to live and coping with the challenges of climate change and flooding are just some of our priorities over the next two decades. The Core Strategy is one of the key tools that the Council can use to achieve these aims and publication of the draft core Strategy is a significant step forward.

It has been developed from the earlier consultation, a range of key evidence, and the sustainability appraisal. The strategy seeks to deliver regeneration and transformational change to Bridgwater through the positive management of housing and employment growth. Elsewhere, Burnham and Highbridge have key roles in delivering town centre improvements, additional brownfield growth, and enhanced employment opportunities. The strategy for the rural areas recommends seventeen key rural centres that will provide local services and facilities, as well as modest future growth. This strategy will provide an appropriate balance between a strong urban focus and supporting our existing rural communities.

This is an important stage in developing the positive planning policies that will build on the District’s many strengths to help shape a Sedgemoor fit for the 21st Century.

This version of the Core Strategy incorporates the binding recommendations (shown as 'tracked changes') of the Inspector who oversaw its public examination held in May 2011. The Inspector's Report was received on 27th September 2011.
# THE STRATEGY

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# DISTRICT WIDE POLICIES

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# List of Policies

## DISTRICT WIDE POLICIES

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## PLACE MAKING POLICIES

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Purpose of this document

1.1 This is the latest stage in the preparation of the Council’s Core Strategy, the key strategic document of the Sedgemoor Local Development Framework (LDF) that will set out the future policy agenda for the long-term development of Sedgemoor between now and 2026 2027. It is the proposed submission version of the Core Strategy (or Draft Plan) and represents for the first time a full draft of the proposed document including detailed policy wording. Following this current consultation between 28th September and 22nd November 2010, the document will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent Examination. The purpose of the consultation is to provide local communities, stakeholders and partners the opportunity to make further comments on the ‘soundness’ of the Core Strategy.

Local Development Framework

1.2 The Core strategy is just one element of the Sedgemoor Local Development Framework, albeit the most important as it sets out the long-term vision and strategic context for managing and accommodating growth within Sedgemoor and provides the framework for preparing all other documents of the Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework consists of several types of documents in addition to this Core Strategy, including:

- Other Development Plan Documents (DPD); that like the Core Strategy, are subject to independent examination and have formal ‘development plan status’. For Sedgemoor this will include site allocation documents and a charging schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy, (CIL);
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD); that are prepared to elaborate on the policies and proposals of the Development Plan Documents and for Sedgemoor will include: Bridgwater Town Centre SPD, design guidance, development briefs for major sites, affordable housing and guidance on the regeneration of Highbridge.

1.3 The Core Strategy is the first document in the Local Development Framework to be completed and the most central, setting out overarching strategic planning policy for the District.

The Role of the Core Strategy

1.4 The Core Strategy sets out a 20 year vision for the District and establishes the spatial strategy and spatial policies, including the key infrastructure and investment decisions, required to deliver the strategy and is central to achieving the objectives of the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy for Sedgemoor and the Council’s identified priorities.

1.5 The Core Strategy ‘joins up’ town planning and land use issues with plans and strategies of other stakeholders and service providers that deal with community issues such as health, community safety, housing, employment, community development, education, transport, the environment and regeneration. This is called ‘spatial planning’, and ensures development and investment decisions are guided by the objectives and long-term vision for the District. Spatial planning is not limited to things that the District Council control, therefore working with other partners and agencies will be essential.

1.6 The Core Strategy, as part of the Council’s Local Development Framework is the ‘development plan’ for Sedgemoor. A key role of the Core Strategy will be to set out a strategy for delivering sustainable growth to the District, including the identification of broad patterns of development, strategic housing and employment sites and policies for assessing development proposals.
1 Introduction

Format and Structure of the Document

1.7 The Core Strategy presents a spatial strategy, polices on major infrastructure projects, place-making policies and district wide policies.

1.8 The document is structured into the following distinct sections:

- **Spatial Portrait** – describes the spatial characteristics of Sedgemoor and outlines the strategic role of Sedgemoor in the region.
- **The Strategy** - develops a vision, identifies the key challenges and objectives and sets out the Spatial Strategy and core policies on infrastructure delivery and sustainable development.
- **Major Infrastructure Projects** – sets out principles and policies for delivery of major infrastructure including development associated with the proposed new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point.
- **District Wide Policies** – sets out policies for development across the District and provides a framework for assessing future development proposals and their contribution to the overall vision and objectives.
- **Place-making policies** – sets out the individual policies for Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge, key rural settlements, other sustainable settlements and the countryside. These are place specific and link to delivering the spatial strategy and achieving the long-term vision for the District.
- **Monitoring and Review** – draws together the monitoring framework for the individual policies and outlines linkages with the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).
- **Saved Policies from the Local Plan** - identifies how the policies of this Core Strategy replace the policies of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan 1991-2011 and where these continue to be 'saved'.

1.9 All policies include introductory context, policy approach, policy wording, delivery and monitoring framework. It is important to note that the Core Strategy must be read as a whole. District wide policies and place-making policies for example elaborate on and add to the spatial strategy.

Proposals Map

1.10 A Proposals Map (Ordnance Survey based) is also published as part of the Core Strategy and is included in the Map Appendix at the back of this document. This identifies the areas where the spatial policies of the Core Strategy apply. The policies within the proposed submission version of the Core Strategy include reference to the Proposals Map or 'saved' Local Plan Proposals Map where this is relevant. To make this distinction clearer the following two references are used in the Core Strategy text:

- "as defined on the Proposals Map" - this relates to a new change introduced by the proposed submission Core Strategy. A map showing this is included in the Map Appendix of the Core Strategy.
- "as defined on the saved Local Plan Proposals Map" - this refers to where a policy or proposal has been 'saved' from the Local Plan and where the Local Plan Proposals map continues to remain relevant.

1.11 The adopted Core Strategy will include a composite Proposals Map.

Assessment of the Core Strategy

Sustainability Appraisal
1.12 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Core Strategy has been undertaken, as required by Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as required by the SEA Directive. SA and SEA are tools to ensure the integration of environmental and sustainability considerations into the Core Strategy and decision making process. The purpose of SA is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of Development Plan Documents. The SA has been carried out by Sedgemoor District Council officers with additional support from consultants from ENVIRON UK Ltd. and is documented separately in the SA Report. The SA Report is being published for consultation alongside the draft Core Strategy. It outlines the significant effects on the environment, social and economic factors of the alternatives for the Sedgemoor Core Strategy. It outlines the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant effects of implementing the draft Core Strategy.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

1.13 There are a number of sites within or near Sedgemoor District that have been designated as internationally important for wildlife. The Council therefore has a legal obligation (arising from the EC Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) / The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010) to carry out a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) in order to ensure that the Core Strategy does not contain any policies that will have or lead to an adverse effect on the integrity of the designated sites. Designated sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated for habitats and animal species, Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated for bird species and 'Ramsar sites', designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands 1971.

1.14 The HRA process starts with a 'screening' stage and if necessary this is followed by 'Appropriate Assessment'. Initial screening was carried out by the Somerset County Council Ecology Officer. In the case of the Somerset Levels and Moors (SPA & Ramsar) and Severn Estuary (SPA, SAC & Ramsar) there has been a need for an Appropriate Assessment and this has been undertaken by consultants Royal Haskoning. That work has influenced the drafting of Core Strategy policies and whilst it was not possible to demonstrate 'no adverse impact on the integrity' of designated sites for three of the Core Strategy policies, measures have been specified which will ensure that any actual adverse effect is avoided. The work is documented in 'Sedgemoor District Council Core Strategy Habitat Regulations Assessment, Volume 1 – HRA for the Somerset Levels and Moors and Severn Estuary International Sites'. In respect of the other designated sites (SACs in the Mendip Hills / Brean Down / Quantock Hills / Exmoor), compliance with recommendations for changes from the screening stage (as documented in 'Habitat Regulations Assessment of Sedgemoor District Council’s Core Strategy, Volume 2 – Other European / International Sites') are sufficient to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations.
Sedgemoor’s Strategic Context

2.1 It is the role of the Core Strategy to set out a spatial strategy and policy agenda that recognises the strategic role of Sedgemoor and interprets how the key spatial and place-making drivers of change can be best delivered to ensure the maximum benefits are achieved. The Core Strategy will reflect national and local planning policy agendas, for Bridgwater specifically this means accommodating levels of growth in a sustainable way to maximise the town’s potential. The Core Strategy will also seek to address potential conflicts within these agendas including growth requirements in areas at high risk from flooding and developing strategic solutions to mitigate against this where possible.

2.2 Sedgemoor as a District is centrally located both for Somerset and the South West Region, linked to the major regional settlements of Taunton, Exeter and Bristol by the Strategic M5 transport corridor and mainline railway. The District is predominantly rural encompassing two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), the Somerset Levels and Moors and a host of other international, national and local nature conservation areas but the District’s towns of Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge are well connected and accessible to the wider region and beyond. Sedgemoor continues to see strong economic and population growth accompanied by notable inward investment success as the District begins to realise its economic potential at the centre of the logistics network for the region and a growing food and drink sector.

2.3 The distinctiveness of Sedgemoor comes from its many different geographical elements and characteristics with its rural nature and outstanding natural environment including its coastline standing alongside the industrial strength of the towns. This uniqueness provides a multi-layered context for developing future plans, strategies and policies for the area and a key objective for the Core Strategy will be to set out a framework for the next 20 years that will best position Sedgemoor to build upon its strategic and geographical advantages to fully contribute to the competitiveness and prosperity of the region as a whole whilst also ensuring protection of its highly valuable natural and historic environmental assets.

2.4 In a fast changing world nationally and internationally and set against a period of future economic uncertainty, considerable challenges lie ahead if Sedgemoor is to fulfil its obvious potential and ensure that all those that live, work and visit here benefit from renewal and growth in the long term. So whilst the District continues to see significant inward investment, there is a significant requirement for restructuring of the economy to strengthen traditional sectors and encourage diversification into new areas of opportunity which develop local labour and establish a better trained and paid workforce for the future.

2.5 Potential major infrastructure projects within and adjacent to Sedgemoor could be important drivers for change within the District enabling the harnessing of regeneration, economic and social benefits in the long-term. The new nuclear build at Hinkley Point, the possible Severn Tidal Power Project and the Steart Managed Realignment Proposal will all have direct impacts on Sedgemoor and provide opportunities and challenges to the local area as well as Somerset and the region. It will be important that national investment of this scale should go beyond short-term mitigation of construction impacts and contribute positively to local place-shaping maximising benefits to the community for the longer term.
2.6 To fulfil the strategic role of Sedgemoor, there is a need to look beyond district boundaries and better understand the functional relationships between Sedgemoor and its neighbouring authorities, particularly Taunton Deane Borough Council given the need to foster a complementary relationship between Bridgwater and Taunton in the context of the strategic significance of the two towns. Bridgwater is at the centre of and forms part of government objectives to use growth within the M5 corridor to drive regeneration in a sustainable manner. Its strong functional relationship with Taunton is also recognised through the identification of a single housing market area to plan for complementary balanced growth.
2.7 Future change in Bridgwater is not just about growth. Instead the focus should be on significant restructuring that allows the town to develop a more confident role as a major service centre in Somerset. Its position as a gateway employment and service centre for the South West and the securing of substantial inward investment means that it has significant regeneration opportunities.

2.8 Whilst location provides Sedgemoor with clear advantages it also brings significant future challenges in the context of climate change and in particular flood risk. With much of Sedgemoor at high risk of flooding, including the main towns, there needs to be a robust and strategic solution to provide investor confidence and ensure the future competitiveness of the District. At the same time this growth agenda needs to respect the natural environment and beauty of the District that is equally fundamental to Sedgemoor's uniqueness and economic competitiveness.

Local Characteristics

Location

2.9 Sedgemoor is located at the heart of the county of Somerset about 30 miles from Bristol, covers an area of 564 km² and is of predominantly rural character. Bridgwater is Sedgemoor’s major urban area and accounts for nearly a third of the population (36,300\(^{(1)}\)). The town accommodates the district’s larger residential, commercial and industrial areas and the majority of retail and service facilities. The other towns are Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge (19,200\(^{(2)}\)). The coastal strip at Berrow and Brean and Cheddar Gorge are significant tourist destinations for the District.

2.10 Many jobs and key services are currently provided by larger towns outside the District (particularly Taunton, Weston-Super-Mare, Bristol and Bath); therefore the focus on planning and service delivery across and beyond administrative boundaries is becoming increasingly important.

Population and Demographics

2.11 Sedgemoor has a current population of 114,000\(^{(3)}\) across 48,000 households\(^{(4)}\). The district has experienced the highest population growth amongst similarly rural districts in the South West in recent years, mainly due to in-migration. Between 2010 and 2026, Sedgemoor’s population is projected to grow by 14% to 130,000.

2.12 While Sedgemoor is a popular area to retire to, there are also significant numbers of young people (particularly school leavers) who move away from the district each year. Consequently, Sedgemoor has an ageing population, with older people making up 24% of all residents (England: 19\%\(^{(5)}\)).

2.13 Sedgemoor is less ethnically diverse than the rest of the country, with 5.3% of residents belonging to Black, Asian and Ethnic minority communities (England: 16.4\%\(^{(6)}\)). Over the last decade, increased diversity has largely been the result of Eastern European economic in-migration, mainly from Poland and Lithuania\(^{(7)}\).

Economy, Employment & Skills

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1 ONS Ward population estimates, 2007
2 ONS Ward population estimates, 2007
3 2008-based Subnational Population Projections for 2010
4 ONS Household Estimates, 2006
5 ONS Mid-year population estimates, 2008
6 ONS Population estimates by ethnic group, 2007
7 LGA worker registration scheme, 2004-10
2.14 Sedgemoor has seen a rapid increase in employment opportunities over the past ten years, with the service and manufacturing industries providing the largest number of jobs. The business base consists mainly of micro enterprises, indicating the local importance of sectors such as agriculture and tourism (8).

2.15 Unemployment in Sedgemoor is higher than in the other districts in Somerset (9), as is the rate of people claiming out-of-work benefits, with the exception of West Somerset (10). Low qualification levels of the Sedgemoor labour force (11) keep average wages down and additionally make it difficult to attract significant employers in knowledge-driven sectors into the area in order to diversify the local economy. The lack of employment opportunities in higher skills sectors also increases the level of out-commuting from Sedgemoor to other areas in the South West and beyond to better remunerated employment.

2.16 There are also concerns that the quality and nature of Sedgemoor’s town centres is not serving the local population adequately in terms of leisure and shopping facilities. Bridgwater town centre in particular suffers from a poor retail offer, with high vacancy rates and a lack of medium to high quality retailers (12).

**Housing**

2.17 Lower than average house prices make Sedgemoor a more affordable place to live than neighbouring districts (13), but the below average incomes of local workers (14) indicate that home ownership is still beyond the means of many residents. As a result, the need for affordable housing remains very high.

2.18 Existing housing development is often perceived to be poorly designed and lacking architectural quality, distinctive character and a sense of place. New development has not typically made best use of advances in construction and technology to improve its performance and sustainability.

**Environment**

2.19 Sedgemoor has a unique historic character and boasts many listed buildings and conservation areas. It also has a number of important environmental designations affecting its landscape: The Mendip Hills and Quantock Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) fringe the northern and south western boundaries of the District, while the coastal strip has important international habitat designations. The Somerset Levels and Moors area forms the largest lowland grazing marsh system in Britain and is of exceptional environmental interest.

2.20 Due to Sedgemoor’s low lying nature, much of the district is at high risk of flooding, including large areas of Bridgwater to the east of the river Parrett, all of Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge and significant areas of the coastal tourist area at Brean and Berrow (15).

**Wellbeing**

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8 Nomis Annual Business Inquiry, 2008
9 Nomis, Oct 08-Sept 09
10 Nomis, Nov 2009
11 Nomis, 2008
12 Sedgemoor Retail Monitoring, 2010
13 Land Registry, Q1 2010
14 Nomis, 2009
15 Sedgemoor Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2009
2.21 While Sedgemoor is not a particularly deprived district overall, there are significant local pockets of deprivation, mostly concentrated in the district’s urban areas\(^\text{(16)}\).

2.22 The health of people in Sedgemoor is generally better than the England average, although obvious health inequalities still exist, with the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas being over five years. More work is required to increase healthy lifestyle habits among adults, reducing the number of injuries and deaths resulting from road traffic accidents as well as improving residents’ feelings of safety when outside in their local area, particularly after dark\(^\text{(17)}\).

**Transport**

2.23 Sedgemoor is well linked to the major South West settlements of Bristol, Exeter, Taunton and Weston-Super-Mare by the strategic M5 transport corridor and the mainline railway. The district is also within easy reach of the two international airports at Bristol and Exeter.

2.24 Sedgemoor has three motorway junctions, and while such accessibility is advantageous in economic terms, it also encourages out-commuting to other centres. Limited access to public transport particularly in the rural areas, and fragmented cycle and pedestrian networks in the towns of the district, mean Sedgemoor residents remain reliant on the car as their main form of transport and Bridgwater especially has high levels of traffic that can lead to congestion at peak times\(^\text{(18)}\).
Figure 2.1 Spatial Portrait Summary

**Key**

- Motorway
- A roads
- Railway

**Coastal Strip**
- High levels of seasonal traffic
- Seasonal employment
- High flood risk

**Burnham-on-Sea**
- Very high proportion of elderly residents
- High levels of out-commuting
- Deteriorating infrastructure
- Limited retail and tourism offer
- Poor links between the town centre and sea front
- High flood risk

**Highbridge**
- Poor public image
- Low quality developments
- Limited retail offer
- High levels of deprivation, especially in relation to education & skills, income and employment
- High flood risk

**Bridgwater**
- Traffic congestion
- High flood risk
- Disjointed centre with poor pedestrian and cycle links
- Very limited retail offer
- High levels of deprivation in Hamp, Sydenham and Victoria wards, especially in relation to education & skills and income

**Key Rural Settlements**
- Local employment opportunities
- High levels of out-commuting
- Some or good access to public transport
- Local services and facilities
- High house prices and a lack of affordable homes

**Other Sustainable Settlements**
- Same as Key Rural Settlements, above

**Rural Areas within Sedgemoor**
- Lack of local employment opportunities
- Very high levels of out-commuting
- Limited or no access to public transport
- Limited or no services and facilities
- High house prices and a lack of affordable homes
Spatial Vision for Sedgemoor

3.1 The Core Strategy must contain a long-term spatial vision that sets out what Sedgemoor should be like in the future and how the places within it will change. The vision should be an expression of where we want Sedgemoor to be in 20 years time so that through the spatial strategy and policies of the Core Strategy we can plan to deliver it.

3.2 It should be seen as a focal point for co-ordinating the development of policy and the actions of service providers and stakeholders to meet the needs and aspirations of the people who live, work and visit Sedgemoor. Therefore it is essential that the vision is both locally distinctive to Sedgemoor and is achievable.

3.3 The starting point for developing a spatial vision for the Core Strategy are the vision and priorities of the Community Strategy, for which the Core Strategy should be the spatial expression. For Sedgemoor both the county wide \(^1\) and district wide \(^2\) sustainable community strategies are relevant. The visions contained in these documents are reproduced below. In respect of local priorities for Sedgemoor the following are identified in the community strategies:

- Making Bridgwater part of the 'engine room' for economic prosperity;
- Tackling the impact of climate change and barriers to regeneration;
- Restructuring the economy, attracting new businesses and jobs as the heart of a new enterprise area. This will include more industries that require higher skills and professional knowledge;
- Improving life in the local deprived neighbourhoods;
- Supporting economic development, particularly skills and attainment, through providing University Centres for Somerset and the Building Schools for the Future project;
- Managing new investment in Sedgemoor from outside the area;
- Ensuring communities can take advantage of new jobs and training and can benefit from outside investment;
- Ensuring affordable new housing and decent existing housing;
- Providing services for the elderly in response to the ageing population.

### Vision for Somerset

'*...a dynamic, successful modern economy that supports, respects and develops Somerset’s distinctive communities and unique environment.*’

Extract from 'Somerset: A Landscape for the Future',

### Vision for Sedgemoor

"By 2026 2027, Sedgemoor will be a place: Safeguarded against the most serious threats of coastal and inland flooding and climate change; celebrated for our Energy – in our people, our carnivals and our economy; made Distinctive due to the beauty and variety of our unique environment, landscapes and heritage; recognised as the Gateway to the Levels and Moors, Somerset and the further South-West – a place to arrive, not just pass through; known for its vibrant Economy – able to withstand future recessions and reductions in fossil fuels and able to provide jobs which are valued by local people; with people Motivated to maximise their educational achievement and skills.; giving everyone the Opportunity to live well – free from the effects of..."

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1 Somerset: A Landscape for the Future
2 Sowing the Seeds for a Better Future
3.4 From the above Sustainable Community Strategies the following relevant and common themes have been used to structure the vision, objectives and policies of the Core Strategy as set out below:

- Living Sustainably;
- Ensuring Economic Wellbeing;
- Enjoying and Achieving;
- Being Healthy.

3.5 In order to fulfil the role of the Core Strategy in providing the spatial, land-use expression of the shared priorities represented in the above community strategies, the following spatial vision has been developed. This identifies the key spatial implications for the future planning of the District and the places within it up to 2027. In developing place specific spatial visions, the Core Strategy draws upon local regeneration strategies including Bridgwater Vision and the Civic Pride work for Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge.

Vision 1
A Spatial Vision for Sedgemoor

Spatial Strategy

By 2026, Sedgemoor will be progressing towards becoming a truly sustainable community consisting of a revitalised Bridgwater that acts as the focal point for the District, supported by thriving and prosperous market towns and key rural settlements where local people can access affordable housing, local employment, and community services. This will be complemented by a living and working countryside that contributes to the overall prosperity and well-being of the District and conserves and enhances its natural beauty. Where growth has occurred the necessary infrastructure has been delivered at the right time and right place to support this.

Living Sustainably

By 2026, the main towns of Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge will be safe and protected from the risk of rising sea levels and flooding. Responsibility to future generations recognising the threats of climate change will be acted upon through reduced greenhouse gas emissions, increased renewable energy generation and improved energy efficiency. This will be complemented by modern, efficient and high quality design that both respects its context and is future proofed to adapt to changing climate including hotter and drier summers.

The right type and tenure of housing will be provided in the towns and the more sustainable settlements to meet a range of needs for affordable and family homes. New housing will create attractive, safe and socially inclusive living environments integrated into existing communities. Homes will be balanced by job opportunities and local services supported by the appropriate infrastructure and sustainable transport options, enabling communities to become more
self-contained. The reuse of brownfield land will be prioritised wherever possible and all
development will embrace the principles of sustainable construction including maximising the
efficient use of resources and minimising waste.

Ensuring Economic Wellbeing

By 2026 Sedgemoor will have a thriving, diverse and resilient economy underpinned by an
ambitious and skilled local labour force. The delivery of an Energy Park on the former Royal
Ordnance Factory at Puriton will be a key catalyst in enabling Sedgemoor to realise its potential
as a leading centre for renewable energy and low carbon technologies. Sustainable tourism,
building on the unique natural assets of Sedgemoor’s countryside and coast, will be a major
source of local income and employment. The District’s town centres will be re-invigorated as
shopping destinations that have broadened their appeal as attractive places for residents, visitors
and retailers alike.

Enjoying and Achieving

By 2026 the natural beauty, biodiversity and heritage of Sedgemoor will have been protected
and enhanced for its enjoyment by future generations. Its contribution to the quality of life of
residents and visitors and to the positive image of the District is understood and respected.

People of all ages will be able to access high quality lifelong learning opportunities to develop
their skills in order to contribute positively to a dynamic local economy. Bridgwater College will
be known and celebrated within the region for its educational attainment and achievements in
developing work-based training.

Being Healthy

By 2026 the health of the people will have improved as a result of good access to a range
of high quality health care facilities. More people will enjoy healthier lifestyles through sport,
recreation and exercise, maximising the benefits of living within or close to a rural environment.
Walking or cycling will be the first choice for local trips encouraged by an attractive, safe and
convenient district wide green network links. New country parks at South Bridgwater and the
Meads and the continued enhancement of Apex Park in Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge will
ensure those living in the towns will have local access to important green spaces.

Bridgwater

By 2026 the foundations for transformational change of Bridgwater will have been put in
place. The town will be making positive progress to become an energy conscious town known
for its ambitious approach to sustainability and low carbon living. Bridgwater will be seen as a
place that is re-energising into a confident town through well designed strong, innovative
architecture, a more vibrant town centre and revitalised neighbourhoods - encouraging a greater
sense of local community, well being and civic pride.

Bridgwater will be emerging as a greener town drawing upon the uniqueness of the Somerset
Levels and outstanding beauty of the Quantock Hills. The River Parrett, public parks and open
spaces within Bridgwater will be transforming into safe, accessible and active areas. The river
will have a more active role in the heart of the town, supported by opportunities for colourful and
contemporary development inspired by Bridgwater’s waterways and maritime history.
Communities within Bridgwater will be defined by exemplary schools and learning achievement, improved public realm and more accessible and better connected transport. The strong sense of social unity, history and culture, reflected in the world famous Carnival, will be seen through a more focused town centre that includes extension into Northgate and improved public realm celebrating the distinctiveness of the town.

Bridgwater will have a growing reputation for successful, co-ordinated delivery of an ambitious place shaping programme building on the successful delivery of the North East Bridgwater urban extension. The towns’ people, businesses and agencies will continue to work in partnership to improve housing and transport, deliver the Parrett barrier, a flood defence solution and provide outstanding health and recreation facilities. Bridgwater will continue to attract new investment, maintaining its emerging position as a centre of enterprise excellence. The growing proportion of a higher skilled workforce will be utilised by the new cutting edge employers in the town, encouraged by the focus on innovation and knowledge, offering quality job opportunities and training in new and emerging sectors with an emphasis on low carbon and green technologies.

**Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge**

By **2026** and **2027** Burnham-on-Sea will have recognised, understood and adapted to the threats of climate change. The town will have strengthened its tourism attraction through a more exciting seaside experience that offers high quality and active public realm, enhanced restaurant and café offer and water based activities. This improved offer will have adapted to meet the changing needs of the tourism market and raising visitor spend by offering higher quality accommodation and new all weather tourist attractions.

The town centre will have a clear and more visible link with the sea front through improved linkages between them. The needs of residents will have been recognised through improved retail, leisure and cultural offer and an all year round economy that will have included the establishment of a dedicated business zone and office cluster close to the town centre. This will have gone some way in reducing out-commuting as the town becomes a place that people want to live, work, invest in and to visit.

In short a town that balances being a ‘sea side town’ with being a ‘town by the sea’.

**Highbridge**

By **2026** and **2027** Highbridge will have established its role as a town providing homes, jobs and community facilities for its local and wider rural population. New and improved flood defences will have enabled brownfield sites to be developed, providing a range of house types with a particular emphasis on family homes. New housing development will have improved the physical appearance of the town through high quality and innovative design and the delivery of necessary infrastructure. This will have acted as a catalyst for the social and economic regeneration of the town, making it a more pleasant place to live and work.

The town centre, focused on Market Street and serving primarily the needs of the local community, will provide a better shopping environment. This will have been complemented and strengthened by the re-development of the former Highbridge Market site for a range of housing, employment and community uses. Further opportunity to enhance Church Street (the A38) will have contributed to a strong street scene and enhanced the town’s role as a gateway to the coast and the Levels and Moors.
The town’s role in supporting Burnham-on-Sea’s tourism function will be more readily recognised through the development of green linkages to encourage walking and cycling between the towns and into the wider surrounds. Highbridge will have enhanced its reputation as a hub for rail and bus travel and through enhanced facilities will be seen by travellers as a convenient destination whether commuting to and from work or visiting the area.

The investment into and expansion of Isleport Business Park will have increased the range and diversity of jobs available that are easily accessible to Highbridge and Burnham as well as surrounding villages. This will have encouraged local working, higher wage opportunities and reduced levels of commuting to other centres to the benefit of the local economy.

Vision for the Rural Communities

By 2027 Sedgemoor’s countryside will be served by a network of settlements that provide for the day to day needs of rural communities. The identified key rural settlements will be thriving and vibrant places that provide jobs and facilities to serve the local and wider rural population, satisfying community and cultural needs as well as increasing self-containment. Complementing this will be a range of smaller sustainable settlements that provide a basic but essential level of community facilities, contributing to a living and working countryside. An established green network will have provided links between the settlements that encourages walking and cycling and greater interaction between places.

Where new housing has occurred this will have been of high quality and sustainable design, avoided areas of high flood vulnerability and met the varied needs and priorities of the local community. Employment opportunities will have been provided at an appropriate scale that benefits the rural economy whilst respecting the natural environment. Where there has been change, rural communities will have retained their unique character, sense of identity and social cohesion.

Objectives

3.6 In order to deliver the long-term vision for the District and achieve the spatial aims of the Somerset and Sedgemoor sustainable community strategies the following overarching objective has been identified:

**Plan Objective**

To ensure development in Sedgemoor supports the principles of sustainable development and delivers sustainable communities whilst respecting the diversity in function and character of Sedgemoor’s towns, villages and countryside.

3.7 Beneath this overriding Plan objective a number of strategic objectives have been developed to underpin the Core Strategy approach, working towards achieving these is essential in managing the challenges Sedgemoor face now and into the future. These strategic objectives and their intended outcomes are the drivers for the policy responses to the issues that exist and provide the essential framework for monitoring the performance of the policies against the relevant targets and desired outcomes. The following profiles outline the linkages that exist between each strategic objective and the following:
The themes of the Sedgemoor Sustainable Community Strategy;
The key challenges facing Sedgemoor that they are intended to address;
The key outcomes/sub objectives the Core Strategy will seek to deliver;
The policy mechanism for delivering the desired outcomes;
The monitoring framework for assessing the performance of the Core Strategy in achieving this.

Strategic Objective SO 1
LIVING SUSTAINABLY: To address the challenges of Climate Change and vulnerability to Flood Risk

Key Challenge: The District’s high vulnerability to flooding and the potential impacts of climate change.

Climate change is now widely accepted as inevitable and responding to the challenges that climate change brings requires both reducing the contributions and adapting to its effects (which may be beneficial as well as detrimental). Much of Sedgemoor lies within areas of high flood risk including significant parts of the towns of Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge and is vulnerable to sea level rise. In addition the threat of intense storms, wetter, warmer winters, hotter, drier summers and drought is likely to affect all areas of the District and the Core Strategy will need to address these issues through policies that seek to direct development away from areas at flood risk where possible or ensure flood defence solutions exist or can be delivered. Promoting coastal and surface water management, minimising greenhouse gas emissions, encouraging energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, sustainable construction, climate change resilience habitat compensation and adaptation will all be necessary.

Key Outcomes:
- To ensure adequate safeguards against the threats of Climate change;
- To address flood risk and ensure key infrastructure, towns and villages are safeguarded (or relocated if necessary);
- To minimise local contributions to climate change, including through energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy.

Key Policy References: S1, S2, S3, S4, MIP1, MIP2, P1, P3, D1, D2, D3, D4, D9, D20

Key Monitoring References: M1, M2, M5, M6, M7, M8, M11, M12, M13, M15, M48

Strategic Objective SO 2
LIVING SUSTAINABLY: To Deliver Development that is of High Quality, Sustainable, Distinctive, Inclusive, Safe and Respectful of its Context

Key Challenge: Poor quality development that lacks local distinctiveness and is unsympathetic to the rural character of the District
New development in Sedgemoor is often perceived as having been in the past of only limited design quality that has had a negative impact on the character and local distinctiveness of places and the natural and built assets of the District. The Core Strategy will need to address these issues through policies that encourage higher quality design standards, safer communities, sustainable construction and energy efficiency to improve the image of individual places and the District as a whole while addressing the threats of climate change.

**Key Outcomes:**
- Ensure new development maximises the use of brownfield sites wherever possible, is of high quality, locally distinctive, involves sustainable construction, including maximising the efficient use of resources and minimising waste and pollution, and respects the historic environment;
- To ensure new development promotes safer communities, including contributing to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, through the design of places, streets and buildings.

**Key Policy References:** S1, S3, S4, MIP2, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, D2, D3, D14, D16, D17, D20

**Key Monitoring References:** M2, M4, M14, M16, M17, M18, M19, M40, M41

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**Strategic Objective SO 3**

**LIVING SUSTAINABLY: To Provide Everyone with the Opportunity to Live in a Decent Home**

**Key Challenge:** Lack of affordable housing and the ability of the local population to access the housing market given the disparities between wages and house prices

Housing affordability is a significant issue across the District as a result of both supply of affordable housing and lower than average wages. The Core Strategy will need to address these issues through policies that seek to increase the supply of affordable housing, ensure the provision of the right type and mix of housing, address specific housing needs including elderly persons, Gypsies and Travellers and improve local earning opportunities through the provision of better quality, higher skilled jobs as well as appropriate training.

**Key Outcomes:**
- Improve the mix of housing types and tenures to meet the future needs of all the community, including the need for affordable housing;
- Diversify the economic base and up skill the existing workforce to increase average incomes.

**Key Policy References:** S1, S3, MIP2, MIP3, P1, P3, P4, P5, D5, D6, D7, D8, D11, D19

**Key Monitoring References:** M16, M20, M21, M22, M23, M24, M25, M26, M27, M31, M32, M33, M34, M52, M53
Strategic Objective SO 4

LIVING SUSTAINABLY: To create more sustainable communities

**Key Challenge:** High levels of out-commuting and lack of self-containment

The limited employment opportunities within the higher skills and earnings sectors within the towns of Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea/Highbridge and the District’s good accessibility overall within the South West, particularly in terms of road transport, are significant contributing factors to high levels of out-commuting to other centres. Furthermore the rural nature of the District has consequences in more limited service provision, access to local facilities and sustainable transport options. The Core Strategy will need to address these issues through policies that encourage greater local employment opportunities, promote economic diversification into higher value sectors, strengthen the economic base of the District as a whole, and support development that meets identified local needs and priorities.

**Key Outcomes:**
- Ensuring access to basic services including housing, facilities and employment opportunities to encourage a higher degree of self-containment within the rural settlements and villages;
- To maximise accessibility to services and facilities by focusing development on the towns to ensure that more people are near to the largest/best range of facilities and the potential for access by other means than the private motor car is increased;
- To provide a better balance between housing and employment opportunities to reduce out-commuting and increase self-containment;
- To ensure that there is adequate infrastructure including energy, water, transportation, flood defences, schools, green infrastructure and community facilities to serve new and existing developments;
- Reinforce the vitality and viability of local shops, schools, services, recreation and community and cultural facilities in the towns and larger villages.

**Key Policy References:** S1, S2, S3, MIP1, MIP2, MIP3, P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D11, D13, D17, D18, D19, D20, D21

**Key Monitoring References:** M1, M2, M33, M36, M37, M46, M47, M48, M49, M51

Strategic Objective SO 5

LIVING SUSTAINABLY: To Promote Safe and Sustainable Transport Options and Manage Congestion

**Key Challenge:** Traffic congestion including the capacity of motorway junctions and additional pressures placed on the road system by future development

The District suffers from specific areas of traffic congestion, particularly in the towns. Bridgwater has issues in respect of peak traffic on all major routes into the town on a daily basis. In addition seasonal congestion is an issue for Burnham-on-Sea/Highbridge and there are local capacity...
issues on many local roads in the rural areas. The Core Strategy will need to address these issues with policies that minimise the adverse impacts of traffic, promote more sustainable alternatives than the car and ensure new development is focused in accessible locations.

**Key Outcomes:**
- To minimise the impacts of traffic generation including managing motorway junction capacity issues and congestion within the towns; and
- To focus development in locations that are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport and ensure development schemes encourage use of sustainable transport.

**Key Policy References:** S1, S2, S3, S4, MIP2, MIP3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, D9, D10, D16, D20

**Key Monitoring References:** M1, M2, M12, M28, M29, M30, M49

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**Strategic Objective SO 6**

**ENSURING ECONOMIC WELLBEING: To ensure the economic wellbeing of our communities, by developing an economic blueprint to shape the restructuring of our economy and transform the workforce**

**Key Challenge:** Low skill levels, qualifications deficit and low quality job opportunities

Despite significant employment development over recent years this has traditionally been in lower wage sectors. Poor education attainment and skill levels of the workforce have made it more difficult to attract the jobs in the emerging higher value sectors, i.e. knowledge–based industries. Consequences of this include the non-retention of younger people with qualifications, loss of innovation and entrepreneurialism and an increased need for affordable housing as house prices and wages diverge. The Core Strategy will need to address these issues through policies that maintain a supply of adequate employment land to meet a range of local needs and inward investment opportunities, support the development of economic activity in higher value sectors, secure opportunities for improving the skills and education of the workforce and support the diversification of both the urban and rural economy.

**Key Outcomes:**
- To provide the right amount and type of employment opportunities;
- Increase opportunities in higher wage sectors by encouraging innovation and business growth in established sectors of the knowledge based economy, combined with appropriate training, education and up-skilling for the local workforce;
- Encourage development of sustainable tourism and high quality facilities that meets modern day needs and offers all year round benefits;
- To increase the accessibility of key employers by walking, cycling and public transport

**Key Policy References:** S1, S2, S3, MIP1, MIP3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, D10, D11, D12,

**Key Monitoring References:** M1, M3, M28, M30, M31, M32, M33, M34, M35, M42
Strategic Objective SO 7

ENSURING ECONOMIC WELLBEING: To strengthen the retail competitiveness of the town centres whilst broadening their appeal as places to shop, work, live and visit

Key Challenge: Relatively poor retail offer of the District’s town centres
Sedgemoor suffers from retail leakage from its town centres to other larger centres including Bristol, Taunton and Weston, nevertheless, the towns of Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea do provide a range of smaller footprint retail outlets. In Bridgwater there are new stores at edge-of-centre locations, but the number of retail businesses in the town centre has declined and vacancy rates are above the national average and as a consequence the town centre image has been affected by the decline of some shopping streets. In Burnham-on-Sea by contrast, the situation is somewhat more positive in terms of vacancy rates though the main core shopping area is heavily reliant on independent shops which, although bringing variety, does mean a significantly high level of churn. The Core Strategy will need to address these issues through policies that: maintain and improve the vitality and viability of centres; protect retail cores; support complementary town centre uses and encourage public realm enhancements that improve the overall experience of those visiting as well as providing opportunities to meet new retail and leisure floorspace demands.

Key Outcomes:
- To stimulate town centre regeneration.

Key Policy References: S1, S3, MIP2, MIP3, P1, P2, P3, D11, D13

Key Monitoring References: M36, M37, M38, M50

Strategic Objective SO 8

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING: To conserve and enhance the natural assets and heritage of Sedgemoor including its natural resources, wildlife habitats, landscape character and historic environment, including appropriate adaptation to climate change

Key Challenge: Threats to the District’s high quality natural environment, biodiversity, natural assets and heritage
Sedgemoor is known for the quality of its natural environment and contains several sites of European conservation interest, including parts of the Somerset Levels and Moors, as well as sites of national and local interest. The District also contains parts of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as well as extensive countryside, areas of high quality farmland and coastal landscape assets. In addition the District has over 1,100 listed buildings, 14 conservation
areas, a battlefield site and numerous archaeological sites. Balancing the protection of these natural and historic assets with access and development pressure is a key challenge for the future planning of the District. There is also the challenge of understanding the implications of climate change for species, habitats, landscapes and the historic environment. The Core Strategy will need to address these issues through policies that seek to protect and where possible enhance the natural and historic environment, resist development that has an adverse impact on these assets and ensure where development does occur appropriate mitigation and compensation measures are in place.

**Key Outcomes :**
- To conserve and enhance the District’s biodiversity, natural assets (including water, soils and geodiversity) and green infrastructure;
- To ensure that the conservation and enhancement of landscapes and biodiversity take account of threats and opportunities arising from climate change;
- To protect and enhance the District’s historic environment.

**Key Policy References :** S1, S3, S4, MIP1, MIP3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, D14, D15, D16, D17, D19, D20

**Key Monitoring References :** M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M15, M39, M41, M44, M45, M54

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**Strategic Objective SO 9**

**BEING HEALTHY: To improve the health and well being of our communities by addressing inequalities and poverty, ensuring access to key services and encouraging healthy lifestyles**

**Key Challenge :** Inequalities in health, social exclusion, poverty and access to basic services and changing demographic profiles with the likelihood of an increasingly ageing population

The District suffers from significant local pockets of deprivation in Bridgwater and Highbridge, particularly relating to health, education and skills attainment. In addition the rural character of much of the District impacts upon the ability of residents to locally access key services without reliance on car travel and this trend has been growing recently with the loss of a number of key rural services such as post offices and local shops. The Core Strategy will need to address these issues through policies that encourage provision and enhancement of health, education, community facilities and other key services that will improve community well-being and increase self-containment. In addition it will be necessary to ensure new development is located in places where adequate services and facilities exist and/or contributes to addressing current deficits, encourages healthier lifestyles through opportunities for cycling and walking and reduces social exclusion.

**Key Outcomes :**
- To reduce inequalities in health, social exclusion and poverty;
To prepare for an ageing population, including the provision and retention of community and other facilities;  
To support active lifestyles through accessibility to education, recreational facilities, open spaces and maintaining/creating places which encourage walking and cycling.

**Key Policy References:** S1, S2, S3, MIP1, MIP2, MIP3, P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, D2, D5, D6, D7, D8, D11, D3, D18, D19, D20, D21

**Key Monitoring References:** M1, M2, M16, M28, M29, M30, M43, M44, M45, M46

**Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor**

**Context**

3.8  Given the low level nature of much of the District flood risk is a significant constraint. Flood risk has be considered at all stages of plan preparation but it is not possible to avoid areas of flood risk given that large parts of the main towns of Bridgwater and Burnham & Highbridge are within areas of high flood risk both now and taking into account climate change. The spatial strategy in directing growth to these locations recognises that strategic flood defence solutions as identified in the Council’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be required. The delivery mechanisms for these are outlined in Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery. Where preferred greenfield locations are identified to accommodate growth the consideration of flood risk has been a key element in determining their suitability.

3.9  Bridgwater is the administrative centre of Sedgemoor and the focus for employment, retailing, housing and a range of supporting functions. The town is located on the M5 corridor served by two motorway junctions providing excellent accessibility to the wider region. Bridgwater will remain the focus for new growth, particularly in respect of employment and housing, there is also a need to regenerate parts of town, particularly the town centre whilst addressing the significant flood risk that impacts upon much of the existing urban area. The Bridgwater Vision and the Council’s adopted Economic Development Masterplan recognise the need for a re-positioning of Bridgwater as an attractive, thriving town, with a busy commercial town centre.

3.10  Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge is the second largest town in Sedgemoor, although there are two distinct centres and significant functional differences the town is physically and socially integrated as a single urban area. The town offers a wide range of services and facilities including a broad retail offering, industrial and business parks and situated mid way between Bridgwater and Weston-Super-Mare, the town is well placed for connections to the motorway and strategic rail and bus networks. It is also well connected to smaller settlements within its rural hinterland and provides an important service centre role for the northern part of Sedgemoor. During the summer season there is a large influx of visitors because of the town’s popularity as a seaside destination.

3.11  In addition to the towns there are a range of smaller rural settlements that meet the immediate needs of their local communities. These vary considerably in size and function and include significant local centres such as Cheddar that provide a full range of services to the north east of the District down to small, isolated villages and hamlets with limited or no local facilities.

3.12  The Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes of the now revoked South West Regional Spatial Strategy (SWRSS) identified a requirement to deliver 10,200 new homes in Sedgemoor and 7,400 new jobs within the Travel to Work Area (TTWA). This envisaged 75% of this growth being focused on Bridgwater compatible with its role as a Strategically Significant City or Town (SSCT). The Draft
3.13 The 2010 elected Coalition Government formally revoked Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS’s) in July 2010, and advised that local planning authorities will be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision in their area and identifying a long term supply of housing land. The Council have subsequently reviewed the housing requirements of the RSS and undertaken additional assessment in order to establish a locally evidence based housing target that is both realistic and deliverable. The decision to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies has been challenged and whilst the Government remain committed to this action through the provisions of the Localism Bill, the Court of Appeal has confirmed that until legislative changes are enacted, development plan documents must be in general conformity with the regional strategy. The South West Regional Spatial Strategy therefore remains a strong material consideration but, given that it has never been approved, the Council considered it prudent to establish locally evidenced housing and employment targets to inform the Core Strategy. In practice, these levels of growth, as set out below, are broadly consistent with the Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes to the South West Regional Spatial Strategy.

Approach

Role and Function

3.14 In order to deliver the most appropriate and sustainable pattern of development the strategy seeks to focus development in the towns and larger rural settlements. This offers greatest opportunity to reduce the need to travel and to protect the District's natural assets.

3.15 The Spatial Strategy identifies Bridgwater as the principal focus for growth over the plan period, providing for housing growth and maximising opportunities to diversify the economy and strengthen the town’s image. It will include housing and employment growth within and adjacent to the existing town, including a strategic urban extension at North East Bridgwater, as well as economic development objectives achieved in the most sustainable way. Essential to delivering this growth will be the need to manage the significant flood risk of the town.

3.16 Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge will be focal points for more limited growth focusing on the need to capture investment to regenerate and sustain the town centres and to promote self-containment by reducing the levels of out-commuting. The Spatial Strategy, whilst identifying Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge as a single urban area, recognises the different roles of the centres and the need for alternative policy responses where appropriate. For Burnham-on-Sea, the emphasis is on maintaining and developing its service centre and tourism role; for Highbridge, the focus is on meeting the needs of its local community. For the town as a whole, the emphasis will be on maximising opportunities to aid regeneration, managing flood risk and reducing out-commuting.

3.17 The Spatial Strategy identifies seventeen rural settlements that offer a reasonable level of services and access to public transport, as Key Rural Settlements (KRS). These will provide the basis for a network of local service centres across Sedgemoor to supplement the service centre role of the towns and to help meet the needs of the rural communities throughout the rural area. The focus will be on local growth that supports community needs and local services. In addition to these, a further ten smaller settlements are identified as Other Sustainable Settlements. These are places with basic levels of services and facilities and serve only the immediate community. The emphasis is on only limited growth that meets identified local needs.
3.18 Table 3.4 below sets out what the spatial strategy means for the identified settlements and the remainder of the District this table forms part of the policy. Development proposals will need to contribute and support these roles and intentions.

Establishing Employment and Housing Targets for Sedgemoor

3.19 In order to establish local housing and employment targets for the Plan period, three different approaches have been used\(^{(3)}\). These are: (1) a projection based approach that looks at future demographic and employment trends; (2) purpose based approach that looks at Plan objectives and outcomes; and (3) a delivery based approach that looks at capacity and deliverability both past and future. Potential housing figures have been identified from three employment growth and self-containment options as shown in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Potential housing figures from three employment growth and self-containment options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Growth: 10,200 Jobs</th>
<th>Medium Growth: 9,160 jobs</th>
<th>Low Growth: 7,560 Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of additional homes required if self-containment is increased to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72%</td>
<td>12,600</td>
<td>11,500</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74%</td>
<td>11,900</td>
<td>10,800</td>
<td>9,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>10,100</td>
<td>9,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.20 In respect of the economic projections there is considerable uncertainty over the state of the UK economy following the deep recession of the past 2 years. The impact of significant job losses in the District in recent years, coupled with proposed cuts nationally to public expenditure and the implications this will have for jobs in the public sector which has previously been identified as an area of job growth suggests that, at least for the foreseeable future, the high employment growth option is considered unrealistic. However the Council is a pro-business authority with an ambitious economic development agenda and has proved successful in attracting inward investment over the past decade, therefore a medium growth scenario is adopted that is considered to be challenging but deliverable. This establishes a jobs target of 9,160 for Sedgemoor between 2006 and 2026.

3.21 Previously, evidence underpinning the now revoked SWRSS sought to reduce out commuting in order to improve self-containment and overall sustainability. Strategic Objective 4 of the Core Strategy identifies the need to create more sustainable communities and includes as outcomes a better balance between homes and jobs and to reduce out-commuting. As out-commuting from Sedgemoor to other centres tends to be driven by those higher skilled workers leaving the District for higher paid work, reducing this will also contribute to the economic objectives of the Plan. In addition, transport policies seek to reduce and manage the need to travel. It is therefore considered that the Plan should adopt an ambitious approach of improving self-containment to 75% thus reducing net out-commuting and strengthening the employment led focus of the strategy.

3.22 Taking into account the assumptions for economic growth (medium) and self-containment (40% reduction)(75%) the housing figure for Sedgemoor as a whole is 10,100 new dwellings between 2006 and 2026.

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\(^{(3)}\) Housing Requirement for Sedgemoor and Bridgwater (2010)
3.23 Planning Policy Statement 12 requires the plan to have a minimum coverage of 15 years from the date of adoption. The plan period has therefore been extended to 2027 and both housing and employment growth figures have therefore been proportionately increased by 505 dwellings (the annual requirement) and 458 jobs respectively. The housing requirement for the plan period 2006 - 2027 in therefore 10,605, the employment target for the same period is 9,620 jobs.

Spatial Distribution of Growth

3.24 Following consultation and concerns raised in respect of limited growth in rural areas the Council has reviewed the spatial strategy contained in the preferred options based upon the now revoked SWRSS. In particular, regard has been had to the Matthew Taylor Report and discussion on the sustainability of rural settlements has informed a review of the evidence underpinning the Role and Function of Sedgemoor Settlements Study. Previous consultation has also identified concerns that the Plan provided limited opportunities at Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge for much needed investment into essential infrastructure and town centre regeneration.

3.25 The Plan therefore provides additional opportunities for growth at Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge that directly contributes to the specific vision and objectives for the town. It also identifies an additional four KRS, and confirms that Cheddar should be classified as a KRS and recognises the role of Wembdon and Berrow as rural settlements in their own right (whilst recognising the role they have in relation to the wider urban areas they adjoin). Furthermore drawing on the Role and Function work ten Other Sustainable Settlements have now been identified where a basic level of services exist.

3.26 In line with the Plan's objective in promoting sustainable development and delivering sustainable communities, a strong urban focus is retained with 85% of the District's growth envisaged in the towns. Bridgwater, being the most sustainable location within Sedgemoor, will accommodate about 70% of this growth with Burnham and Highbridge accommodating 15%. This is broadly in line with the urban focus identified by the evidence that underpinned the now revoked SWRSS and the most sustainable option tested as part of the Plan's Sustainability Appraisal.

3.27 Table 3.2 below identifies the Spatial Strategy's distribution of housing and employment growth and confirms the employment led focus of the strategy with a close match between jobs and homes. Whilst the number of homes are higher than proposed jobs this takes into account the need to provide housing for those people who are not economically active i.e. the retired, unemployed.

Table 3.2 Additional Homes and Jobs in District 2006-2027

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement Category</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No. of Homes</th>
<th>No. of Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgwater</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7400-7,455</td>
<td>6400-6,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnham-on-Sea / Highbridge</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4500-1,575</td>
<td>4400-1,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Rural Settlements</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4200-1,260(1)</td>
<td>900-945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sustainable Settlements</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>300-315</td>
<td>275-290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remainder of the District</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>485-195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10,100-10,605</td>
<td>9,620-9,620</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Please note: This figure does not include the potential contribution from local housing priority sites as defined in Policy P4.
However, in planning for housing land supply, new homes completed since 2006 (the start of the Plan period) and land already committed for housing (with planning consent or under construction) needs to be taken into account. The resultant residual requirement is outlined in Table 3.3 by settlement category and identifies a land supply requirement for approximately a further 6,600-10,000 dwellings is required across the remainder of the Plan period.

Table 3.3 Residual Housing Requirement 2010-26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement Category</th>
<th>Housing Requirement 2006-26</th>
<th>Completions 2006-10</th>
<th>Commitments as of 1st April 2010</th>
<th>Residual Requirement 2010-26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgwater</td>
<td>71,007,455</td>
<td>1,248</td>
<td>1,381</td>
<td>44,714,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnham-on-Sea/Highbridge</td>
<td>45,001,575</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>8,458,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Rural Settlements</td>
<td>42,001,260[1]</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>6,046,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sustainable Settlements</td>
<td>30,0315</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>14,4159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remainder of the District</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>247**</td>
<td>219**</td>
<td>-466**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedgemoor Total</td>
<td>40,100,10,605</td>
<td>2,279</td>
<td>2,253</td>
<td>5,568,6,073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Please note: This figure does not include the potential contribution from local housing priority sites as defined in Policy P4.

**Please Note: although no strategic target is given for the Remainder of the District outside of the identified settlements in this Core Strategy, sites that have been completed or committed under the policies of the Local Plan are taken into account in terms of overall residual requirements.

Deliverable Supply of Housing Land

For Bridgwater the majority of the required supply of land for approximately an additional 4,500-4,800 dwellings will be accommodated on the North East Bridgwater strategic urban extension (granted consent in July 2010 for 2,000 dwellings) and brownfield opportunities within the existing urban area identified in the Council’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) that account for about 1,700 dwellings. This leaves an additional requirement to identify greenfield urban extension(s) that can accommodate about 800-1,200 dwellings in the later part of the plan period. For Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge the SHLAA identifies brownfield opportunities to accommodate about 400 dwellings leaving an additional requirement to identify a greenfield urban extension(s) to accommodate about 350-400 dwellings.

Outside of the towns, the SHLAA suggests more limited opportunities for brownfield sites. Instead small infill sites below a 5-dwelling threshold (not included in the SHLAA) are likely to be a key contributor to land supply in both Key Rural Settlements and Other Sustainable Settlements. In addition the Core Strategy makes provision for the identification and release of small greenfield extensions to Key Rural Settlements where this will contribute to key local priorities. For the remainder of the District, housing provision will be strictly controlled and limited to that where a countryside location is essential. For this reason no land supply for housing is identified.
Picture 3.1 Sedgemoor Spatial Strategy
Habitats Regulations Recommendation 1

The Appropriate Assessment identifies that the Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor, in proposing growth, will have a direct impact on the number of people using the internationally designated nature conservation areas for recreation and has the potential to result in increased recreational disturbance to birds and habitats from population growth and increased recreation within the region, it has been concluded that there is potential Likely Significant Effect arising from this policy.

To address this concern, Policy D20: Green Infrastructure makes specific reference to giving priority to projects that meet Natural England’s “Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard” (ANGST) which will contribute to reducing pressure on recreational disturbance on sensitive nature conservation sites.

Notwithstanding the provisions of Policies D12: Tourism, D14: Natural Environment and D20: Green Infrastructure, the cumulative (plan-level) assessment also recommended that Policy S1: Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor, should be strengthened by inclusion of a specific caveat regarding protection of internationally designated sites.

Policy S 1

Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor

To create the most sustainable form of growth for Sedgemoor, Bridgwater will be the focus for the District’s housing, and employment and retail growth. As the principal town in the District it will accommodate the majority of new development within its urban area through the provision of a strategic urban extension, brownfield sites and at other well related Greenfield locations.

For the remainder of the District, development will be concentrated at those places which, after Bridgwater, offer the greatest opportunity for appropriate sustainable development. These places will be Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge, Key Rural Settlements and Other Sustainable Settlements as identified in the settlement hierarchy below and expanded upon in Table 3.4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Town</td>
<td>Bridgwater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Burnham-on-Sea &amp; Highbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Rural Settlement</td>
<td>Ashcott, Axbridge, Berrow***, Brent Knoll, Cannington, Cheddar, East Huntspill, Lympsham, Mark, Nether Stowey, North Petherton, Pawlett, Puriton, Wedmore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3 The Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Sustainable Settlements</th>
<th>Catcott, Chilton Polden, Combwich, Cossington, Edington, Middlezoy, Othery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shipham, Spaxton, Weare (including Weare and Lower Weare), West Huntspill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside</td>
<td>Remainder of the District not included above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(NB***Although identified as KRS these settlements form part of the larger urban areas to which they join and policies P1: Bridgwater Urban Area and P3: Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge will also therefore be relevant)

Priority will be given to development opportunities in the identified settlements that contribute towards regeneration, viability and vitality, and which are within or close to existing or proposed public transport corridors. These will normally be on previously developed land and buildings which offer the opportunity for redevelopment or re-use, or be local priority housing sites as defined in Policy P4.

Outside of the identified settlements consideration will be given to the re-use and recycling of previously developed land and buildings for appropriate scale employment opportunities or where a countryside location is essential.

All development will take into account flood risk and vulnerability and be located at lower risk wherever possible. Where it is sequentially demonstrated that this is not possible, the benefits of development will need to outweigh the flood risk and be safe for its lifetime taking into account long-term flood defence strategies.

Development must not adversely affect designated sites of international importance for nature conservation.

Development proposals will be expected to support the delivery of the required infrastructure in accordance with the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Strategy. This will include flood defence, transport, community and cultural facilities, health care, education, and green infrastructure.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement(s)</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgwater</td>
<td>Principal Town</td>
<td>Focus for regeneration, economic diversification in order to increase self-containment. To be the principal focus for the District’s housing and employment growth, providing about 7,455 new homes and 90,000 square metres of employment space. The town centre to be the focus for new retail development, including 16,000 square metres of new retail floor space; to play a complementary role with Taunton providing jobs in sectors not as well represented in Taunton’s economy. Establishing a long-term strategic flood defence solution for the town; strategic and local transport improvements; including enhancing movement and accessibility for all on the A38 corridor between Bridgwater and Taunton.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.4 Policy S1: Unpacking the Spatial Strategy: What it means for places**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What it means</th>
<th>Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable housing growth comprising of 5,100 new homes within or adjacent to the urban area, maximising brownfield opportunities; A strategic mixed use urban extension at North East Bridgwater to provide 2,000 new homes and 90,000 square metres of employment space; Diversification of Bridgwater’s economy, promoting it as a location for high value added and service based businesses; Maximising development opportunity that will contribute to the delivery of the transformational town regeneration strategy; Strong, innovative architecture, urban design and revitalised neighbourhoods encouraging a greater sense of local community, wellbeing and civic pride; Focus for new healthcare facilities including new Bridgwater Hospital and investment in education i.e. Refurbishment and expansion of Bridgwater College as part of Somerset University proposals and to provide vocational based training; Establishing a long-term strategic flood defence solution for the town; Strategic and local transport improvements; including enhancing movement and accessibility for all on the A38 corridor between Bridgwater and Taunton.</td>
<td>Focus for regeneration, economic diversification in order to increase self-containment. To be the principal focus for the District’s housing and employment growth, providing about 7,455 new homes and 90,000 square metres of employment space. The town centre to be the focus for new retail development, including 16,000 square metres of new retail floor space; to play a complementary role with Taunton providing jobs in sectors not as well represented in Taunton’s economy. Establishing a long-term strategic flood defence solution for the town; strategic and local transport improvements; including enhancing movement and accessibility for all on the A38 corridor between Bridgwater and Taunton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Settlement(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Town     | Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge | • Focus on growth that increases self-containment and enhances its role as a service centre;  
• Will be the focus for locally significant housing and employment growth providing about 1,500 new homes within, or adjacent to, the existing urban area maximising brownfield opportunities and on a well related mixed use urban extension on Land at Brue Farm, Highbridge that contributes to strategic flood defence, education and town centre regeneration;  
• Burnham-on-Sea and the wider coastal strip will be the focus for investment that supports and strengthens its role as significant tourist destination;  
• Burnham-on-Sea town centre will be the focus for locally significant retail and other complementary uses including leisure;  
• Highbridge will be the focus for residential and employment led regeneration;  
• Highbridge district centre will focus on the needs of its local community. | • Delivering sustainable transport solutions that promote walking, cycling and public transport to, from and within the town.  
• Sustainable housing growth comprising of 1,500 new homes within, or adjacent to, the existing urban area maximising brownfield opportunities and on a well related mixed use urban extension on Land at Brue Farm, Highbridge that contributes to strategic flood defence, education and town centre regeneration;  
• Extension and enhancement of existing employment areas to encourage inward investment and provide local employment opportunities;  
• Supporting and encouraging tourism proposals that consolidate and strengthen Burnham-on-Sea’s role as a destination, through improving the quality and quantity of its offer;  
• Encourage the expansion and retention of retail uses, other complementary town centre activities and investment in public realm that support Burnham-on-Sea’s wider tourism focus;  
• Retain key services and facilities within the district centre of Highbridge to meet the needs of the local community;  
• Consolidate and enhance the existing services, facilities and infrastructure;  
• Local transport improvements including public transport, walking and cycling. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Settlement(s)</th>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>What it means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Key Rural Settlements (KRS) | Ashcott Axbridge Berrow* Brent Knoll Cannington Cheddar East Huntspill Lympsham, Mark Nether Stowey North Petherton Pawlett Puriton Wedmore Wembdon* Westonzyland Woolavington | • Focus for local growth that promotes greater self-containment and stronger local communities;  
• Will be the focus for local housing providing collectively about 42001.260 new homes (4012% of District total) (excluding any contribution from local housing priority sites as defined in Policy P4). and at least 909945 new jobs between 2006 and 2026.  
• Employment growth will be encouraged that is of an appropriate scale and that will create or retain local jobs to reduce the need to travel, diversify the rural economy, and promote sustainable communities;  
• These places will be the focus for the provision of key local services and facilities, recognising the role of these settlements serving the wider areas. | • Appropriate infill opportunities within existing settlement boundaries;  
• Specifically releasing mixed tenure and mixed use schemes outside of settlement boundaries that will include affordable housing, market housing, local employment opportunities and sustainability benefits. To be determined as part of a subsequent ‘small sites’ development plan document;  
• Retention and expansion of existing employment sites and premises to provide local employment opportunities;  
• Consolidate and enhance the existing services, facilities and infrastructure and facilitate the provision of new where appropriate. |
| Other Sustainable Settlements (OSS) | Catcott Chilton Polden Combwich Cossington Edington, Middlezoy Othery Shipham Spaxton Weare West Huntspill | • Focus for limited growth that primarily meets identified needs;  
• Will be the focus for local housing providing collectively about 30831.15 new homes (3% of District total) between 2006 and 2027.  
• Employment opportunities will be supported that are of an appropriate scale and that will create or retain local jobs and help to diversify the rural economy;  
• In these places the focus will be to retain a basic minimum level of services (i.e. at least three of the following services: shop/post | • Appropriate infill opportunities within existing settlement boundaries;  
• Sites exceptionally released to meet identified local needs for rural housing;  
• Retention and expansion of existing employment sites and premises to provide local employment opportunities;  
• Consolidate and enhance the existing services, facilities and infrastructure and facilitate the provision of new where appropriate. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Settlement(s)</th>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>What it means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remainder of the</td>
<td>Those places not named above</td>
<td>• Countryside where development will be strictly controlled to that</td>
<td>• Conversion and re-use of appropriate existing rural buildings for small-scale employment space;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td></td>
<td>which benefits the local economy, maintains or enhances the</td>
<td>• Supporting development that meets the needs of the agricultural industry and other sectors that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>environment and does not increase the need to travel.</td>
<td>require a countryside location;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage and support environmental enhancement and protection of existing assets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Although identified as Key Rural Settlements, these settlements form part of the larger urban areas to which they join and policies P1: Bridgwater Urban Area and P3: Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge will also therefore be relevant.*
Deliver

3.31 The Spatial Strategy for the District will be delivered through implementation of the Strategic, District Wide and Place Making specific policies of the Plan. In addition, the Council will work in conjunction with landowners, developers, local communities, key partners and main service providers in seeking to implement this strategy and encouraging their plans and strategies to be consistent with the principles of the Spatial Strategy.

3.32 Further planning policy documents will be prepared to assist the delivery of this strategy. For Bridgwater a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) a town centre Area Action Plan will be prepared that will provide detailed guidance in implementing the Bridgwater Vision and ensuring the proposed growth contributes to the transformational and regenerational aspirations for the town. Similarly, a Supplementary Planning Document for Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge will establish key principles ensuring the proposed growth contributes to key local priorities. Where greenfield sites are required to fulfil land supply requirements, these will be identified in site allocations Development Plan Documents (DPD) and Broad locations and specific allocations for housing and employment will be supported, where appropriate, by specific Supplementary Planning Documents, Masterplans or Development Briefs. This will assist in determining where development is appropriate and deliverable.

3.33 The Council will implement as an interim measure a Planning Obligations Tariff (POT) to secure contributions towards core infrastructure including the delivery of a strategic flood defence, transport infrastructure and public realm improvements. In addition individual developments will be required to make appropriate on-site and off-site contributions for other infrastructure requirements through negotiated Section 106 (S106) agreements. This will be superseded after 2014 by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) approach or its subsequent successor.

3.34 In addition there are other policy tools identified in the delivery section of other policies within this Plan that cumulatively will assist in the delivery of this Spatial Strategy.

Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>Distribution of all new housing and employment development over the Plan period</td>
<td>Deliver housing and employment growth in Sedgemoor according to the following spatial distribution: Bridgwater: 70% Market Towns: 15% Key Rural Settlements: 12% Other Sustainable Settlements: 3% Countryside: 0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.35 Monitoring will establish progress against growth proportions and provide evidence to show whether the Spatial Strategy is being delivered. The Core Strategy includes a number of measures to provide contingencies where this occurs. For both housing and employment sites, release mechanisms form part of the policies (see Policy D5: Housing and D11: Economic Prosperity
respectively) to ensure that land supply is sufficient to support the Spatial Strategy throughout the Plan period. Where employment delivery falls significantly behind housing delivery this may require a partial review of the Core Strategy to ensure self-containment objectives are not being prejudiced.

3.36 In addition to monitoring whether the spatial distribution of new development is in line with the settlement hierarchy as outlined above, it will also be important to regularly review Key Rural Settlements and Other Sustainable Settlements to ensure that their roles and functions remain consistent with the hierarchy. If during the annual monitoring process a settlement were found to have experienced significant changes in its provision of services, facilities or accessibility, its standing in the settlement hierarchy would be amended accordingly.

Infrastructure Delivery Strategy

Context

3.37 Sedgemoor is a district on the threshold of significant change and to accommodate this it is essential that the Core Strategy sets out a framework for the delivery of its Vision, Spatial Strategy and Policies. The Council recognises that the successful delivery of the Core Strategy will be reliant upon ensuring that development is co-ordinated with the investment in the necessary infrastructure to bring forward sustainable growth.

3.38 To inform and support the Core Strategy and successfully deliver sustainable growth in Sedgemoor over the next 20 years the Council have prepared the Sedgemoor Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Study. This sets out a district wide assessment of infrastructure needs and recommendations for coordinating and managing infrastructure delivery, taking into account the role and plans of infrastructure and service providers and other key external agencies, business and communities.

Approach

3.39 The Infrastructure and Delivery Study has drawn upon numerous work streams undertaken by the Council, Somerset County Council as well as partner infrastructure and service providers and sought to consolidate, analyse and augment details of infrastructure requirements through the application of high level standards. A review of the existing infrastructure planning evidence base has revealed areas where significant progress has been made including the adoption of the Bridgwater Strategic Flood Defence Tariff, but also areas where significant work is required to develop concepts into deliverable infrastructure projects.

3.40 Three tiers of infrastructure are identified in the Study, these are:

- Core Infrastructure - including flood risk management, transport, public realm, water supply, waste water, energy
- Essential Services - including education, emergency services and healthcare
- Place-making - including libraries, community centres, cultural facilities and sports facilities

3.41 The report recommends the expansion and development of the tariff approach to planning obligations so that it covers a wider geographic extent and range of infrastructure sectors. However, from 2014 such an approach will only be acceptable through the Community Infrastructure Levy (or successor) mechanism. Whilst the Council will adopt a Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule by that time, in the interim it will develop a planning obligations tariff for the towns as a means of securing Core Infrastructure requirements in the following areas:
Flood Risk Management - The publication of the Bridgwater Strategic Flood Defence Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) means that there is now a mechanism in place to collect developer contributions towards the cost of the Parrett Surge Barrier over a long time frame (physical construction of the barrier is not required until 2030 – 2050 based upon current forecasts of sea level rises and climate change impacts). It is recommended that a similar approach is extended to Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge, as the capital cost of defences at Highbridge and Brean are expected to outstrip what could reasonably be paid for by single developments located closest to the points of breach. Flood Risk management schemes will also include, where appropriate, strategic surface water management solutions.

Transport and Public Realm - Studies show that the transport network needs considerable improvement to accommodate growth at Taunton and Bridgwater and to avoid unacceptable increases of traffic on the M5. Delivery of the A38 Public Transport Corridor, a project of strategic importance, will require coordinated delivery by the Council, Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council. The financing of the scheme currently remains unclear, so it is recommended that a tariff approach is adopted so that financial contributions towards a multimodal transport strategy can be collected. Further parallel transport planning is required for Bridgwater town centre as the current DaSTS (Delivering a Sustainable Transport System) project does not consider movement around the town in detail. This will establish a sustainable transport strategy, prioritising sustainable modes of travel. There are clear synergies between the development of a sustainable transport strategy including encouraging walking and cycling and public realm interventions to encourage healthier lifestyles. The Bridgwater Vision sets out seven catalyst projects, all of which contain significant transport and movement proposals. There are opportunities to deliver these in conjunction with highways projects or specific developments sites. A tariff payment towards transport would also contribute towards linked public realm works.

Public Realm - There are clear synergies between the development of a sustainable transport strategy including encouraging walking and cycling and public realm interventions to encourage more healthier lifestyles. The Bridgwater Vision sets out seven catalyst projects, all of which contain significant transport and movement proposals. There are opportunities to deliver these in conjunction with highways projects or specific developments sites. A tariff payment towards transport would also contribute towards linked public realm works.

3.42 Policy S2 provides the basis on which a Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared to set out in more detail the approach towards the delivery of strategic infrastructure. The policy identifies that core infrastructure will be sought primarily through an interim tariff that will need to demonstrate obligations are legally compliant with the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2011 in so far as they are:

(i) necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms;

(ii) directly related to the proposed development; and

(iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development

3.43 Water supply and waste water infrastructure projects, although identified as core infrastructure, have established mechanisms in place for their financing and delivery and therefore are not required to be incorporated into the interim planning obligations tariff.

3.44 Similarly energy has been included in the study on the basis of the initial conclusions of the Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) Planning and Climate Change Study for Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane. This suggests consideration should be given for a strategic levy on development tied to the price of CO2, that would allow delivery of off-site carbon measures. However the early introduction
of this as part of the interim planning obligations tariff is considered not to have the same priority as flood risk management, transport and public realm. Instead Policy D3: Sustainable Construction and Promoting Renewable Energy in New Developments, deals with on-site provision of renewable energy and (in exceptional circumstances) off-site provision or contributions to a low carbon infrastructure levy. However it is anticipated that renewable and low carbon energy will be a component of any future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule.

3.45 Outside of the towns and for other infrastructure sectors the Council in the interim will continue to negotiate on-site and off-site contributions through Section 106 Agreements on a site by site basis until replaced by a Community Infrastructure Levy or its successor.

3.46 In all cases it will be essential that Infrastructure delivery does not have a negative effect on the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and/or nature conservation objectives.

3.47 In taking into account viability the Council will require a full development appraisal, including financial viability assessment to be submitted. Negotiations will be based on an 'open book' approach and any demonstration should be based on an agreed financial appraisal model. Where the Council are required to seek independent financial advice to assess the viability issues, this will be funded by the developer or promoter of the scheme.

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Policy S 2

Infrastructure Delivery

It is the intention of the Council to adopt a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Schedule by 2014. In the interim the following approach towards infrastructure delivery is proposed.

All new development that generates a demand for infrastructure will only be permitted if the reasonable and necessary on and off-site infrastructure required to support and mitigate the impact of the development is either already in place or there is a reliable mechanism in place to ensure that it will be delivered at the time and in the location it is required.

To ensure the effective and timely delivery of key infrastructure all development proposals in Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge will be required to, where appropriate, provide a financial contribution towards core infrastructure in line with a standard charge tariff, and in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and Circular 2005/05 (or subsequent guidance or legislation) unless this can be delivered through an alternative reliable mechanism or otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority. For these purposes core infrastructure is identified as:

- Flood risk management;
- Transport and Public Realm;
- Public Realm;

In addition the Council will continue to seek provision of onsite and offsite infrastructure through the use of planning obligations (section 106 agreements) on a site by site basis. This will include, where appropriate, the following (but is not exhaustive):

- Affordable Housing;
- Education;
Sport Facilities and Open Space;
Green Infrastructure;
Public realm (not funded through tariff);
Healthcare;
Community and Cultural Facilities;
Low Carbon Infrastructure;
Local Labour Agreements;
Emergency Services.

Regard will be had to the type of development proposed when agreeing a list of recipient infrastructure projects with the applicant. In determining the nature and scale of any planning obligation, viability issues will be taken into account where this is clearly demonstrated through open book negotiation. Where the Council seeks independent financial advice to assess viability issues on a proposal the developer will be expected to fund this.

The Council will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on the tariff and planning obligation approach outlined above.

Delivery

3.48 This policy will be supported by a Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions which will set out the Council's detailed approach for seeking development contributions to fund new infrastructure, services and facilities. This will cover the interim planning obligations tariff approach and the seeking of on-site and off-site provision on a site by site basis and will include details on the requirements for demonstrating the viability issues of a scheme.

3.49 In the longer term the Council will continue to work with key partners and infrastructure providers in developing a Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule (or successor) to replace the tariff in 2014 in accordance with the transitional arrangements of the CIL Regulations.

3.50 The Council will establish an Infrastructure Planning Group, whose suggested roles and activities would include updates to and approval of the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy, participation in multi-sectoral workshops, and information sharing on project phasing. It is envisaged that such a group would be a sub-group of the Local Strategic Partnership’s of Somerset and/or Sedgemoor.

3.51 Finance available towards infrastructure through planning obligations is expected to be oversubscribed and therefore the Council will continue to actively pursue alternative funding sources wherever possible. Options for consideration include a 'one-off' or sustained levy to deliver specified priority projects, such as flood risk management infrastructure. Lottery funding provides a potential additional and supporting means for taking forward public realm projects identified in the Bridgwater Vision and Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Regeneration Strategy.

3.52 The proposals for a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point C presents a significant and unique opportunity to secure infrastructure investment with real legacy benefits. This issue is dealt with in Policy MIP3: Hinkley Point C - Mitigation and Compensation.
Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>Financial contributions towards core infrastructure in Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge prior to adoption of a Community Infrastructure Delivery CIL</td>
<td>All development in these towns must financially contribute towards core infrastructure according to a standard charge tariff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sustainable Development Principles

Context

3.53 Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. A widely used definition was drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” PPS1 “Delivering Sustainable Development” (2005) set out government policy and advice and has been supplemented with “Planning and Climate Change” (2007).

3.54 Planning Authorities are advised to “ensure that sustainable development is treated in an integrated way in their development plans. In particular, they should carefully consider the interrelationship between social inclusion, protecting and enhancing the environment, the prudent use of natural resources and economic development”. (PPS1, paragraph 24)

3.55 The Core Strategy will play a key role in delivering sustainable development and in particular addressing the causes and impacts of climate change. The UK’s Sustainable Development Strategy – Securing the Future (2005) identifies four key priorities in promoting sustainable development:

- Sustainable production and consumption
- Climate change and energy
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
- Sustainable communities

3.56 The development plan is not only required to help deliver sustainable development, it is specifically subject to “Sustainability Appraisal” (which is reported separately in the SA Report).

Approach

3.57 The necessary thorough consideration of sustainable development issues results in the Core Strategy having sustainability considerations deeply embedded in the Spatial Vision, Plan Objective and Strategic Objectives.

3.58 Delivering sustainable development is central to the spatial strategy which seeks to deliver a pattern of growth that promotes self-containment, manages the risks of climate change, maximises the reuse of land and aids the creation of more sustainable communities. It is essential that individual development proposals contribute to the aim of delivering more sustainable development. The Core Strategy therefore includes an overarching policy that identifies a framework for assessing this.

3.59 This alongside the spatial strategy should be the starting point when preparing development proposals, establishing that a the proposal is in the right location and that it will meet the Plan objective of ensuring development in Sedgemoor supports the principles of sustainable development.
To maximise opportunities for local food production and farming, development should avoid best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 3a), unless it can be demonstrated that this is unavoidable taking into account other sustainability considerations, and that the opportunity to use lower quality agricultural land has been fully considered.

**Policy S 3**

**Sustainable Development Principles**

All development proposals will be expected to have a sustainable impact, where they contribute to meeting all of the relevant following objectives:

- **Contribute to** Mitigating the causes of climate change and adapting to those impacts that are unavoidable;
- Prioritise where appropriate the reuse of previously developed land and buildings within existing settlements and then at the most sustainable locations on the edge of the identified settlements in accordance with the Spatial Strategy (Policy S1:Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor);
- Promote greater self containment of settlements by contributing to communities that are supported by adequate services, cultural, sporting and leisure activities, a diverse range of employment opportunities, physical and social infrastructure and transport options whilst taking into account flood risk;
- Be located to minimise the need to travel and to encourage any journeys that remain necessary to be possible by alternative modes of travel including maximising opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
- Provide opportunities where relevant for housing to meet the needs of local people;
- **Contribute towards** The creation of locally distinctive, well designed, healthy, safe, and accessible neighbourhoods that empower and support inclusive and vibrant communities
- **Contribute towards** A vibrant, diverse and responsive local economy that supports investment and regeneration of our towns and rural settlements
- **Contribute to** Raising the aspirations, skills and achievements of young people and adults through accessibility education, training, local employment and housing
- Minimise the impact on natural resources, avoid pollution and incorporate the principles of sustainable construction to contribute to energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste reduction/recycling, the use of sustainably sourced materials, sustainable drainage, reduced water use, water quality and soil protection;
- Maximise opportunities for local food production and farming by avoiding best and most versatile agricultural land where possible, taking into account other sustainability considerations; and
- Protect and enhance the quality of the natural, built and historic environment improving their understanding, appreciation and sustainable use.

**Delivery**

The policy provides an overarching framework for assessing development proposals in terms of their contribution towards sustainable development. It will be delivered through the development management process alongside the district wide and place-making policies of the Core Strategy.
3 The Strategy

Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>Employment floorspace on previously developed land (m²) (core)</td>
<td>Maximising the use of brownfield land for employment related development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>New and converted dwellings on previously developed land (core)</td>
<td>A minimum of 50% of housing development should be located on brownfield land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on water quality grounds (core)</td>
<td>No permissions should be granted in cases where an Environment Agency objection cannot be overcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flood risk grounds (core)</td>
<td>No permissions should be granted in cases where an Environment Agency objection cannot be overcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land through development (local)</td>
<td>No major development proposals should lead to the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land unless there is overriding justification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>Use of sustainable drainage systems (local)</td>
<td>Increase in the use of sustainable drainage systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>Change in areas of biodiversity importance (core)</td>
<td>There should be no net losses in biodiversity habitat areas due to development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M29</td>
<td>Travel to school (local)</td>
<td>Decrease in the number of pupils making the journey to school by car in line with the current Transport Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Climate Change

Context

3.62 Tackling Climate change is a key aim for the Government. The Climate Change Act 2008 (4) sets targets for green house gas emission reductions through action in the UK and abroad of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO2 emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

3.63 PPS1 supplement on Planning and Climate Change requires local authorities to mitigate and adapt to climate change through appropriate location and patterns of development, promoting the reduction of the use of the car, conserving and enhancing biodiversity and ensuring that new development is resilient to the effects of climate change.

4 The Climate Change Act 2008 is available at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/legislation/
3.64 Sedgemoor District Council has signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, a commitment to work in a way that counteracts climate change. National Indicator (188) covers planning to adapt to climate change, all local authorities must complete a climate change adaptation plan. This is a new indicator and Sedgemoor District Council has achieved Level 1 and is currently working towards Level 2 in preparing comprehensive risk based assessments of climate change.

Approach

3.65 The spatial strategy for the District will have the most significant impact on climate change locally through directing new development to the most sustainable locations and therefore helping to reduce the need to travel and provide opportunities for alternatives to the car. Through the Core Strategy the Council proactively considers climate change adaptation and mitigation measures through the place making process and addressing issues, such as:

- promoting renewable energy use, sustainable construction and the re-use and recycling of waste;
- encouraging people to walk, cycle and use public transport rather than drive;
- the sustainable management of water resources, including flood control and coastal defences;
- reducing the effects of heat islands through green infrastructure; and
- facilitating and encouraging behavioural change and energy demand management.

3.66 The Core Strategy also includes an overarching policy on mitigating the causes and adaptation to the effects of climate change against which individual development proposals can be assessed. This provides the key considerations that all development should take into account to ensure that it will be resilient to the effects of climate change. The Core Strategy includes specific detailed policy guidance on issues outlined above. This approach seeks to ensure the delivery of sustainable growth within environmental limits, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resource efficiency.

Policy S 4

Mitigating the Causes and Adapting to the Effects of Climate Change

Development should contribute to both mitigating and adapting to climate change and to meeting targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

Development should mitigate the causes of climate change through contributing to all of the relevant following objectives:

- Ensuring development minimises the use of natural resources by the use of sustainably sourced materials or the reuse and recycling of materials where appropriate, minimises greenhouse gas emissions, incorporates energy efficiency, helps to reduce waste and encourages modes of transport other than the car; and
- Utilising on site or decentralised renewable energy where feasible and viable and be consistent with the need to safeguard residential amenity, the natural, built and historic environment and the landscape, in line with standards set out in Policies D3: Sustainable Construction and Reducing Carbon Emissions in New Developments and D4: Renewable or Low Carbon Energy Generation.

Development should adapt to the effects of climate change through contributing to all of the relevant following objectives:
3 The Strategy

- Minimising the risk of flooding and ensuring appropriate management of land within areas vulnerable to flooding;
- Maximising resilience to climate change through design, layout and construction;
- Provide additional measures through natural shade and cooling in the built environment and the provision of networks of green infrastructure and tree planting to compensate for CO₂ emissions;
- Ensure that the ability of landscapes, habitats and species to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change is not affected and if required, compensatory habitat should be provided;
- Efficiently use water and implement other measures to improve drought-resilience, maintain water flows and quality, including the use of sustainable drainage systems;
- Protect soils in order to ensure that they are resilient to the effects of climate change;
- Provide increased opportunities to walk or cycle in preparation for reduced availability or increased cost of fuel; and
- Support opportunities for local food production and farming to reduce the District’s contribution to food miles.

Delivery

3.67 Delivery will primarily be through ensuring that all new development proposals meet the requirements of the policy. The spatial strategy will ensure that new development is located where it is most resilient to the effects of climate change. Specific policies on design, sustainable construction and flood risk provide further detailed requirements. Additional design guidance will unpack relevant mitigation and adaptation requirements.

3.68 The Council is also developing a climate change strategy that will set out how it will meet its commitments both internally as an organisation, and externally through its wider community leader role.

Monitoring and Review

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>M5</td>
<td>Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on water quality grounds (core)</td>
<td>No permissions should be granted in cases where an Environment Agency objection cannot be overcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding grounds (core)</td>
<td>No permissions should be granted in cases where an Environment Agency objection cannot be overcome</td>
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<td>Use of sustainable drainage systems (local)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>Change in areas of biodiversity importance (core)</td>
<td>There should be no net losses in biodiversity habitat areas due to development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>Renewable energy generation by installed capacity and type (core)</td>
<td>Increase in renewable energy generation capacity installed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Monitoring Indicator</td>
<td>Target</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>Local Air quality management (local)</td>
<td>Meet or exceed relevant Air Quality objectives as set out in Air Quality regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>Per capita reduction in CO₂ emissions in the Local Authority area <em>(NI186)-(local)</em></td>
<td>Significantly reduce the percentage of benefits claimants living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meet or exceed relevant Air Quality objectives as set out in Air Quality regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14</td>
<td>Percentage of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low and high energy efficiency rating <em>(NI187)-(local)</em></td>
<td>Meet or exceed relevant Air Quality objectives as set out in Air Quality regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significantly reduce the percentage of benefits claimants living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Infrastructure

Context

4.1 During the planning timeframe of the Core Strategy, it is expected that a series of infrastructure proposals of national, regional and county importance relating to energy, flood risk management and climate change could be brought forward in Sedgemoor. The Council recognises the need to deliver security in electricity, water supply and safety from flooding. Infrastructure proposals could also present significant opportunities in terms of investment and job creation in the district, supporting the rebranding, realignment and strengthening of the local economy. Nevertheless, the Council is concerned that, unless a coherent, integrated planning and development approach is adopted the projects proposed could result in unacceptable economic, social and environmental impacts and harm to local communities and businesses.

4.2 For the purpose of the Core Strategy, Major Infrastructure Projects (MIP) include those defined as NationallySignificant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) in the Planning Act 2008; as well as infrastructure projects that would require Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as set out in Schedules 1 and 2 of the EIA Regulations 1999. Where associated development is integral to the construction or operation of a MIP, these proposals will also fall under the policies set out below. The definition of MIPs covers a very broad range of project scales and types, so the policies will be applied in a manner that reasonably relates to each development proposal.

4.3 National Policy Statements (NPS) will establish the case for NSIP’s and provide the policy framework for the consideration of proposals by the Major Infrastructure Planning Unit of the Planning Inspectorate (the Infrastructure Planning Commission and its successor body), with the final decision to grant permission being made by Government Ministers. Sedgemoor District Council will continue to play an important role as a statutory consultee in the new process. NSIPs located within or in close proximity to Sedgemoor are expected to include:

- **New Nuclear Power at Hinkley Point C**—The requirement for a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point C is driven fundamentally by national policy, as set out in draft National Planning Statement EN 6. The new power station and long-term waste storage facility would be located in West Somerset, but much of the associated development required to construct and operate the facility would be located in Sedgemoor.
- **Severn Tidal Power**—The Government is leading an investigation of potential technologies and schemes and is expected to make a decision on whether to proceed with a Severn Tidal Power project, and if so which one, by the end of 2010. Two of the five schemes shortlisted by Government, the Severn Barrage (Brean to Lavernock Point) and Bridgwater Bay Lagoon, would directly affect Sedgemoor.
- **New Electric Transmission Circuit between Hinkley Point and Seabank (near Bristol)**—Proposed grid reinforcements comprise a new 400kV circuit between Hinkley Point (West Somerset) and Seabank (near Bristol). National Grid has a statutory obligation to connect new electricity generators to the high voltage transmission network. As Hinkley Point C would be one of the single largest generators in the UK, it would be necessary for National Grid to reinforce and upgrade the network in the region to accommodate the extra power and ensure system security.

4.4 There are a series of further infrastructure proposals that may be brought forward as planning applications to Sedgemoor District Council. While these are not of the same scale as the NSIPs, the interactions and cumulative effects of these proposals could, nevertheless, be of substantial importance. Major Infrastructure proposals include those identified below, although this should not be considered an exhaustive list:
Major Infrastructure Projects

- **Energy generation at Puriton Energy Park**: The Council is supportive of the regeneration of the Former Royal Ordnance Factory owned brownfield site for B1 and B2 energy related uses, with associated power generating capacity, in particular renewable technologies (refer to Policy P1: Bridgewater Urban Area).

- **Huntspill Level Wind Farms**: National Planning Policy Statement 22 ‘Renewable Energy’ requires local planning authorities to promote and encourage the development of renewable energy resources. Renewable energy developments should be capable of being accommodated in locations where the technology is viable and environmental, economic and social impacts can be addressed satisfactorily (see Policy D4: Renewable or Low Carbon Energy Generation).

- **Walpole Anaerobic Digestion Waste Management Project (incorporating energy recovery)**: Conditional planning permission for the use of a former landfill site as an anaerobic digestion facility was granted in October 2008. The proposed scheme provides for the treatment of source segregated organic waste, to recover energy and compost from waste that currently goes to landfill.

- **Steart Coastal Management Project**: The Steart Coastal Management Project comprises the re-alignment of existing flood defences at Steart and the creation of up to 500ha of brownland, which at least 300ha would be inter-tidal/brackish. The project site is located across the boundary between West Somerset and Sedgemoor and comprises two parts; a compensatory habitat scheme proposed by the Bristol port Company (which relates to their proposals for a Deep Sea Container Terminal at Avonmouth) and a second larger scheme that could be brought forward independently by the Environment Agency.

- **Parrett Barrier**: The preferred solution to managing flood risk in Bridgwater is “The Parrett Barrier”, as developed in the Bridgwater Strategic Flood Defence Infrastructure Planning report (June 2009). It is predicted that the barrier would not be required until between 2030 and 2050, however preparatory work may commence during the Core Strategy plan period.

- **Cheddar Reservoir extension**: The Water Resource Plan of Bristol Water (December 2009) identifies an extension of the Cheddar Reservoir as the most sustainable and resilient means for meeting water supply and demand requirements predicted as a result of climate change and population growth.

4.5 The majority of the projects identified above are clustered around the M5 corridor north of Bridgwater and the south-western part of the district. The close proximity of proposals means that it is particularly important that each project is not viewed in isolation and that the cumulative effects of infrastructure projects are assessed. For instance, the impact of a single project on ecology in the area may be considered acceptable, but the combined effects may not. There may also be important interactions and relationships between projects, such as high concentrations of construction activity, freight transportation and construction waste (including generation, management and disposal) in particular areas. For this reason, the timing and phasing of projects in relation to each other could be an important factor.

**Approach**

4.6 In view of the potential for environmental, social and economic impacts the Council will require that comprehensive assessments of the following types of impact, both positive and negative, are undertaken for Major Infrastructure Projects:

- **Direct Impact**: Impacts that will arise as a result of the project and any associated development or supporting infrastructure that is required during its construction, operation and decommissioning.

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4 EC (May 1999) Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions, Hyder Consulting
4 Major Infrastructure Projects

- Indirect Impacts: Impacts which are not a direct result of the project, often produced away from or as a result of a complex pathway. These are sometimes referred to as second or third level impacts, or secondary impacts.
- Cumulative Impacts: Impacts that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the project.
- Impact interactions: The reactions between impacts whether between the impacts of just one project or between the impacts of other projects in the areas.

4.7 Where Major Infrastructure Projects are proposed that serve the national, regional or county interest, but the majority of effects will be felt locally, the District Council will ensure that negative impacts are avoided or minimised and that there are appropriate measures to mitigate and compensate for the harm that would arise. The overarching aim is that the overall balance of outcomes from major infrastructure projects should be positive for the local communities.

4.8 Measures to optimise benefits to the local area and minimise harm will be secured through a range of interventions and mechanisms including:

- The planning of associated development (infrastructure required to enable the construction and operation of major infrastructure) such that it integrates with the wider plans and aspirations for the area, including: the Somerset and Sedgemoor Sustainable Community Strategies; Council Corporate Plans; the overall vision and objectives of the Core Strategy; the Bridgwater Vision; the Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington Future Transport Strategy; Sedgemoor Economic Development Strategy; Sedgemoor Green Infrastructure Strategy; and the Sedgemoor Infrastructure Delivery Strategy.
- The development and implementation of an employment and skills charters to support and improve access to jobs and training (secured through a planning condition/requirement or S106 planning or development consent obligation).
- Planning conditions or requirements.
- Developer contributions, to be secured by legally binding mechanisms to address impacts and harm and meet the needs of local communities in Sedgemoor that will be affected by the project.

4.9 The developer must demonstrate, through a balanced assessment of a project’s positive and negative effects, that detrimental impacts at the construction, operation and decommissioning stage have been fully minimised, mitigated or compensated. It is noted that compensation for an impact experienced by a community need not be exactly the same as that lost, for example, where a visual impact cannot be fully mitigated through landscape design, the residual effect of that impact may be compensated by another means.

4.10 With respect to the development and implementation of employment and skills charters for major infrastructure proposals, the Council views this as one of the principal means for implementing the adopted Economic Development Strategy for Sedgemoor. Many of the MIPs identified for Sedgemoor fall into the sectors and themes of energy, flood risk management and climate change adaptation and mitigation. The Economic Development Strategy highlights, in particular, the opportunities that the energy sector presents for the District and the challenges to be tackled. The objectives of the Strategy in terms of innovation and enterprise, employment, skills and learning, and environment should therefore be fully reflected in proposals advanced for infrastructure projects and the developer’s approach to procurement, training and recruitment.
4.11 Reinforcing this point, the Council is in the process of formulating a joint vision statement to develop a low carbon future, with Somerset County Council, West Somerset District Council and the promoter of Hinkley Point C. This encourages the development of a Centre of Excellence for low carbon energy and resource management through:

- Developing low carbon skills training and creating a green collar workforce;
- Developing a national reputation for Somerset as a centre of excellence for low carbon energy and resource management;
- Developing Sedgemoor as a centre of excellence in flood management and securing appropriate solutions for coastal flood management and the risk of tidal surge along the coast;
- Building upon the existing reputation for excellence in waste management through securing appropriate modern management solutions for waste from the nuclear new build that delivers environmental and economic benefits; and
- Building upon existing programmes to support homes and businesses to be low carbon.

4.12 In line with the Economic Development Strategy and emerging Low Carbon Vision, it will be necessary for a developer to demonstrate how they would contribute towards the achievement of the following objectives through delivery of a Major Infrastructure Project, individually and in combination with other projects:

- Accelerating the move to a high value, knowledge based economy, including the growth of an emerging energy, environment and related technology business corridors
- Supporting a growing, highly skilled workforce which can underpin a more competitive and productive business base
- Providing opportunities and benefits for all communities, helping to narrow inequalities, particularly those suffering from worklessness; and
- Recognising the value of the natural environment and maintaining the District’s positive image as a visitor and investment destination.

4.13 Strategies incorporating indicators and targets to secure the maximum local economic benefits should be discussed and agreed with the Council at the pre-application stage in sufficient time to influence the employment, training, procurement, and recruitment policies of the developer.

4.14 Policy MIP4: Major Infrastructure Proposals, sets out an overarching criteria-based approach to the consideration of applications, whether these are determined by the Council, or where the formal views of the Council are sought by the Major Infrastructure Planning Unit (the IPC and successor body). In addition, a range of Core Strategy policies will apply to Major Infrastructure Proposals, including: Policy D3: Sustainable Construction; Policy D10: Traffic Impacts of Development; Policy D14: The Natural Environment; Policy D15: Bats in the Landscape; and Policy S4: Sustainable Development and Climate Change.

MIP4—Major Infrastructure Proposals

The Council requires a developer to comply with the following criteria and policy objectives when preparing proposals for major infrastructure projects:

Worklessness is a term used to refer to both the unemployed and economically inactive. The unemployed population are people who are without a job, want a job, have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks. The economically inactive population are those without a job who have not actively sought work in the last four weeks, and/or are not available to start work in the next two weeks. This can include those who are out of work because of illness.
4 Major Infrastructure Projects

- The assessment of impacts of a proposal should include analysis of direct, indirect impacts, cumulative impacts and impact interactions. The assessment should cover a specified timeframe including the construction, operation and decommissioning stages. Promoters must demonstrate that they have had regard to reasonably foreseeable development proposals in the local area, including other infrastructure projects and employment and residential development.
- The completion of a Habitats Regulation Assessment will be required where a project is likely to give rise to significant effects upon a Natura 2000 site, such as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA).
- Where major projects are proposed that serve the national, regional or county interest, but there would be significant local impacts, it will be necessary for the promoter to demonstrate that the overall balance of outcomes for the communities affected in Sedgemoor in the short, medium and long term would be positive.
- Developers must demonstrate how the proposals respond to and help to deliver the wider County and District Council visions, objectives, policies and proposals for the areas in which they are located.
- Developers must demonstrate that projects are compliant with national and international standards and best practice for environment, safety and security.
- Developers must demonstrate how local economic benefits can be maximised, through agreement to strategies for procurement, employment, training and recruitment with the Council at an early stage of project development, including agreement to an employment skills charter.

The environmental, social and economic impacts (positive and negative) of proposals and the measures and initiatives to avoid, minimise and compensate for harm will be given significant weight in determining whether proposals should be granted planning permission or achieve development consent.

## Delivery

4.15 The Council are in the process of preparing Topic Papers that set out in greater detail the anticipated effects of infrastructure projects and the approach that should be adopted by project developers. It is the Council’s intention that a Major Infrastructure Topic Paper will be developed into a Supplementary Planning Document.

4.16 The additional cost burden of MIPs on the Council will be assessed and the Council will require developers to enter into Planning Performance Agreements and Service Level Agreements as appropriate.

4.17 Pre-application consultation by developers with local communities in Sedgemoor, statutory consultees and the local authority is required.

## Monitoring

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td><em>impact assessments (local)</em></td>
<td>All major infrastructure proposals should be accompanied by impact assessments as outlined in the policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.18 Where a planning obligation or development consent obligation is secured, the Council will set in place an audit trail to demonstrate that funding has been spent on the mitigation and compensation measures agreed with the MIP developer.

4.19 Where the Council would be required to discharge planning conditions/requirements and monitor developer compliance with S106 planning or development consent obligations, the financial costs of resourcing the discharge of conditions/requirements and monitoring obligation clauses will be required by the Council:

4.20 Any strategies agreed between the developer and the Council to maximise local economic benefit should include SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) targets in relation to procurement, training and recruitment.

**Hinkley Point C**

**Context**

4.21 The current Hinkley Point C proposal is for the construction of two European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) units generating 3,260MW, representing future capacity well in excess of the combined output of the two Hinkley Point B units still operating (1,320MW) and the A station that was shut down in 2000 (500MW). The scale of the power station and associated development, the relatively advanced stage of the proposals, and potential scope and severity of impacts means that the project deserves special attention in the Core Strategy:

4.22 The new station and long-term waste storage facility would be located in West Somerset, but the wider impacts of the project would affect Sedgemoor, such as the impact upon vistas from tourism and leisure destinations at Burnham-on-Sea, the Quantocks and Mendips. Health concerns surrounding the operation of the station and the storage of nuclear waste on site could precipitate negative perceptions of the area; adversely affecting the local economy, particularly in areas such as the tourism and food and drinks sectors. It is also proposed that the majority of associated development required to construct and operate the station would be located in Sedgemoor, increasing pressure on an already strained transport network and social and community infrastructure. There are, as a result, likely to be wide ranging adverse impacts associated with the development and operation of a nuclear plant and waste storage facility on the image of the area, the agricultural sector, property market, the tourism industry and on inward investment and economic growth. For these reasons, it is a key objective of the Council to improve the sustainability of communities and regenerate Bridgwater in accordance with the Vision, and deliver measures that will benefit tourism and rural development, in order to counter negative perceptions of the area:

4.23 It is predicted that around 20,000 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs would be created during the construction of the station, with approximately 5,000 FTE positions at any one time during the peak construction phase. Once the station is commissioned, it is expected that around 700 permanent employees and 200 contractor workers will be required to operate the station and it is anticipated that this will create a demand for a similar level of new housing across the two Districts. The operational requirements of Hinkley require employees to live within 25 minutes of the power station and therefore in line with the spatial strategy a significant proportion of additional housing growth will be located at Bridgwater. The spatial strategy set out in Section 3 makes no allowance in terms of housing numbers for permanent employees at Hinkley (given that it is yet to gain consent) and therefore proportion of this this growth, estimated to be approximately 630 dwellings, will be in addition to 7100 new homes required at Bridgwater. The power station is anticipated to be fully operational in 2018 and therefore any additional housing required to meet this specific growth is unlikely to be required until the second half of the Plan period:
4 Major Infrastructure Projects

4.24 The supply chain requirements for employment land and premises during the construction phase are as yet unspecified and will therefore form part of the Topic Paper being prepared by the Council. The employment land policies of the Core Strategy have anticipated potential supply chain needs and impacts (see Policies P1: Bridgwater Urban Area and D11: Economic Prosperity).

4.25 It is a priority objective of the Council that, should development consent be granted, opportunities for people in Sedgemoor to be employed in the construction and operation of the station are maximised, through the early agreement of a procurement, recruitment and training strategy with the project developer. This should include opportunities for business development in the local area. Even with local employment initiatives in place, the developer has estimated that between 60%-70% (3,000 to 3,500) of the construction workforce would need to migrate to the area from elsewhere in the UK and overseas. This would lead to significant additional pressure on community infrastructure and services within Sedgemoor, such as the availability of sports and leisure facilities and the ability of the emergency services to respond to increased incident rates. The potential for overburdening of services and diversion of limited existing resources to respond to the influx of migrant labour raises concerns around the potential for reduced social cohesion and increased levels of anti-social behaviour. The developer of the project will therefore be expected to accurately identify the potential impacts of the migrant workforce and agree to appropriate impact mitigation and compensation measures. An element of the construction workforce will stay or retire in the area, which could place further pressure on existing services.

4.26 The ‘Associated Development’ that would be required to enable the construction and operation of the new power station as proposed by the Hinkley Point C developer, comprises:

- Highways infrastructure, including a Cannington Bypass;
- Refurbishment of the wharf at Gombwich;
- Freight consolidation and holding facilities;
- Park and Ride facilities with bus services to Hinkley Point; and
- Construction worker accommodation

4.27 These proposals represent significant levels of development in their own right. It is considered essential that any associated development is planned in such a way that adverse impacts are minimised and so that positive contributions to the wider visions and strategies for Sedgemoor are realised to ensure long-term sustainability. The criteria and objectives set out in Policy MIP1: Major Infrastructure Proposals, will therefore apply to associated development in addition to the power station proposal.

4.28 In meeting the temporary construction worker accommodation, much of which is anticipated to be located at Bridgwater on existing brownfield sites that currently contribute to the housing land supply, the implications for delivery of sites for permanent new housing will need to be carefully considered. Policy D5: Housing provides a mechanism for releasing additional housing land where this leads to a shortfall of deliverable sites:

Approach

4.29 The siting and design of the associated development, at this stage of Core Strategy preparation, has not been confirmed and the Council will seek to engage proactively with the developer and contractor to ensure that the proposals are acceptable. In many cases the associated development would have a temporary purpose during the construction stage of the project. The Council considers it essential that the planning and design of these facilities is informed by the potential legacy uses of sites, buildings and infrastructure to facilitate a permanent use beyond the construction period. In
some cases, where it is demonstrated that the temporary development of a greenfield site is necessary, the reinstatement of land to its former use following and standard the construction stage may be the only acceptable option. Reinstatement is a neutral state and does not constitute a beneficial legacy.

4.30 Sedgemoor District Council’s overarching objective is that the associated development proposals provide opportunities to enable workers and their families to integrate into the community, whilst making a positive contribution to the Council’s housing, economic development, transport, community infrastructure and regeneration strategies. The priorities for the accommodation to be provided are:

- To work with the developer to ensure effective local delivery of housing to meet the temporary needs of the workforce and to contribute to the longer-term local housing need.
- To reduce the risk of local people being disadvantaged as a result of the construction of the project through robust mitigation, legacy and compensation measures. For the housing sector, there is a concern that a reliance on the private rented sector for accommodating large numbers of construction workers could result in the eviction of existing tenants on low incomes. This would in turn increase pressure on the availability of affordable housing. The objective would therefore be to ensure that affordable housing delivery is maintained and secured in accordance with policies of the Core Strategy and that further investment in affordable housing is provided to mitigate and compensate for impacts on existing stock, housing services and voluntary advice services.

4.31 The number of permanent jobs created at Hinkley Point C may result in a need for additional housing land to be released in the second half of the plan period (2016—2026). Decisions by the Council on the release of land for housing will be informed by monitoring and undertaken in accordance with Policy D5: Housing. There is also likely to be a requirement for significant land and premises to support the construction of the Hinkley Point C project. Policy D11: Economic Prosperity provides the mechanism for considering sites whilst Policy P1: Bridgwater Urban Area, specifically reserves employment land for this purpose.

4.32 Policy MIP1: Major Infrastructure Proposals, requires developers to demonstrate how local economic benefits can be maximised, through agreement to meeting strategy objectives (including indicators and targets) for procurement, employment, training and recruitment with the Council at an early stage of project development. The education, employment and skill priorities for the Hinkley Point C project are:

- To invest in education initiatives which would raise the aspirations of young people in Sedgemoor and across the County to improve retention and increase participation;
- To provide timely information on the workforce and their families, to support the management of any increase of the pupil population and impact linked to the Hinkley Point C project;
- To establish an employment brokerage that opens up access to employment opportunities to local people of all ages;
- To work in partnership to tackle worklessness by providing pathways that provide opportunities for skilling, which leads to sustained employment;
- To create a future workforce through the provision of apprenticeships and training opportunities in the construction supply chain and through securing the provision of training and skill development facilities and initiatives, including opportunities for further and higher education;
- To ensure that the Hinkley Point C supply chain partners recruit, train and inspire people.

4.33 Policy MIP2: Hinkley Point C: Associated Development and Compensation, sets out the principles that should guide proposals for associated development and training and recruitment strategies related to Hinkley Point C.
4 Major Infrastructure Projects

MiP2 - Hinkley Point C Associated and Ancillary Development and Employment

The developer must comply with the following criteria and achieve the following policy objectives for any proposals for development associated with or ancillary to the Hinkley Point C project:

- Associated development should conform with the spatial strategy for Sedgemoor and other relevant policies of the LDF.
- Proposals should be directed to a range of sites, primarily in Bridgwater, where there is greater access to services and public transport, and the greatest potential for sustainable legacy uses of sites to be established. Town centre regeneration objectives and objectives of Council strategies, such as the Bridgwater Vision, should shape the approach to Hinkley Point C accommodation and associated development.
- The siting and design of associated development should be informed by a consideration of legacy uses, so that investment in infrastructure, buildings and landscaping is not wasted in the long term. The Council will require the developer to agree a delivery plan for legacy uses during the pre-application process that will inform the approach to the design and layout of the associated development sites.
- The developer must demonstrate that highways and transport proposals for Hinkley Point form part of a robust transport and logistics plan that prevents adverse transport impacts arising from the movement of construction workers and freight, and the proposals are shown to contribute towards the delivery of the Future Transport Strategy for Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington and the Bridgwater Vision. The transport and logistics plan will need to demonstrate its resilience through taking account of:

  - The transportation implications of traffic associated with outages at the existing nuclear plant and of any planned decommissioning;
  - Traffic associated with construction workers for non-work related trips (such as leisure, school and shopping related trips);
  - Traffic associated with the supply chain and training facilities;
  - Transport relating to the operational phase;
  - Contingencies, such as incidents, accidents and emergencies which would result in road closures or diversions;

A comprehensive package of mitigation and compensation would be required for impacts on the transport network, including multi-modal transport solutions and public realm investment that encourage travel by public transport, walking and cycling.

- In parallel with the provision of accommodation for construction workers, the developer would be required to contribute to the delivery of housing to meet local needs to offset short, medium and long term detrimental effects on the housing market. Measures that would be required are:

  - Financial contributions and and the direct provision of affordable housing to maintain delivery in Sedgemoor, meet Core Strategy policy requirements and compensate for adverse effects on the private rented sectors, and any other impacts on the housing market and housing services;
  - Following the construction of Hinkley Point C, the relocation and/or adaptation of construction worker housing, to provide an affordable housing legacy that meets the needs of people in Sedgemoor.
● Should the location, scale, siting or design of construction worker housing make it unsuitable for re-use as affordable housing, the equivalent level of provision as a commuted sum would be required.

● The housing would be required to be designed to agreed environmental, safety and sustainability standards (refer to Policy D3: Sustainable Construction and Promoting Renewable energy in New Development).

● Where accommodation proposals have an educational legacy the detailed design of the property must be agreed with the end user and details of the transfer included in the S106 planning or development consent obligation.

● Where community infrastructure is provided for construction workers, such as shops, healthcare, and sports and leisure facilities, the Council would require this to be sited and designed such that it can be made available for community use during the construction phase and ultimately, where appropriate, serve a community legacy use.

● Proposals must be consistent with the evolving Vision for Community and Well-Being and Safety (to be agreed by the Hinkley Point C developer, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council and West Somerset Council), which require measures to promote social cohesion and take account of the requirements of the Councils, Emergency Services, Social Services and the local community. A Police Architectural Liaison Officer should be consulted during the design of associated development proposals.

● Proposals must be supported by procurement, employment, training and recruitment strategies that have been agreed with the Council at an early stage of project development, with an objective to maximise the employment and training opportunities of the project for the local community:

**Delivery**

4.34 The Council are in the process of preparing Topic Papers that set out in greater detail the anticipated effects of the Hinkley Point C project and the approach that should be adopted by the project developer. It is the Council’s intention that the Major Infrastructure Projects Topic Paper will be developed into a Supplementary Planning Document.

4.35 Pre-application consultation by developers with local communities in Sedgemoor, statutory consultees and the local authorities is required. The Council will provide a full and detailed response to formal public consultation by the Hinkley Point C developer.

**Monitoring**

4.36 The Hinkley Point C proposals will be assessed having regard to the extent they mitigate and compensate for negative impacts, and align with the objectives, plans and strategies of the Council. A monitoring framework will be prepared that is structured around key Council objectives and targets and the Local Impact Report that will be submitted to the Major Infrastructure Planning Unit of the Inspectorate (the Infrastructure Planning Commission and its successor body):

4.37 Any monitoring framework for future nuclear development proposals of Hinkley Point C should include SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) targets in relation to the mitigation and compensation for negative impacts.
4 Major Infrastructure Projects

Hinkley Point—Compensation and Mitigation

Context

4.38 The Council’s objective is to ensure that the aspirations from within the community, the local authorities or other key stakeholders who have an interest in the Hinkley Point C project are reflected in legally enforceable measures to mitigate and compensate for the harms that would arise from the project. In accordance with the Planning Act 2008 and associated regulations and guidance, these measures and benefits would be principally delivered through planning requirements and a Development Consent Obligation:

- decommissioning of the A station—the Council will promote accelerated decommissioning;
- works relating to the potential extension of the operational life of the B station, outages and eventual decommissioning;
- waste storage and transportation proposals;
- grid reinforcement and rationalisation; and
- other projects in the area that could result in cumulative effects and impact interactions.

4.39 The proposals for Hinkley Point C are of a greater scale and involve different, untested reactor technologies to the existing (A and B station) reactors on site. There would therefore be different and increasing magnitude of impacts associated with the Hinkley Point C project that will need to be assessed in combination with other projects and works, including:

- operational measures to mitigate for these impacts (such as mitigating for the decommissioning of A station and extensions to the operational life of B station);
- new decommissioning arrangements for waste storage associated with the A and B stations. Facilities for the management and storage of high level radioactive waste would be required for Hinkley Point C, which could remain on site for up to 160 years from the commencement of the power station’s operation. The Draft Nuclear National Policy Statement refers to these proposals as “interim storage” although the parliamentary Committee on Energy and Climate Change stated that “from the perspective of the community affected, it is a misnomer to describe this as interim storage as it will be several lifetimes between the commencement of a power station’s operation and the eventual removal of waste from that site.” There is currently no known technical solution for dealing with nuclear waste and no site has been identified in the UK for deep geological storage, which is likely to be needed in the longer term. Nor has any information been provided to demonstrate how the now nuclear power station would be decommissioned at the end of its life so that landscape impacts are minimised. This puts at risk the confidence of the community in its long term future and has a chilling effect on economic and social vitality.

Approach

4.41 The Council would require a comprehensive scheme of community, environmental and safety measures to mitigate and compensate for the new and increased levels of impact and harm associated with the Hinkley Point C project that takes account of the needs of the communities of the District as well as the needs and impacts of the Hinkley Point C workforce, including:

- Protection of sites of international, national and local importance for landscape, ecology, geology, archaeology and built heritage, together with a range of compensatory measures that offset the residual landscape and environmental harm resulting from the project;
- Identification of appropriate means for reducing, reusing, recycling or disposing of waste materials, including transportation of waste where required;
- Measures to encourage social cohesion and minimise crime and disorder.
Major Infrastructure Projects

- Measures to address negative impacts on Bridgwater as a place to live, work, learn and community including public realm and town centre improvements.
- Contributions towards high quality cultural, leisure, recreation and religious facilities, services and facilities, and where agreed, direct delivery.
- Provision of adequate emergency service resources and resurgence to cover the potential for increased incidents at the Hinkley Point site, on the transport network, and in the towns and villages hosting construction workers.
- Investment in educational facilities, outreach initiatives, including community development and third sector support, which would raise aspirations and improve the employment prospects of local people in Sedgemoor and across Somerset. Provision of and contributions towards housing to compensate for the impact on the affordable and rented housing stock and adverse impacts on the housing market.
- A holistic approach to community health and well-being, including preventative and responsive measures to improve the environment, provide opportunities for a healthy lifestyle and support delivery of high quality health care.
- Provision of facilities for visitors and tourists to effectively manage visitors during the construction and operation of Hinkley C and to compensate for the adverse effects on tourism.
- To engage the community and key stakeholders in the design, development and delivery of infrastructure, facilities, services and/or partnerships.

**MIP3—Hinkley Point C: Compensation and Mitigation**

A development consent obligation and a comprehensive set of planning requirements would be required to compensate and mitigate for the impacts and harm associated with the nationally significant new nuclear project including proposals for nuclear waste storage. It will be necessary for the developer to agree with the Council, in advance of the submission of a Development Consent Order, the necessary legally enforceable measures to avoid, minimise and compensate for harm during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. It is possible that agreed on-going monitoring of impacts may identify unforeseen consequences resulting from the construction and operation of Hinkley Point C. In such circumstances the Council may seek to renegotiate the mitigation and compensation package in order to off-set these.

The compensation and mitigation should be commensurate with the harm of the project, including the potential for adverse impacts on property values and on the housing market (for both public and private assets), impacts on the image and environmental quality of the area, social impacts and adverse impact on community well-being, negative impacts on inward investment and tourism, and impacts on public health. The provision of facilities such as community infrastructure necessary to support the construction and operation of the project, which would not otherwise be provided, would also be required.

The developer should engage effectively with local communities and the Council, at the pre-application stage, to identify appropriate compensation and mitigation for the adverse impacts and harm of the project. The objective will be to identify measures, projects and services to enhance the long term well-being and sustainability of the communities affected, which include Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea, Cannington and Combwich.
4 Major Infrastructure Projects

Delivery

4.42 The Council are in the process of preparing Topic Papers that set out in greater detail the anticipated effects of the Hinkley Point C project and the approach that should be adopted by the project developer. It is the Council’s intention that a Major Infrastructure Topic Paper will be developed into a Supplementary Planning Document.

4.43 Pre-application consultation by developers with local communities in Sedgemoor, statutory consultees and the local authorities is required. The Council will provide a full and detailed response to formal public consultation by the Hinkley Point C developer.

Monitoring

4.44 The Hinkley Point C proposals will be assessed having regard to the extent they mitigate and compensate for negative impacts, and align with the objectives, plans and strategies of the Council. A monitoring framework will be prepared that is structured around key Council objectives and targets and the Local Impact Report that will be submitted to the Major Infrastructure Planning Unit of the Inspectorate (the Infrastructure Planning Commission and its successor body).

4.45 Any monitoring framework for future nuclear development proposals of Hinkley Point C should include SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) targets in relation to the mitigation and compensation for negative impacts.

- Major Infrastructure Projects

Context

4.46 For the purposes of the Core Strategy, Major Infrastructure Projects (MIP’s) are those infrastructure projects that would require Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as set out in Schedules 1 and 2 of the EIA Regulations 1999 (except predominantly residential schemes), and include those defined as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP’s) in the Planning Act 2008. Where associated or ancillary development is related to the construction or operation of a MIP, these proposals will also fall under the same definition.

4.47 Legislation in the Planning Act 2008 provides that NSIP are of such potential importance to the UK that a different consenting process to the “normal” grant of planning permission by the local planning authority is established. The primary planning policy relating to the consent of NSIP’s is to be found in the generic and specific National Policy Statements (NPS).

4.48 Potential MIPs (with some likely to be NSIP’s) which are either located within Sedgemoor or are likely to affect Sedgemoor within the Core Strategy plan period, include:

- New Nuclear Power Station at Hinkley Point C.
- New 400kV Electricity Transmission Circuit between Hinkley Point and Seabank (near Bristol).
- Steart Coastal Management Project.
- Cheddar Reservoir extension.
- Severn Tidal Power – Although there are no currently active plans, this project is subject to review and new proposals for Severn Tidal Power may emerge during the timeframe of the Core Strategy.
4.49 Relevant NPSs will set out the national case in principle for NSIPs and provide a national policy framework for the consideration of proposals by the Major Infrastructure Planning Unit of the Planning Inspectorate (the successor body to the Infrastructure Planning Commission), with the final decision to grant permission being made by Government Ministers.

4.50 NPSs set out in the context of the particular type of NSIP explain how the proposals will be assessed. For example, the Revised Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), published in June 2011, explains how applications for development consent for large scale energy projects will be examined and determined. In accordance with legislation, the IPC, its successor or the Secretary of State must determine applications in accordance with any relevant NPS, except in specified circumstances. The Assessment Principles note that the IPC should take into account national, regional and local benefits, and adverse impacts including local impacts, and that it should have regard to any local impact report submitted by a relevant local authority. In reaching a decision it is stated that; “if the IPC is satisfied that the adverse impacts identified (including any cumulative impacts) outweigh the benefits of the proposed development (taking into account measures to avoid, reduce or compensate for those adverse impacts), consent should be refused”.

4.51 Although NPSs are not part of the statutory development plan, local planning authorities will clearly need to have regard to these when preparing their plans at a local level.

4.52 Sedgemoor District Council will continue to play an important role as a statutory consultee in relation to NSIP applications, including producing a Local Impact Report when affected by the NSIP application.

4.53 In this Chapter of the Core Strategy, where "impacts" are referred to, these can be positive and negative impacts and where "mitigation" is referred to this can, where appropriate, include "compensation" where this is consistent extant government policy advice (currently Circular 05/05 that contains the relevant policy approach to planning obligations relating to NSIPs). The completion of a Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required where a project is likely to give rise to significant effects upon a Natura 2000 site; this may give rise to mitigation or compensation requirements under the provisions of the Habitats Directive.

Approach

4.54 This chapter of the Core Strategy deals both with those MIPs where Sedgemoor District Council is the local planning authority, and NSIPs, where the Council is a statutory consultee. Because NSIPs are subject to a separate planning process within the national planning regime, the Core Strategy does not set any policies, tests or requirements for the IPC/MIU/ Secretary of State to apply in deciding whether any element of the development comprised in an application for development consent is acceptable, nor the basis on which any such application should be approved. Accordingly, the Core Strategy does not have the same status for decision making by the IPC/MIU as it does for decisions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, where the Council is the determining authority. However, the Planning Act 2008 at Section 104(2)(b)and(d) states that the IPC/MIU/Secretary of State must have regard to any Local Impact Report [LIR] together with any other matters they think are both important and relevant to their decision. This chapter of the Core Strategy will inform the LIR to be submitted by the Council to the IPC/MIU/Secretary of State in connection with the determination of any application for development consent.

4.55 In relation to NSIP’s, applications for NSIP’s will be examined by the Major Infrastructure Planning Unit (MIU) and a decision made by the Secretary of State. Local authorities will only be the decision maker for any elements of associated or ancillary or related development for which applications are made to the local planning authority. National Policy Statements will provide the national policy framework for decision making for NSIP’s, but the MIU will also take account of other matters that it
4 Major Infrastructure Projects

Thinks are both important and relevant to its decision. In this respect, the Council considers it appropriate to explain the approach that it will take in undertaking its role as planning authority when consulted upon such an application. The chapter deals with both roles of the Council in relation to MIP and with development that is associated with, ancillary to, or related to a MIP, so that the terms of this chapter therefore will help inform:

1. The promoter’s understanding of how the local authority considers a NSIP should be brought forward in the local context, including in relation to any associated, ancillary or related development proposals of an NSIP project. This is to help assist a NSIP promoter when preparing a development consent order application to be made to the MIU.

2. The preparation of a Local Impact Report by the Council in relation to the NSIP to be submitted to the MIU by the Council. This Local Impact Report will assist the MIU in the examination of the NSIP. The Local Impact Report will help identify potential local impacts and possible mitigation and compensation sought by the Council to address impacts of the NSIP and any associated or ancillary or related development which is part of the development consent order application. The determination of any associated or ancillary or related development proposals which are not part of a development consent order application for a NSIP but are related to the NSIP and are applied for to the Council as local planning authority.

3. The formulation of the Council’s response on matters on which it is consulted by other authorities who would be host authorities for NSIP projects.

Policy MIP1: Major Infrastructure Proposals

4.56 Policy MIP1: Major Infrastructure Proposals, sets out the approach that the Council will take in responding to major infrastructure applications either as determining authority or as a statutory consultee:

Policy MIP 1

Major Infrastructure Proposals

In responding to major infrastructure proposals as a consultee or decision maker the Council will consider applications against the relevant national planning policy and the strategy and relevant policies of the development plan. The objective from the Council’s perspective is that such proposals should, where possible, contribute positively to the implementation of the spatial strategy and meet the underlying objectives of the plan. However, the Council will seek to adopt an approach which is consistent with relevant NPS and take into account operational requirements of the MIP.

For a NSIP the Council will take into account through the preparation of a Local Impact report, how proposals through their formulation and implementation, avoid or minimise adverse impacts or harm to local places, communities and businesses and maximise local benefits wherever possible. Where the Council is the decision maker, these matters will be taken into account through the planning application process.

In all cases the Council will also assess where appropriate how the consideration of alternatives has informed the proposals.

The Council will consider the benefits and impacts of a proposal having regard to direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative benefits and impacts, and benefits and impact interactions. This assessment will include the construction, operation and decommissioning (including restoration)
stages of the project. It will also have regard to reasonably foreseeable development proposals in the local area, including other infrastructure projects and employment and residential development.

Depending upon the scale and nature of the proposals, in order to present sufficient information for the Council to undertake the assessment it may request the preparation of delivery plans identifying measures to be taken to maximise benefits, to avoid and minimise impacts, and to mitigate and compensate for impacts, with respect to matters such as the economy, climate change, the environment, transport and movement, housing, local communities (including safety, health, leisure and general well-being) council services, and education where this is justified by reference to national policy. The management or delivery plans should identify the systems and resources that will be used to implement the proposed measures.

Delivery

4.57 The additional cost burden of MIPs on the Council will be assessed and the Council may request promoters to enter into Planning Performance Agreements and Service Level Agreements as appropriate.

4.58 Pre-application consultation by promoters with local communities in Sedgemoor, statutory consultees and the local authority will be encouraged.

Monitoring

Table 4.2

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>Impact Assessment (Local)</td>
<td>All major infrastructure proposals should be accompanied by impact assessments</td>
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4.59 Where a planning obligation or development consent obligation is secured, the Council will set in place a process to demonstrate that funding has been spent on the mitigation and compensation measures agreed with the MIP promoter.

Hinkley Point C

Context

4.60 Hinkley Point is listed as a ‘potentially suitable site’ for a new nuclear power station before the end of 2025 in the Revised Draft National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN-6) published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in October 2010.

4.61 The current proposals are for the construction of two European Pressurised Reactors (EPR) generating 3,260 MW, representing future capacity well in excess of the combined output of the two Hinkley B units (1,320 MW) and the A station which was closed in 2000 (500 MW), but much of the associated, ancillary and other related development required to construct and operate the facility would be located in Sedgemoor.
4 Major Infrastructure Projects

4.62 The Council acknowledges the national status of the proposal, and recognises the support for the project and its potential benefits at the national level. The role the project could play at the local level in helping to deliver the Council’s economic objectives is also recognised.

4.63 Associated or ancillary or related development that may be required to enable the construction and operation of the new power station is likely to include:

- transport infrastructure improvements for Bridgwater and its surrounds, including a Cannington Bypass and associated improvements in Cannington
- refurbishment of the wharf at Combwich and other associated development at Combwich
- freight consolidation and holding facilities;
- Park and Ride facilities with bus services to Hinkley Point;
- sites and buildings relating to housing management, induction, research, and educational functions;
- construction worker accommodation; and
- a temporary jetty (in West Somerset).

4.64 These types of associated or ancillary or related development may be significant in their own right, as well as being considered in the context of the project. It is therefore the Councils preference that any such development is, wherever possible, planned in accordance with the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy where this is possible having regard to national policy and the specific functional requirements of the project.

4.65 In recognition of the importance of the project both nationally and locally, the Council has been working with the project promoter to develop a shared vision and objectives for the project and these have been set out in a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) between the promoter and the Council and in a document agreed following a workshop involving the promoter, SDC, West Somerset Council and Somerset County Council (known as the Dillington Vision).

4.66 The Council recognises the significance of the investment into the local economy that the HPC project would represent and that it has the potential for significant benefits alongside impacts for Sedgemoor. The PPA vision of what the project should achieve in the local context includes:

- “A significant contribution of socio-economic benefits to the local community, both during construction and in operation, through local employment opportunities, training and workforce development, the provision of related leisure services, expenditure on local facilities and services, and business for the supply chain.”
- “A positive contribution to local place shaping and transformation in line with regional and local priorities for regeneration, and to coordinated infrastructure investment to improve local outcomes and economic performance.”

4.67 The potential significance of Hinkley Point C to the local economy in particular is recognised by the Council in the Sedgemoor Economic Strategy adopted in July 2009. The Strategy states that “One of the Sedgemoor’s key commitments is that Sedgemoor will be one of the UK’s leading centres for energy related business, employment and skills, with Hinkley as the foundation, and other initiatives based on renewable energy and technologies”.

4.68 From this commitment in the Sedgemoor Economic Strategy, two ‘key actions’ are identified to be:
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- “Derive the maximum community and business benefit possible from any large scale energy related development in the area”; and
- “Establish a high profile regional energy cluster in the District”.

4.69 The Sedgemoor Economic Strategy demonstrates the importance the Council attaches to energy development, and establishes a key objective for the way it discharges its role in relation to proposals connected with Hinkley Point C.

4.70 The Council, the promoter of Hinkley Point C and other stakeholders worked together to produce the ‘Dillingston visions’, which have the five headline commitments in relation to economic development, developing a low carbon future, education, employment and skills, community wellbeing and housing.

4.71 The precise impacts potentially associated with Hinkley Point C will be assessed as part of the specific proposals when applications come forward. However, on the basis of public consultation by both EDF and by the Council and on the basis of the information that is available, it is clear that this is a significant development which will have a number of significant impacts, both positive and negative. It is anticipated from the available information that construction will take place over 8 years, involving 5,600 construction workers at the peak of the construction phase. There will be significant HGV movements during the construction period, particularly on the A39 and from Cannington to the main station. When operational the facility will employ about 900 employees.

**Approach**

4.72 Policies MIP 2 and MIP 3 identify the preferred outcomes sought by the Council in relation to the Hinkley Point C project in the context of the overall strategy of the plan set out in Chapter 3.

4.73 The accommodation requirement that will arise during the construction of Hinkley Point C is a particular issue for the Council in the context of the spatial plan for the Core Strategy. A relatively rapid influx of large numbers of workers to the area is expected during this period. The Council considers it important that temporary or permanent accommodation is consistent with the overall plan objectives and does not prejudice the delivery of the spatial strategy. The Council wishes to see an accommodation strategy agreed between the promoter and the Council, together with other parties if appropriate.

4.74 Construction workers are likely to be housed through a combination of the use of private owner occupied and rented housing, tourism accommodation and purpose built campus development provided by the promoters of Hinkley Point C. There will be a need to increase the stock of suitable accommodation to match the additional requirements from an influx of construction workers for the project. Whilst recognising the functional needs of the promoter, in this regard the Council is concerned:

1. To ensure that the impact on the private rented housing market from the demand arising from construction workers should not unreasonably limit the access to this form of housing for others in the community who rely on this source of accommodation.
2. As part of the accommodation strategy for the Hinkley C proposals, the Council encourages wherever possible investment in schemes already allocated or identified for accommodation development in the Local Development Framework in any event.
3. To ensure that there is no significantly adverse diversion of tourism accommodation from its existing purpose as that could harm the interests of others involved in the tourism industry in the area and too great a diversion might be to the detriment of this part of the local economy. It is also recognised that there may well be positive benefits in terms of additional tourism-related accommodation investment.
4. That the investment inherent in accommodating project construction workers to provide a significant long lasting benefits which help the delivery of the overall spatial strategy for Bridgwater.
as far as possible. This would ideally include developing sites for permanent residential and mixed use development that are already identified for these purposes.

**Policy MIP2 Hinkley Point C Associated and Ancillary Development**

4.75 Policy MIP2 below sets out the principles that the Council will take into account in responding (either as statutory consultee or decision maker) to the proposals for associated or ancillary or related development related to Hinkley Point C:

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**Policy MIP 2**

**Hinkley Point C Associated and Ancillary Development**

In responding to proposals for development associated with or ancillary or related to the Hinkley Point C project where the Council is the decision maker, the Council will take into account through the planning application process the degree to which the proposals achieve the outcomes set out at (a) to (f) below.

In responding to proposals for development associated with, or ancillary or related to the Hinkley Point C project which are subject to an application to the IPC/MIU/Secretary of State for development consent as an NSIP, and the Council is not the determining authority, the Council will, subject to the influence of any overriding national imperative, or specific operational requirement, take into account the same considerations in the preparation of a Local Impact Report.

(a) Accommodation proposals on a range of sites, primarily at Bridgwater, where there is greater access to services and public transport and the greatest potential for integration as part of the spatial strategy.

(b) A comprehensive package of measures to avoid, minimise and then mitigate adverse impacts on the transport network arising from the movement of people, goods and services and any other associated transport movements, including multi-modal transport solutions and public realm investment that encourage travel by public transport, walking and cycling. Highway safety for all users should be maintained and where possible improved. Transport services should be inclusive and accessible to the community where practicable and proposals should also make an appropriate positive contribution towards the delivery of Somerset’s Future Transport Plan 2011-26, the Future Transport Strategy for Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington, the Sedgemoor Infrastructure Delivery Strategy and the Bridgwater Vision.

(c) Meeting the accommodation needs of the temporary workforce in a way that does not have an unreasonable adverse effect on the housing market, including the ability of those on low incomes to access the private rented sector, affordable housing and other housing services. Proposals to provide for the accommodation requirements of temporary construction workers should wherever possible make a positive contribution to the long term housing and affordable housing objectives in Sedgemoor.

(d) Appropriate community facilities, where it is necessary to meet additional demand generated by the project. These facilities such as retail outlets, and healthcare, sports and leisure facilities, should be designed and located so that, wherever possible, they serve the general community and help contribute to the achievement of cohesive and sustainable communities with long lasting
benefits. Where there would be additional impacts or demands on leisure facilities the Council will seek appropriate contributions for off-site facilities consistent with extant national policy advice.

(e) The delivery of education, employment and training opportunities connected with the project for the local community. Proposals should be supported wherever possible by procurement, education, employment, training and recruitment strategies, agreed with the Council at an early stage of project development. Where proposals have an educational or training and skills long lasting benefit, the detailed design of any property asset should be agreed with the end user and details of the transfer or agreed provision mechanism included in planning or development consent obligations.

(f) The delivery of investment in infrastructure, buildings and green infrastructure that would have long lasting benefits, contributing to creating attractive, prosperous and safe communities, as well as serving the needs of the development.

Delivery

4.76 The additional cost burden of MIPs on the Council will be assessed and the Council may request promoters to enter into Planning Performance Agreements and Service Level Agreements as appropriate.

4.77 The Council may request delivery plans where appropriate to ensure action results in tangible investment and improvement for local places and communities as part of any related conditions, requirements or obligations.

4.78 Pre-application consultation by the HPC promoter with local communities in Sedgemoor, statutory consultees and the local authorities is encouraged. The Council will provide a full and detailed response to formal public consultation by the HPC promoter.

Monitoring

4.79 The HPC proposals will be assessed by the Council having regard to the extent they avoid, minimise, mitigate and compensate for negative impacts, and align with the objectives, plans and strategies of the Council.

4.80 Where a planning obligation or development consent obligation is secured, the Council will set in place a process to demonstrate that funding has been spent on the mitigation and compensation measures agreed with the MIP promoter.

Hinkley Point – Planning Obligations and Mitigation

Context

4.81 As part of its application to the IPC/MIU the promoter of Hinkley Point C will be obliged to undertake an impact assessment which will include consideration of impacts in combination with other projects and works including:

- decommissioning of the Hinkley A station;
- works relating to the potential extension of the operational life of the Hinkley B station, outages and eventual decommissioning and restoration;
- waste storage and transportation proposals;
4 Major Infrastructure Projects

- National Grid reinforcement and rationalisation;
- Steart Coastal Management Project.

**Approach**

4.82 If negative impacts are identified, any proposals to avoid, minimise or mitigate and, where appropriate compensate for the effects of the Hinkley Point C will need to accord with national legislation including, Circular 05/2005 and any relevant NPS.

4.83 Local matters to be addressed may include:

a. Sites of international, national and local importance for landscape, ecology, geology, archaeology, environmental quality and image, and built heritage
b. means for reducing, reusing, recycling or disposing of waste materials,
c. Social cohesion and avoiding or minimising crime and disorder,
d. health and wellbeing
e. Bridgwater as a place to live, work and learn,
f. secure social and economic benefits for local communities
g. cultural, leisure, recreation and religious services and facilities,
h. emergency service resources and their resilience
i. educational facilities and outreach initiatives, including community development and third sector support
j. housing market considerations
k. tourism including facilities for visitors and tourists
l. the objectives of the Core Strategy

Should impacts and harm resulting from the project be demonstrated, necessary and reasonable mitigation (including where appropriate compensation) will be sought in accordance with Policy MIP3 below.

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**Policy MIP 3**

**Hinkley Point C: Planning Obligations and Mitigation**

Subject to any overriding national imperative, or specific operational requirement, the Council will seek to ensure, wherever possible, that the Hinkley Point C proposals avoid, minimise and mitigate (including, where appropriate, compensate for) impacts during the construction, operation, decommissioning, and restoration phases of the Hinkley Point C development, consistent with extant national policy advice.

The Council will encourage the promoter to engage effectively at the pre-application stage, with the Council and with local communities (including those at Bridgwater, Cannington, Combwich and Burnham-on-Sea), consistent with the requirements of national policy and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
Delivery

4.84 Pre-application consultation by promoters with local communities in Sedgemoor, statutory consultees and the local authorities is encouraged, including compliance with the Council's requirements in relation to community involvement. The Council will provide a detailed response to formal public consultation by the HPC promoter.

4.85 The Council may request delivery plans where appropriate to ensure action results in tangible investment and improvement for local places and communities as part of any related conditions, requirements or obligations.

Monitoring

4.86 The Council will assess the HPC proposals having regard to the extent they mitigate and compensate for any identified negative impacts and harm, and align with the objectives, plans and strategies of the Council. A monitoring framework will be prepared that is structured around key Council objectives and targets.

4.87 Where a planning obligation or development consent obligation is secured, the Council will set in place a process to demonstrate that funding has been spent on the mitigation and compensation measures agreed with the MIP promoter.
Living Sustainably

Flood Risk

Context

Government Guidance

5.1 Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25), published in 2006 and amended in 2010, sets out Government policy on development and flood risk. It’s aims are to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and to direct development away from areas of highest risk. Where new development is, exceptionally necessary in such areas, policy aims to make it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible reduce flood risk overall. A fundamental requirement is that it must be demonstrated that any new development to safe from the risk of flooding for its lifetime and taking into account the effects of climate change and rising sea levels.

Flood Risk in Sedgemoor

5.2 Environment Agency data shows that due to its low-lying nature, much of Sedgemoor is at significant risk of flooding. Large parts of the District’s main urban areas of Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge lie within flood risk areas and it will be difficult to avoid new development in these areas. Extra care therefore needs to be taken to ensure that, where development in flood risk areas is necessary, it will be safe to use for its whole lifetime.

5.3 The Council commissioned a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the District in 2008 to provide more detailed information on the level of all forms of flood risk across the District and to help assess individual planning proposals. The Level 1 report provides guidance on applying the Sequential Test as set out in PPS25, to ensure that development is directed away from areas of highest flood risk where possible. Where this is not possible, the Level 2 report provides more detailed flood risk information on Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge to assist in applying the Exception Test as set out in PPS25. This aims to ensure that all development is safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

5.4 In areas at risk of coastal flooding it will be relevant to have regard to the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) and associated Flood Risk Management Strategies. SMPs provide the policy framework from which more detailed strategies and schemes are developed by the Environment Agency. The Draft North Devon and Somerset SMP will provide the strategic guidance for sustainable coastal defences, taking account of the dynamics of natural coastal processes and anticipated rises in sea level over the next 100 years. The draft SMP proposes policies that will ultimately result in some managed realignment of defences and parts of Sedgemoor’s low-lying coastal farmland becoming saltmarsh or other inter-tidal habitat. Further studies are proposed in respect of fully exploring the implications of realignment options in the Parrett estuary and at Brean.

5.5 The emerging SMP Action Plan proposes detailed studies of the Brean area to be completed by 2020; there is currently no basis for the designation of a Coastal Change Management Area as suggested in national policy (PPS25 Supplement, ‘Development and Coastal Change’, March 2010) but this situation will need to be kept under review as there could be significant implications for residential and tourism uses in the Brean area.
Approach

5.6 Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) are used to reduce flood risk at the site level. Planning applications for development proposals of one hectare or greater in Flood Zone 1 and all proposals for new development located in Flood Zones 2 and 3 should be accompanied by a FRA which should clearly demonstrate that the Sequential Test, and the Exceptions Test where appropriate, have been passed.

5.7 PPS25 suggests that the area of search for alternative sites should be the whole district. However, the spatial strategy sets out the preferred locations for sustainable growth and therefore the approach is to ensure that the application of the sequential test also supports these wider objectives. Areas of search are therefore identified for Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge to meet the specific growth requirements of these towns, similarly for Key Rural Settlements the area of search for infill proposals will be restricted to the relevant settlement boundary. In other cases where specific local need can be demonstrated, the area of search should reflect this. For example, housing and employment that meets an accepted local community need at a Key Rural Settlement or other sustainable settlement would only have to assess alternatives within the specific settlement.

5.8 In terms of assessing alternative sites, these need to be able to accommodate the requirements of the proposed development and be deliverable (considered to be available at the time of consideration and with a reasonable prospect of implementation within five years). When identifying alternative sites applicants should therefore draw on the information contained in the Council's Five Year Housing Land Supply report. There is still a need for any site that meets the sequential test to pass the exceptions test where required.

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

5.10 The coastal strip area of Brean and Berrow includes considerable concentration of tourist related businesses. This area is also under long term threat from coastal flooding and the Shoreline Management Plan seeks to promote long term strategies to manage these risks. Policy P3: Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge provides a precautionary approach to further development in this area and any acceptable proposals for upgrading of existing sites will still need to meet the requirements of Policy D1: Managing Flood Risk.

5.11 All development (including that in flood zone 1) should be run-off neutral as a minimum wherever possible. Policy S3: Sustainable Development Principles refers to this as one of the requirements of the policy.

Policy D 1

Managing Flood Risk

All development proposals in Flood Zones 2 and 3 as defined by the Environment Agency’s Flood Map will only be permitted where the Sequential Test is passed as outlined in PPS25, unless:
5 District Wide Policies

- PPS25 or subsequent replacement makes specific exception for the type of development proposed; or
- The site is allocated or identified for development of the same type, scale and character in this Core Strategy or any subsequent document of the Local Development Framework as that proposed.

In undertaking the Sequential Test it is the responsibility of the applicants to demonstrate that there are no reasonably available alternative sites at lower flood risk within a defined area of search where the proposed development could be sited.

For the purposes of the Sequential Test the area of search will be the Sedgemoor District area unless:

- It can be demonstrated that the development has a specific locational requirement based on functional requirements or to meet a demonstrable specific local need, in which case the area of search should reflect this; or
- The site is located within or physically adjoining the urban area of Bridgwater, in which case that will be the search area; or
- The site is located within or physically adjoining the Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge urban area, in which case that will be the search area; or
- The site is located within a settlement boundary of an identified Key Rural Settlement, in which case that will be the search area.

For the purposes of the Sequential Test, reasonably available alternative sites are those that are within the relevant area of search, can accommodate the requirements of the proposed development and are deliverable. For residential proposals alternative such sites considered should be identified in the Council’s 5 year Housing Land Supply Report. Sites identified in the Council’s 5 year Housing Land Supply will be deemed to have passed the Sequential Test but will still need to pass the Exception Test where required. Sites not identified will need to demonstrate why they perform sequentially better. Where the Exception Test is required by PPS25, development proposals will need to demonstrate how they meet these requirements.

Delivery

5.12 Delivery will principally be through the consideration of planning applications. The Council has also prepared draft local guidance for applicants and agents in applying the sequential and exceptions tests. This has been developed in partnership with the Environment Agency and will be updated to take into account Policy D1: Managing Flood Risk and any further national policy changes or guidance.

5.13 The Shoreline Management Plan includes an action plan that requires developing a Dune and Beach Management Plan for Berrow to Brean Down by 2013. This will inform future studies of the Berrow and Brean frontage by 2020.

5.14 In partnership with the Environment Agency tidal flood defences will be delivered as part of the Council’s infrastructure delivery strategy, this includes a tariff approach for securing contributions towards the Parrett Barrier at Bridgwater and strategic defences at Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge as set out in Policies S2: Infrastructure Delivery, P1: Bridgwater Urban Area and P3: Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge. In addition the Council will continue working with the Environment Agency and the Internal Drainage Boards to support ongoing maintenance and improvements to existing defences.
5.15 Working with developers and scheme promoters, surface water management will be delivered through the creation of multi-functional green infrastructure, for examples the introduction of swales, ponds and the restoration of rhynes in line with Policies D2: Promoting High Quality Design and D20: Green Infrastructure.

Monitoring Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding grounds (Core)</td>
<td>No permissions should be granted in cases where an Environment Agency objection cannot be overcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>Use of sustainable drainage systems (local)</td>
<td>Increase in the use of sustainable drainage systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>Number of planning applications granted in Flood Zone 3 on sites not in/ adjoining the Bridgwater or Burnham-on-Sea &amp; Highbridge urban areas or within Key Rural Settlements (Local)</td>
<td>No planning permissions should be granted in Flood Zone 3 on sites not in/ adjoining the Bridgwater or Burnham-on-Sea &amp; Highbridge urban areas or within the settlement boundaries of the Key Rural Settlements unless a specific local need or locational requirement can be demonstrated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Promoting High Quality and Inclusive Design

Context

5.16 Good design is indivisible from good planning. PPS1 (Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development) together with the companion guide ‘By Design’, encourages planning authorities to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Other guidance is provided by CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment), including the Building for Life Standards, while the Lifetime Homes standard provides guidance on designing homes that take into account the needs of disabled people of all ages.

5.17 Ensuring that new development is well designed, responding to national guidance, and reflects the local character, scale and distinctiveness of a place is a key aim for the Council. High quality development can create places and spaces that are attractive, safe and healthy. It also protects and enhances the natural, built, historic environment and archaeology and therefore design should be a key consideration in assessing individual development proposals.

Approach

5.18 The Core Strategy sets out a policy that seeks to encourage the use of high quality, sustainable and inclusive design to improve the image of its settlements and the District as a whole and to promote a good quality of life for those who live, work and visit Sedgemoor. It will ensure that development contributes positively to an area's character and identity, creating and respecting local distinctiveness as well as seeking to apply the best architecture for a specific site or area by promoting the use of contemporary styles and innovative approaches to the appearance of architecture.
5 District Wide Policies

5.19 Ensuring the most efficient use of land and enhancing local distinctiveness through the size and arrangement of plots, further determining the position, orientation, proportion, scale, height, massing and density of buildings as well as the treatment of the spaces around and between the buildings themselves as well as considering the relationship to adjoining buildings and landscape features will be encouraged. Density should therefore be justified as part of the overall design concept of development proposals and will also include appropriate consideration of private amenity spaces.

5.20 The safety and security of development, through its design, location and layout will need to reduce the incidents of anti social behaviour, vulnerability to crime, the fear of crime and distinguish between spaces which are private or public.

5.21 The policy will ensure that development is accessible to all potential users using a range of transport modes including walking and cycling, be integrated into existing patterns of movement and be legible (simple to navigate) and permeable (easy to move through).

Policy D 2

Promoting High Quality and Inclusive Design

The Council is committed to achieving high quality, sustainable and inclusive design for all new developments throughout the district to deliver places and spaces that are attractive and safe, accessible for all, enjoyable to use and which encourage social interaction together with healthy lifestyles and environments.

Development will need to demonstrate the following:

- High quality sustainable and inclusive design that responds positively to and reflects the particular local characteristics of the site and the identity of the surrounding area as well as taking into account climate change;
- That it contributes to the quality of the public realm through creating safe and attractive public open spaces and street scenes using appropriate materials/surface treatments, landscaping, public art, street lighting and furniture which is appropriate for their locations;
- That it does not harm the amenity value of the occupiers of nearby buildings or the wider area;
- That development promotes safety and security through design, location and layout in a way that reduces the incidents of anti social behaviour, vulnerability to crime, the fear of crime and distinguishes between spaces which are private or public;
- The use, where appropriate is of contemporary architectural styles and innovative approaches to design;
- That its design solution incorporates the need to make the most efficient use of land through appropriate densities, whilst recognising the need for positive treatment of the spaces around and between buildings (including soft and hard landscaping), and their relationship to adjoining buildings and the local context;
- That it is accessible to all potential users using a range of transport modes, be integrated into existing patterns of movement and be permeable. Its design should create good connections to wider areas with a clear network of routes for walking and cycling using legible routes through the site and supported by integrated networks of open space and green corridors;
- That climate change issues are fully considered.
Delivery

5.22 The Council will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document setting out the Council’s approach on the design standards that development proposals should meet, this will include details on densities, materials, private and public open space, movement and parking. The supplementary planning document will include a design and sustainability checklist against which proposals will be assessed. In addition this will be supported by a series of technical notes and guidance relating to specific forms of development such as household extensions, shopfronts and commercial premises.

5.23 The Council will also continue to support the preparation of Village Design Statements by local communities, particularly within the Key Rural Settlements.

5.24 For housing schemes that propose ten or more dwellings the Council will use the Building for Life guidelines (published by CABE) to assess how well development proposals are responding to the design requirements of the policy.

Monitoring and Review

5.25 Building for Life is the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods, and new housing developments are scored against the 20 Building for Life criteria to assess the quality of their design. Since the standard’s criteria encompass all aspects of Policy D2: Promoting High Quality and Inclusive Design, they are well suited to monitor the effectiveness of the policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>The proportion of new development reaching very good, good, average and poor ratings against Building for Life criteria (core)</td>
<td>New developments having regard to the design and other appropriate policies should at a minimum be able to achieve a Building for Life rating of ‘good’ (14 points out of 20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sustainable Construction and and Reducing Carbon Emissions in New Development

Context

5.26 New development can contribute significantly to climate change though the generation of carbon emissions during construction and in subsequent use. It is important that strategic policy addresses this impact and contributes to national CO₂ reduction targets by requiring high standards of sustainability in new buildings.

5.27 The Climate Change supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 highlights that Core Strategies should provide a framework that promotes and encourages renewable and low carbon energy development. Planning Policy Statement 22: Planning for Renewable Energy, sets out further detail about how such policies should be framed and the issues which should be considered. This national policy framework expects new development to be planned to make good use of opportunities for decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy, including microgeneration.

5.28 Nationally accepted methodology for measuring the sustainability of new buildings is set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) (for domestic buildings) and BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) (for non-domestic buildings). Building Regulations are requiring increasingly exacting carbon emissions standards equivalent to higher levels of the
energy parts of the Code for Sustainable Homes or higher BREEAM ratings. National policy, current at the time of writing, requires new domestic buildings to be zero-carbon by 2016, and non-domestic buildings by 2019.

5.29 The Council have commissioned a study to help understand what local opportunities are available for reducing carbon emissions and using renewable energy in new development. The PPS1 Supplement Study: Planning and Climate Change suggests that standards higher than those already required by Building Regulations may not be viable for all new development in Sedgemoor. Policy therefore needs to ensure that, while high sustainability standards are encouraged, development is not stifled by overly exacting requirements.

Approach

5.30 This policy aims to ensure that sustainability principles are taken into account at all stages of development, including demolition of existing buildings, construction and long term management.

5.31 Current Building Regulations ensure that buildings perform to a certain energy standard once built. They do not consider the building process, nor such issues as the sustainable sourcing of materials. Developers will be required to demonstrate that all aspects of their proposal meets policy objectives, including those not covered by Building Regulations. As part of this requirement, all new residential development at the time of construction will need to meet the Government's suggested Code for Sustainable Homes level targets, currently Code Level 3 from 2010, Code Level 4 from 2013 and Code Level 6 (zero carbon) from 2016, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not viable. Non residential development will need to achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good', unless it can be demonstrated that this is not viable. Additionally the Government is developing targets for zero carbon for non domestic buildings (ZCNDB) that will set out CO₂ reduction targets implemented through compliance with building regulations. Non domestic building will therefore be expected to meet these targets. In all such cases a carbon emission reduction viability statement will be required to justify why the relevant targets are not achievable. However, it is acknowledged that these targets may be subject to change or superseded by changes to national policy.

5.32 Using on-site renewable energy production in order to achieve zero-carbon homes by 2016 will not necessarily be feasible. In recognition of this, the national policy context for ‘Allowable Solutions’ is currently under review. Pending further government guidance, the Council will consider the following Allowable Solutions for carbon emission reductions that could include the following (but is not exhaustive):

- Energy efficiency measures;
- On-site renewables and low carbon technologies;
- Off-site generation (where a direct link is provided to the development); and
- Payment into a low carbon infrastructure fund (to be considered within the proposed Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions - see Policy S2 : Infrastructure Delivery)

5.33 A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be required for major proposals where it is considered that a development will result in significant adverse environmental effects, as identified in an Environmental Statement. This will provide the framework for which commitments made in the Environmental Statement or any requirements of planning conditions or Section 106 agreements can be realised. The CEMP outlines the contractors approach to environmental management throughout the construction phases with the primary aim of reducing any adverse
impacts from construction on local sensitive receivers. The CEMP should also take into account other considerations including registration with the Considerate Constructor Scheme and the Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites.

5.34 Further guidance on sustainable construction will be provided in the proposed Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document.

5.35 In providing renewable energy within developments, developers will be required to provide full information on the likely impact of proposals, including information on noise and emissions generation, a visual impact assessment and an ecological survey incorporating a biodiversity impact assessment. Wind turbines may particularly impact on bats in the Sedgemoor district. Any such proposals should therefore have specific regard to the Bats and Wind Turbines report published by Somerset County Council (2010), and the requirements of Policy D15: Bats in the Landscape.

Policy D 3

Sustainable Construction and Reducing Carbon Emissions in New Development

The Council will encourage the use of sustainable construction techniques that promote the reuse and recycling of building materials, maximise opportunities for the recycling and composting of waste on all new development proposals (residential and non-residential) and reduce CO₂ emissions.

Residential development will be expected to meet the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 from 2010, Level 4 from 2013 and Level 6 from 2016 (or successor) as set out in Table 5.1 below, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not viable.

Non-domestic development will be expected to achieve a BREEAM rating of ‘Very Good’ and the zero carbon for non domestic buildings (ZCNDB) targets (or successor) as set out in Table 5.1 below, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not viable.

Table 5.1: Domestic and Non-Domestic CO₂ Reduction Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic Buildings</th>
<th>Non-Domestic Buildings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Code Level</td>
<td>CO₂ reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Building regs. 2006</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CfSH Level 3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>CfSH Level 4</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>CFSH Level 6</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to meet the above targets for residential and non-residential development the Council will consider the following ‘Allowable Solutions’ that could include the following (but is not exhaustive):

- Energy efficiency measures;
5 District Wide Policies

- On-site renewables and low carbon technologies;
- Off-site generation (where a direct link is provided to the development); and
- Payment into a low carbon infrastructure fund (to be considered within the proposed Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions - see Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery)

In all cases proposals for on-site renewable energy and low carbon generation will need to meet the requirements of Policy D4: Renewable or Low Carbon Energy Generation.

Applications for all major development proposals (residential and non-residential) will be required to provide a statement demonstrating how sustainable construction principles have been incorporated, this should address demolition, construction and long term management. This will be expected to show how the proposal maximises its contribution towards the following objectives:

- Sustainable sourcing of materials and their efficient and appropriate use, including their durability;
- Minimising waste and maximising recycling;
- Incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems wherever feasible;
- Minimising water consumption;
- Minimising energy consumption and improving energy performance;
- Minimising net greenhouse gas emissions of the proposed development;
- Maximising on-site low or zero carbon energy generation.

Where the Council consider it likely that the proposal will result in significant adverse environmental effects during the construction phase a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be required.

Delivery

5.36 Delivery will principally be through the consideration of planning applications. In addition the Council will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document covering Design Guidance which will incorporate a Sustainability Checklist which will be required to be submitted with all planning applications. A low carbon infrastructure levy will be considered as part of a future Community Infrastructure Levy or successor scheme as set out in Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery.

5.37 The Council's PPS1 Supplement Study: Planning and Climate Change report provides examples and details on how new development can meet the Council's CO₂ reduction targets outlined above. This will be a consideration in determining planning applications.

Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>Per capita reduction in CO₂ emissions in the Local Authority area (NH96)(local)</td>
<td>Significantly reduce the percentage of benefits claimants living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating Meet or exceed relevant Air Quality objectives as set out in the Air Quality regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17</td>
<td>Construction waste (local)</td>
<td>Significant increase in the proportion of construction waste that is recycled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Renewable or Low Carbon Energy Generation

Context

5.38 Increasing the use of renewable and other low carbon energy technologies will be a key means of delivering the challenging CO₂ emissions reductions targets set by the Government. As well as incorporating low and zero carbon energy production into new development, Local Authorities will need to encourage stand-alone schemes that contribute to national and regional targets for renewable energy production. This includes the target set in the UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009) for 30 – 35% of our electricity to come from renewable sources by 2020.

5.39 The Council has undertaken a study to assess the potential for renewable and low carbon energy in the District (the PPS1 Supplement Study). Findings suggest that while potential for renewable or low carbon heat production is limited, there is some capacity in Sedgemoor for renewable electricity production. This potential is largely for stand-alone wind projects, which, although not extensive, may be of significance regionally. It will be important to utilise this capacity, estimated to be approximately 28MW, in order to contribute to regional and national renewable energy targets.

5.40 The feed-in tariff increases opportunities for other stand-alone technologies to come forward, for example photo-voltaic solar parks, which could make a significant contribution to the above targets.

Approach

5.41 The council will encourage low or zero-carbon energy generating projects that contribute positively to the aim of reducing CO₂ emissions and to regional and national targets for renewable electricity production, provided that they meet the criteria set out in Policy D4: Renewable or Low Carbon Energy Generation.

5.42 Developers will be required to provide information on the likely impact of proposals, including information on noise and emissions generation, a visual impact assessment and an ecological survey incorporating a biodiversity impact assessment. Wind turbines may particularly impact on bats in the Sedgemoor district. Any such proposals should therefore have specific regard to the Bats and Wind Turbines report published by Somerset County Council (2010), and the requirements of Policy D15: Bats in the Landscape.

5.43 The Habitat Regulations Assessment identified significant concerns about the potential effect of wind turbines on the migration / movement of birds to, from and/or between designated sites of the Severn Estuary and the Somerset Levels & Moors. This is relevant in respect not only of any proposed turbine within 800m of a designated site but also in respect of any prospective wind farm located between the designated sites if that would create a barrier impact. Prospective developers should consult Natural England and the Council at an early stage to clarify the parameters of project-level Habitat Regulation Assessment. This will require studies of the proposed site and the wider area to fully assess the potential for impact on bird species.
5 District Wide Policies

5.44 Such studies should include a minimum 12-month field survey to determine the baseline numbers of birds present during an annual cycle. This survey should provide data on bird distribution and movements, including observations of bird numbers, intensity of movements, altitude and orientation of flight during different weather conditions and tidal cycles. For species that show significant annual variation in numbers and distribution it may be necessary to undertake at least 2 years’ baseline survey. Studies should also include an area around the wind farm which might be subject to displacement (up to at least 800m from the outer turbines) and the potential for barrier effects.

5.45 The development of small scale renewable energy schemes and micro generation that provide power for specific development proposals rather than for commercial generation of electricity can also make a contribution and will be supported wherever appropriate.

Habitats Regulations Recommendation 2

The Appropriate Assessment (Volume 1, Section 5.3) indicated that many bird species avoid wind farm areas, with a maximum avoidance distance of 800m being shown by some wintering wildfowl species. Whilst this distance is dependent on a wide range of conditions and the species of birds, it was recommended that a precautionary approach be taken and that the policy or supporting text should include a specific recommendation that wind farm developments are likely to be considered unacceptable within 800m of the international sites. It also recommended that Policy D4: Renewable or Low Carbon Energy Generation should be strengthened with specific reference to there being a requirement on the developer to show that there is no barrier impact on the migration/movement of bird species from both international sites. This process should also include consultation with Natural England.

The Appropriate Assessment also made recommendations in respect of surveys and monitoring

Policy D 4

Renewable or Low Carbon Energy Generation

The Council will support proposals that maximise the generation of energy from renewable or low carbon sources, provided that the installation would not have significant adverse impact taking into account the following factors:

- The impact of the scheme, together with any cumulative impact (including associated transmission lines, buildings and access roads), on landscape character, visual amenity, historic features and biodiversity;
- Evidence that the scheme has been designed and sited to minimise any adverse impact on the surrounding area as far as is practical for its effective operation;
- Any unreasonable adverse impact on users and residents of the local area, including the generation of emissions and noise;
- The extent of any direct benefits to the local area and community.

Where appropriate, provision should be made for the removal of the facilities and reinstatement of the site should it cease to be operational.
Within the Mendip Hills and Quantock Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, proposals for the development of renewable energy schemes and associated infrastructure will only be acceptable where it is in the public or national interest and it can be shown that no alternative site exists.

Wind turbine proposals in the vicinity of the designated sites of international importance for nature conservation at the Severn Estuary or Somerset Levels and Moors, or within the areas between these sites, will need to be subject of rigorous assessment in respect of potential impacts on bird species.

In all cases development will need to demonstrate that there are no significant adverse impacts on biodiversity interests as set out in Policy D14: Natural Environment and Policy D15: Bats in the Landscape.

In addition, the Council will encourage the provision of small-scale renewable energy developments utilising technology such as solar panels, biomass and woodfuel heating, small-scale wind turbines and photovoltaic cells where these would not have any significant adverse impact.

Delivery

Delivery will primarily be through private sector proposals for specific renewable energy schemes. In addition the Council has specifically allocated the former Royal Ordnance Factory site as an energy park with specific reference to accommodating renewable and low-carbon energy generation, Policy P1: Bridgwater Urban Area refers. The overall vision seeks to promote energy generation within the district.

Small scale generation will be encouraged through national support such as the feed-in tariff.

The Council's PPS1 Supplement Study: Planning and Climate Change report provides examples and details on how new development can meet the Council's CO₂ reduction targets outlined in Policy D3: Sustainable Construction and Reducing carbon Emissions in New Development. This will be a consideration in determining planning applications.

Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>Renewable energy generation by installed capacity and type (core)</td>
<td>Increase in renewable energy generation capacity installed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>Per capita reduction in CO₂ emissions in the Local Authority area (NH886)(local)</td>
<td>Significantly reduce the percentage of benefits claimants living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating Meet or exceed relevant Air Quality objectives as set out in the Air Quality regulations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.46 Creating mixed and balanced communities is one of the government’s aims for sustainable development and a core aim of the Council. This means providing sufficient good quality housing of the right types and mix, in the right places, which will be attractive to, and meet the identified needs of, different groups in society.

5.47 Key evidence for developing the housing policy and approach for the Core Strategy includes the relevant Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

5.48 SHMAs provide a comprehensive understanding of how the housing market operates and its key drivers and relationships to inform policies aimed at providing the right mix, size and type of housing for both market and affordable housing. Sedgemoor falls within the Taunton Housing Market Area and the Council have jointly prepared the Taunton and South Somerset SHMA with Taunton Deane, West Somerset and South Somerset Councils.

5.49 The Council's SHLAA was published in July 2009. Its purpose is to ensure that a flexible and responsive supply of housing land in Sedgemoor can be maintained by demonstrating a 5 year supply of deliverable sites and setting out a supply of developable sites for the 5-10 year and 11-15 year periods. Whilst the SHLAA is an important evidence base to inform policy, it does not in itself determine whether or not a site should be allocated for housing development, instead it is for the policies of the Local Development Framework to select the sites that would best deliver the spatial vision and meet spatial objectives of the Core Strategy informed by the SHLAA.

5.50 Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) : Local Spatial Planning requires Local Planning Authorities to prepare a housing trajectory. This provides a position statement comparing past performance on housing supply with anticipated future rates of housing development. The Sedgemoor Housing Trajectory is updated each year as part of the Annual Monitoring Report (or successor). It sets out the strategic housing requirements for the Plan period, past completion rates, projected future supply informed by the SHLAA and existing commitments and actual performance, identifying any under supply or over provision.

5.51 The Council's strategy for housing delivery is to prioritise regeneration opportunities within the towns on brownfield sites and at the strategic urban extension at North East Bridgwater. In addition where there is a need to meet long-term land supply for housing, greenfield sites identified as broad locations in the Plan will be released. This approach is underpinned by the principles of Plan, Monitor and Manage and includes contingency measures should delivery of this strategy not progress as anticipated. The Housing Trajectory and the SHLAA suggest that brownfield housing will accommodate approximately 50% of the strategic housing requirement. This brownfield target will be reviewed following the updating of the SHLAA.
5.52 The Local Plan included a number of brownfield housing allocations that have not yet been implemented in the towns. Following a review of their deliverability, the majority of these will continue to be 'saved' and form part of the housing land supply. Section 8 sets out all policies and proposals that continue to be 'saved' from the Local Plan.

5.53 The remainder of the housing growth will be directed towards the Key Rural Settlements and the Other Sustainable Settlements though this is more limited and will be based on infill and redevelopment opportunities within existing settlement boundaries. In addition the strategy makes provision for the release of sites adjoining settlement boundaries for a mix of market and affordable housing where this brings demonstrable benefits to the local community, including affordable housing to meet local needs and infrastructure investment as set out in Policy P4: Key Rural Settlements.

Managing Housing Supply

5.54 The Sedgemoor Housing Trajectory will be used to annually assess progress of actual housing completions against the housing targets set out in the spatial strategy. The trajectory covers a 15-year period from the current date, identifying deliverable sites for the five-year period and developable sites for the following ten years. Where an annual assessment of housing land supply identifies an issue of under supply the Council will take action to address this, including holding discussions with developers and landowners to identify any barriers to the delivery of sites included in the trajectory but not progressing as expected. Where the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year land supply, and there is no short-term prospect of making up any shortfall as required by PPS3, the additional release of greenfield sites may be required as a contingency.

5.55 The trigger for making such contingencies will be if monitoring identifies the following circumstances:

- The 5-year supply of deliverable sites falls by 15% or more below the required 5-year land supply (equivalent to a 4.25-year land supply);
- That this occurs for two consecutive Annual Monitoring Reports; and
- That a review of site deliverability indicates that the under supply is unlikely to be recovered before the publication of the following Annual Monitoring Report.

Where the Council’s Annual Monitoring report identifies a shortfall in the five year deliverable land supply, Policy D5 sets out a mechanism for the release of additional greenfield sites.

5.56 Where this is demonstrated at Bridgwater priority will be given to the broad locations identified in Policy P1: Bridgwater Urban Area. In the remainder of the District priority will be given to sites that have been identified within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment as having 'future potential', firstly at Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge then at the Key Rural Settlements and then followed by Other Sustainable Settlements. All sites promoted as part of this contingency approach will need to meet the objectives of this policy and the Plan as a whole. The release of land under the Local Priority Housing Sites section of Policy P4: Key Rural settlements are specifically identified to deliver key local priorities. Therefore these sites could come forward at any time in the Plan period. There are similar early release mechanisms for the broad locations identified in Policy P1: Bridgwater where this can be linked to the delivery of transformational projects and Land at Brue Farm, Highbridge identified as a broad location in Policy P3: Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge where this is linked to the delivery of local objectives.

5.57 The trajectory is represented by the graph in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 and shows the actual and projected levels of completions against the targets of the spatial strategy and the annual requirement taking into account past performance.
5 District Wide Policies

Figure 5.1

Sedgemoor Housing Trajectory: Bridgwater

Figure 5.2

Sedgemoor Housing Trajectory: Rest of the District
The above graphs suggest that for both Bridgwater and the remainder of the District that it is possible to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites in the short to medium plan period. It also identifies a need to allocate additional land to meet the potential shortfall from 2020/21. It is anticipated that subsequent allocations development plan document will be prepared to address this. However the contingency approach outlined above also provides a mechanism that can be used to ensure continued supply of land for housing throughout the Plan period.

The housing trajectory does not take into account the likely additional housing demand that would result from the operational workforce at Hinkley Point C, should this be constructed. It is estimated that this could result in a requirement for approximately 630 additional dwellings at Bridgwater in the second part of the plan period (commissioning is estimated in 2018). If consent is granted the housing trajectory will be updated and the implications of this would be incorporated into the contingency approach outlined above. Delivery of any additional housing requirement will be taken into account when preparing site allocations development plan documents.

Housing Mix

In delivering sustainable communities the Council will seek to balance the size and types of both market and affordable housing. The SHMA considered the overlap between market (including rented) and social housing in the District and the extent to which supply and demand are 'balanced' across tenure and property size. This has informed the approach of both this housing policy and Policy D6: Affordable Housing in terms of housing mix. Table 5.2 below outlines a profile of housing in terms of type and size for market housing that would contribute to creating more balance in the housing market.

Table 5.2 Profile for market housing by type and size of dwelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Type</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flat/maisonnette</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungalow</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terraced</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-detached</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detached</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Size</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+ bedrooms</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sedgemoor District Council household survey (2008)

The profile suggests in terms of type that there is significantly less requirement for flats and terraced housing compared to detached properties. Similarly in terms of size the table suggests much less requirement for 1 bedroom properties compared to the other house sizes, with over half the
requirement being for 3 or more bedroom properties. This information will be drawn upon to inform negotiations on housing schemes taking into account other circumstances including specific site characteristics, design issues and, where appropriate, viability considerations.

Care Homes and Specialist Accommodation

5.62 In Sedgemoor it is anticipated that the number of people aged over 65 will increase from 22,600 (20%) to 35,400 (27%) by 2026. The proportion of the population aged 80 and above will account for 9% of the total district population by the end of the plan period (2008 based sub national population projections(July 2010)) . The 2001 Census reported that 1,532 people were living in communal establishments including nursing homes or residential care homes in Sedgemoor. The considerable growth in the number of older people in the District will undoubtedly have an influence on the need for and provision of health care services and facilities aimed at older people and a range of accommodation options (including sheltered housing, Extra Care housing, Care Homes and Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs). In addition there are demands within the District for other forms of specialist accommodation to meet the requirements of other groups including young persons and those with mental healthcare needs.

5.63 Any such scheme should be consistent with the spatial strategy unless there are particular locational requirements related to specific needs of the tenants and care regime. Where this is demonstrated alternative sites may be considered suitable taking into account the other policies of this plan including their appropriateness in terms of flood risk and design.

Agricultural Occupancy Conditions

5.64 Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7): Sustainable Development in Rural Areas provides policy coverage for proposals for agricultural workers’ dwellings in terms of when they can be supported. However PPS7 advises that local planning authorities should set out their policies for dealing with the retention and removal of occupancy conditions in their development plan. Therefore Policy D5: Housing, below seeks to retain any such existing occupancy conditions unless it can be demonstrated that the agricultural unit is no longer viable or there is no longer a local need for the dwelling for agriculture. In seeking to demonstrate this, it will be necessary to appropriately market the property in the following way:

- Through two agricultural agents for a reasonable marketing period (about 18 months);
- Acknowledgement of the occupancy conditions in the sale details;
- Targeted at people who could be expected to comply with the condition; and
- At an asking price that reflects the discount attributable to the limited market appeal of this type of dwelling.

Policy D 5

Housing

In general housing proposals will be supported where they contribute to the following objectives:

- Accord with the Spatial Strategy;
- Deliver a minimum of 40,100\(^{10,605}\) new homes \((10,730 \text{ new homes including NNB at Hinkley between 2006-26})\);
- Consistent with the Council's Housing Trajectory;
- Meeting local housing needs, including mix, type and tenure;
Making provision for identified specialist local needs including older persons and those with disabilities;

- Providing appropriate infrastructure (including green infrastructure) when required;
- High quality sustainable design and energy efficiency;
- Compatible with the scale, accessibility needs and character of its location.

No adverse impact on the transport network in terms of the nature and volume of traffic.

The Council will manage housing delivery through its housing trajectory, ensuring that a five year deliverable land supply for housing is maintained wherever possible. The release of additional greenfield land for housing (excluding sites promoted under the 'Local Priority Housing Sites' section of Policy P4: Key Rural Settlements) will only be approved where it can be demonstrated in two consecutive Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) that the five year supply of deliverable land for housing is more than 15% below the required level set out in the housing trajectory and that the shortfall is unlikely to be addressed within a further 12 months in the Council’s Annual Monitoring Report that there is a shortfall in the five year supply of deliverable land supply for housing.

In such circumstances where the above can be demonstrated the release of sites will be considered according to the following:

- For sites at Bridgwater against Policy P1: Bridgwater Urban Area;
- Elsewhere in the rest of District sites will be prioritised at Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge unless it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable and deliverable sites. If this can be demonstrated, priority will then be given to the Key Rural Settlements and then followed by Other Sustainable Settlements. In all cases sites should be identified in the SHLAA as having ‘future potential’ and meet the above objectives and other relevant policies of the plan.

**Housing Mix**

The Council will seek a range of housing sizes to meet locally identified housing requirements and demands as set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (see Table 5.2 above) or relevant local housing needs assessment taking into account the characteristics of the site, design considerations and viability.

**Care Homes and Specialist Accommodation**

Proposals for care homes or similar specialist accommodation that meets an identified local need will be supported where it is consistent with the Spatial Strategy. In exceptional circumstances, where development is proposed in a countryside location, the Council will require clear justification for its location taking into account the nature of specialist care required, transport impact and demonstration that alternative sites are unsuitable and/or unavailable.

**Agricultural Occupancy Conditions**

Where proposals for dwellings for agricultural workers or similar are permitted the Council will impose appropriate occupancy conditions to ensure that the accommodation remains available for its intended purpose. Where such occupancy conditions are in existence the Council will not support their removal unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a continued local need or it is no longer viable.
Chapter 5: District Wide Policies

Delivery

5.65 Evidence for the housing approach of the Core Strategy will continue to be underpinned by the involvement of the Somerset Housing Market Partnership in their role as overseeing the preparation and review of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Strategic Housing land Availability Assessment.

5.66 A site allocation document will be prepared to ensure that a continued supply of housing land is available and deliverable. This will include design principles for the sites and the phased delivery of infrastructure working with landowners and developers. Given current land supply this is likely to only be required in the second half of the plan period.

5.67 Discussions on housing mix as part of the negotiations on development schemes will be informed by the evidence of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and any local assessment. This will include the proposed supplementary planning documents and site allocations documents for Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge.

5.68 Working with key partners, including care and specialist accommodation providers, the Council will proactively encourage providers to take the spatial strategy into account when developing their own strategies and plans. This will ensure that specialist accommodation is delivered in the most appropriate locations to serve the identified needs of the local community and specific groups.

Monitoring and Review

Table 5.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>New and converted dwellings on previously developed land (core)</td>
<td>A minimum of 50% of housing development should be located on brownfield land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>Net additional dwellings (core)</td>
<td>At least (10,605) additional dwellings should be provided over the Plan period as set out in the Spatial Strategy (S1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M21</td>
<td>Housing trajectory (core)</td>
<td>Demonstration of a five year deliverable housing land supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M22</td>
<td>Dwelling size, type and tenure in new housing developments (local)</td>
<td>The housing mix of new development should correspond to requirements as set out in the current Strategic Housing Market Assessment or alternatively a local housing needs assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Affordable Housing

Context

5.69 Housing affordability is one of the biggest challenges facing Sedgemoor and increasing the supply of affordable housing is a key priority for the authority, the district wide Sustainable Community Strategy and this Core Strategy. The delivery of affordable housing to meet the current and future needs of Sedgemoor is an essential component of creating sustainable communities. The definition of affordable housing is set out in PPS3: Housing (Annex B), and includes both social rented and intermediate affordable housing, this is reproduced in the Glossary.

5.70 The Taunton and South Somerset Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), adopted by the Council in 2009, provides the key evidence for developing the affordable housing policy and approach of the Core Strategy. The SHMA estimated that there was an annual affordable housing requirement of 891 units in Sedgemoor and identified a particular need for homes for social rent and for family homes as well as specialist housing for older people. To support the policy recommendations of the SHMA a Strategic Housing Land Viability Assessment (SHLVA) was also undertaken to ensure the development of affordable housing policy and targets was underpinned by the consideration of viability.

5.71 New development needs to take account of changing community needs and the affordability and supply of adequate numbers of new homes. The SHMA reaffirmed that without an increase in supply, the affordability of housing will worsen and the longer sustainability of Sedgemoor’s communities will be harmed.

Approach

5.72 The preferred approach seeks to maximise the provision of affordable housing across the district, both urban and rural. The principle underpinning the Council’s future proposals are that the Core Strategy must ensure affordable housing is provided as part of new housing developments. The SHMA recommends, as a result of the levels and type of of housing need identified across the housing market areas and Sedgemoor specifically, that in setting out policies and targets the Councils should seek to maximise the opportunities to provide as much additional affordable housing as possible. The Council recognises that when negotiating affordable housing, financial scheme viability of any given development will be important factor and will be a consideration to ensure policies are deliverable to enable genuinely affordable housing to be provided for those in need.

Thresholds

5.73 In order to help meet the identified high levels of affordable housing need in the District, it is essential that as many sites as possible contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing, whilst taking viability into consideration. Traditionally small sites have made a significant contribution to housing land supply in Sedgemoor, however these fall below the 15 dwelling threshold for seeking affordable housing set out in PPS3: Housing. This has meant that whilst the Council has secured affordable homes from medium and large housing schemes in Bridgwater and the larger settlements, this has not been as possible on smaller schemes or schemes within the rural areas and these therefore make little or no contribution towards affordable housing delivery.

5.74 The SHMA identifies that for Sedgemoor a case on supply and viability grounds can be made for lower thresholds of ten dwellings and significantly lower for rural sites. In addition the SHLVA findings suggest whilst sites of less than 4 dwellings showed a mixed picture in terms of viability there was an indication that sites between 4 and 14 dwellings could be generally viable with a 30% affordable housing provision. Whilst it is acknowledged that the number of sites at the lower end of this scale
5 District Wide Policies

included in the SHLVA was low, the Council considers that this provides some justification for considering lower thresholds, particularly given the high levels of need for affordable housing in the District.

5.75 Thresholds for seeking affordable housing are therefore lowered to sites of 5 dwellings (net) and above, though it is recognised that viability will be different from scheme to scheme and will be an important consideration in determining whether a site can reasonably provide affordable housing. As the SHMA recommends, the Council have undertaken additional viability work to assess the appropriateness of these lower thresholds.

Policy Targets

5.76 In developing long-term policies and targets it is recognised that economic circumstances are likely to change and that this will potentially have an impact both positively and negatively on viability. Establishing a single Plan-wide affordable housing target that takes into account the likely economic viability of housing land and available finance (as required by PPS3: Housing) is therefore problematic.

5.77 The SHMA therefore recommends a two staged approach towards setting affordable housing targets that takes into account both the levels of need and the viability conditions of the time as outlined below:

- Target A - a district wide target for the lifetime of the Plan based on the high levels of need and set by traditional practice and custom; and
- Target B - initially based on the viability analysis of the SHLVA. This target will be reviewed and updated regularly (as part of the SHLVA updating) to take into account changing economic circumstances and overall conditions for viability including risks to delivery, the likely levels of finance available for affordable housing, including public subsidy and the level of developer contribution that can reasonably be secured.

5.78 The two targets represent the optimum (Target A) and the minimum level considered acceptable taking into account viability, delivery and overall Plan objectives (Target B). Each target is discussed in turn below and, as required by PPS3, an assessment of the amount of affordable housing that would be provided is set out based on the Housing Trajectory.

5.79 The SHMA recommends a district wide policy target of 40% for Target A, based on the high levels of housing need in the context of custom and practice. However both experience and the findings of the SHLVA indicate that the proportion that can be secured on small sites (below 15) is likely to be less. Therefore Target A includes a variable developer contribution dependant on the size of development for sites as follows:

Table 5.4 'Target A' Affordable Housing Developer Contribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Units (net)</th>
<th>Developer Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>No affordable housing contribution required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>At least 20% of the total number of units will be affordable homes and will be provided on site as part of the development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>At least 30% of the total number of units will be affordable homes and will be provided on site as part of the development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.80 Using the assumptions underlying the Housing Trajectory implementing this target based on the expected affordable housing developer contribution set out in Table 5.3 above would result in approximately 3000 additional affordable housing units over the Plan period (of which over 500 has already been delivered) equating to about 30% of all housing expected to be delivered over the Plan period under Target A.

5.81 In establishing a plan-wide target that reflects the likely economic viability situation and any risks to delivery (Target B) the findings of the SHMA indicate that the 40% target recommended for Target A would not be appropriate given the economic circumstances at the time of the report (July 2008). Instead it suggests that providing a 30% proportion of affordable housing on qualifying sites was broadly viable, although there was evidence to suggest that brownfield sites were less viable than greenfield sites at that level. It was suggested that generally targets for brownfield sites should not rise above 15%.

5.82 This evidence has been drawn upon in setting Target B, however it has been assumed that the second part of the Plan period will see an increased level of viability and a return to Target A levels of affordable housing developer contributions. In reality Target B will change as the Plan period progresses and will be based on regular monitoring and review of overall viability within the District. In setting target B the assumptions set out in Table 5.4 below have been drawn upon:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Units (net)</th>
<th>Developer Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 and above</td>
<td>At least 40% of the total number of units will be affordable homes and will be provided on site as part of the development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.83 Using the above assumptions and the projections of the Housing Trajectory implementing Target B based on the expected affordable housing developer contribution set out in Table 5.4 would result in approximately 2600 additional affordable housing units over the Plan period (of which over 500 has already been delivered) equating to about 25% of all housing expected to be delivered over the Plan period under Target B.

5.84 In negotiating affordable housing on a site by site basis the anticipated affordable housing developer contributions sought in Table 5.4 will be generally considered the minimum acceptable level required even where viability may suggest this cannot be achieved. Where schemes can clearly demonstrate that this minimum level cannot be achieved on viability grounds, the Council will exceptionally consider supporting this only in the following circumstances:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Dwellings (net)</th>
<th>Site Typology</th>
<th>2011-16</th>
<th>2016-26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>Brownfield</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>Brownfield</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 and above</td>
<td>Brownfield</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 District Wide Policies

- The site is required to meet an identified shortfall of housing land supply as evidenced by the Housing Trajectory in accordance with Policy D5: Housing and its delivery can be demonstrated within the required time scales;
- The overall development package being offered on the site would demonstrably deliver other Plan objectives that may outweigh the need to provide affordable housing at the target levels such as the delivery of transformational projects.

5.85 In these cases the Council will take into account the delivery time scales of the site and require developers to enter legal agreements that set out review mechanisms linked to deliverability to ensure that if viability conditions improve there is an opportunity for future 'clawback' and an improved affordable housing delivery.

Assessing Viability

5.86 It is important to stress that the actual amount of affordable housing to be achieved on any specific site must be assessed for that actual site, and will take into account the particular factors of developing that site at that point in time. Any such assessment will not only take into account the normal costs of developing the site (including S106 and any future tariff or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments and the availability of grants and subsidies), but also any abnormal costs (such as off-site highways works etc).

5.87 It is unreasonable to expect any policy target to be viable on all sites at all times. The Council also accepts that there are often particular viability issues associated with the development of brownfield sites and in such circumstances financial appraisals and ‘open-book’ negotiations will be required to clearly justify a departure from the targets set out in the policy below. A similar approach demonstrating viability issues will also be appropriate for other sites such as large greenfield sites where infrastructure costs can often be significant.

5.88 Where an offer of affordable housing that does not meet the policy targets is proposed (in terms of overall numbers, tenure mix etc), the Council will seek to independently validate the developer’s financial assumptions. The cost of undertaking this validation exercise will paid for by the developer.

Affordable Housing Provision

5.89 It is expected that affordable housing will be provided on-site. Off-site provision will only exceptionally be considered where there is a clear justification that this will better meet unmet housing need. For example where it is not possible to deliver the homes on-site, or the off-site provision will result in an enhancement of what would have been achieved on-site.

5.90 The number, type and tenure of affordable housing will be negotiated for each development. Factors such as local housing need, market and site conditions, and site specific development costs will be taken into account.

5.91 The affordable housing should normally be provided free from public subsidy unless it can be demonstrated that the addition of public grant would either increase the numbers of, or improve the mix of the affordable housing to be provided. **Any public grant application must be endorsed by the Council in advance of any submission.** The Council wishes to be engaged in early discussions and have the opportunity to endorse any public grant application in advance of any submission.

5.92 Affordable housing provision should support the wider objective of creating sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. To this end, affordable housing will normally form part of the overall development and be well integrated with market housing.
Housing Mix and Size

5.93 A variety of affordable housing sizes and types should be provided. The SHMA has highlighted a particular need for homes for rent and family homes. 70% of the affordable housing should be social rent via a Registered Social landlord (RSL) the remaining 30% being intermediate housing such as discounted market rented via an accredited landlord, shared-equity or other affordable home ownership products via either an RSL or directly from the developer. The Council recognises that this tenure split will alter to reflect localised unmet housing needs, however the 70:30 split identified in the policy reflects the recommendations of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

5.94 Table 5.5 below identifies a profile for affordable housing by size and tenure which should be used to inform development proposals. However some caution should be exercised as this profile will only identify the size of dwellings required to meet the current needs of occupiers rather than their future needs. Schemes should also take into account the need for 'lifetime homes'. What the profile does suggest is that the demand for 2 and 3 bedroom housing accounts for approximately half of all social rented and intermediate housing needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Percentage of Social Rented</th>
<th>Percentage of Intermediate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms - flat</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms - house</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+ bedrooms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sedgemoor District Council Household Survey (2008)

Policy D 6

Affordable Housing

Thresholds and Policy Targets

The Council will seek to negotiate appropriate affordable housing provision on sites of 5 dwellings or more on a site basis taking into account viability considerations. Negotiations will take into account Policy Targets A and B as set out in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 respectively, dependant on the economic circumstances of the time and the demonstrable impact this has on the overall viability of schemes and the delivery of affordable housing.

As a minimum all qualifying housing proposals should meet the requirements of Target B. Where it is clearly demonstrated that Target B cannot be achieved on viability grounds the Council may exceptionally support a lower provision where:
the scheme would address a housing land supply deficiency as identified in the Housing Trajectory in accordance with Policy D5: Housing; and/or

the scheme will deliver other Plan objectives that outweigh the need to provide affordable housing at the target levels.

In these cases the schemes will need to demonstrate that they are deliverable within agreed time frames and be subject to legal agreements setting out review mechanisms to allow for a change in viability circumstances.

Assessing Viability

Where development proposals do not meet affordable housing targets, the Council will require a full development appraisal, including financial viability assessment, to demonstrate an acceptable alternative affordable housing provision. This might, in exceptional circumstances, include a financial contribution towards off-site provision.

Affordable Housing Provision

Affordable housing provision should support the wider objective of creating sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. To this end, affordable housing should form part of the overall development and be well integrated with any market housing.

Housing Mix and Size

Taking into account local circumstances, the Council will seek to secure 70% of the affordable housing for social rent. The Council will seek a range of affordable housing sizes to meet locally identified housing requirements and demands as set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (see Table 5.5 above) or relevant local housing needs assessment taking into account the characteristics of the site, design considerations and viability.

Delivery

5.95 Affordable housing will be delivered within the framework of this Core Strategy and the Council’s Housing Strategy. Delivery will be supported by more detailed guidance on policy requirements and implementation matters in a revised Supplementary Planning Document. The precise details of quantities, type and mix of affordable housing on specific sites will be a matter for negotiation with the Council’s Affordable Housing Delivery Unit and Planning Officers. Detailed affordable housing packages outlining tenure and type should be agreed prior to planning approval.

5.96 Developers and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) will be expected to deliver the affordable housing requirements through the planning process, the Council securing appropriate affordable housing through legal agreements.

5.97 The Council in conjunction with the Somerset Housing Market Partnership will continue to monitor viability circumstances and where appropriate seek to update and review the SHMA and other relevant evidence, undertaking further analysis if and when required. This will ensure current and future economic circumstances are reflected in Policy Target B and the overall approach of this policy. This mechanism will be set out in greater detail in the proposed Supplementary Planning Document.
Monitoring and Review

Table 5.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M22</td>
<td>Dwelling size, type and tenure in new housing developments (local)</td>
<td>The housing mix of new development should correspond to requirements as set out in the current Strategic Housing Market Assessment or alternatively a local housing needs assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M23</td>
<td>Affordable housing completions (core)</td>
<td>Target A - 3000 affordable units to be delivered by 2026 or 30% of all housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Target B - 2600 affordable units to be delivered by 2026 or 25% of all housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M24</td>
<td>Affordable housing provision (local)</td>
<td>All new housing development should contribute to affordable housing provision according to the sliding scales set out in Tables 5.3 and 5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M25</td>
<td>Tenure of affordable housing completions (local)</td>
<td>70% of affordable housing completions should be social rented homes, equating to 2100 units under Target A and 1820 units under Target B.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rural Local Needs

Context

5.98 The Council recognises the difficulties which some local people face in being able to find affordable housing accommodation in their native parish and remains committed to delivering affordable housing in the rural areas to meet the identified needs of local communities. As a result a number of such schemes have been secured in communities across the District.

5.99 PPS3: Housing encourages local planning authorities to undertake a proactive and positive approach towards the delivery of rural affordable housing including utilising a rural exceptions policy approach. Such an approach allows for the exceptional release of small sites, which would not otherwise be released for housing, for 100% affordable housing schemes where this addresses an identified need within the local community.

Approach

5.100 Proposals for rural exception schemes will need to be consistent with the spatial strategy and other policies of the plan. In order to balance the need to meet local needs and ensure schemes are in accessible and sustainable locations, proposals should immediately adjoin Key Rural Settlements or Other Sustainable Settlements. This will ensure that any future occupiers will have access to at least a basic level of services and facilities.

5.101 In exceptionally releasing sites for rural affordable housing the Council will need to be satisfied that the level of local affordable need can be quantified through a local housing needs survey (or other mechanisms that identify local need) and that any identified need could not be met on sites...
where permission for housing would reasonably be granted. The local housing needs survey should be in accordance with “The Local Housing Needs Assessment: A Guide to Good Practice”, DTLR 2000, or any superseding guidance covering the settlement or parish to which the proposal is related.

5.102 The local housing needs survey must demonstrate that there is a genuine local need for affordable housing within a Key Rural Settlement, Other Sustainable Settlement or relevant parish from people, unable to access housing through the local housing market, who have a close connection with the settlement or parish. Such local connections will normally be in the following categories listed in priority order:

1. have lived in the parish concerned for the previous five years;
2. have a strong local connection with the parish concerned. Consideration will be given to:
   - family association in the parish who have lived in the parish for the previous three years;
   - any past periods of residence in the parish; and
   - whether any member of the household has permanent employment in the parish.
3. have lived in an adjoining parish for the previous five years;
4. have a strong local connection with an adjoining parish as set out in b) above.

5.103 Any proposal which satisfies the requirements of this policy is likely to involve an organisation such as a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). However alternative mechanisms for provision will be considered if the Council is satisfied that affordability and occupancy requirements can be met so that the benefits of affordable housing provision pass not only to the initial occupants but also to subsequent occupants. Appropriate Section 106 Planning Agreements will be sought to ensure retention of accommodation for local needs. Proposals to construct dwellings for sale on the open market offering a discounted initial purchase price only will not be acceptable.

5.104 This policy requires all housing on the site to meet the definition of affordable housing. However Policy P4: Key Rural Settlements provides some opportunity for mixed tenure sites within or adjacent to Key Rural Settlements where this demonstrably meets local priorities and objectives.

5.105 Assessment under the Habitats Regulations has identified specific concern for Cheddar and Nether Stowey in respect of bats in the area which may have an impact on development proposals (see Policy D15: Bats in the Landscape). At Nether Stowey the assessment of the Core Strategy has identified potential disturbance to Barbastelle bat roosts arising from new housing development and requires that before any new housing is occupied, there must be signs at entrances to woodland west of Nether Stowey requesting users to keep to Public Rights of Way and that dogs are kept on leads. This requirement would need to be taken into account if there were proposals under this policy specifically for that village.

**Policy D 7**

**Rural Exceptions - Site Local Needs**

In exceptional circumstances limited residential development on sites which would not otherwise be released for this purpose may be permitted provided it can be demonstrated that:

- It meets a proven need for affordable housing for local people;
- Management of the scheme will ensure that the dwellings continue to meet such proven needs for initial and subsequent occupiers;
The site is within or immediately adjoining the development boundary of a Key Rural Settlement or Other Sustainable Settlement; and

The proposal meets the requirements of all other relevant policies of the Core Strategy.

Delivery

5.106 The Council will work with partners, including RSLs, Parish Councils, landowners and the Community Council for Somerset, to bring forward suitable schemes that meet an identified local need. In addition, further detail on bringing forward rural exceptions schemes will be provided within the proposed supplementary planning document on affordable housing.

Monitoring and Review

Table 5.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M26</td>
<td>Addressing local housing need through exceptions sites (local)</td>
<td>Rural exceptions sites should address all housing need unmet by other housing development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People

Context

5.107 Existing Government guidance makes it clear that local authorities should consider the accommodation needs of the travelling community through the Local Development Framework (LDF) process. Evidence work undertaken for the now revoked South West Regional Spatial Strateg (RSS) identified a need for 17 additional pitches within Sedgemoor in the period 2006-2011. This need has already been met through the granting of planning applications for private sites but a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment is currently being jointly undertaken by Somerset Local Authorities, which will identify the projected need for further sites during the period 2011-2026.

Approach

5.108 It will be important to continue to work with neighbouring Local Authorities to provide a coordinated approach to meeting identified need. If need is identified for additional sites in Sedgemoor, this will be met through a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). In the interim and to provide appropriate policy coverage for the preparation of this DPD a development management policy is required to address site identification and assessment.

5.109 In order to deliver the vision and objectives featured in the Sedgemoor Sustainable Community Strategy this policy is aimed at promoting social inclusion and at ensuring that the sites are allocated in sustainable locations close to essential facilities. The aim is to improve the environment without isolating communities and clearly meets the overall core strategy’s social and environmental objectives. Particular attention will be given to potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites and habitats, such as semi dry grasslands and scrubland and lime-maple woodlands, which are particularly sensitive to recreational pressure in combination with other policies in the Core Strategy.

5.110 There is a need to take bats into account when planning the location and content of sites, particularly in the vicinity of the Mendip Hills (specific issues of habitat connectivity, land use change, night roosts and artificial lighting will need to be carefully considered). Policy D15: Bats in the Landscape should be referred to.
5 District Wide Policies

5.111 Although it is recognised that Travelling Show People sites require greater storage and maintenance space for associated equipment, the same criteria will need to be met by all groups regarding accommodation provision.

Policy D 8

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People

To meet the need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People pitches within the District, as identified by the Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment; sufficient sites will be allocated within a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). In allocating sites the following criteria will need to be satisfied:

- The site is sustainably located with easy and safe access to the highway network and within a reasonable distance by foot to local facilities and services, including public transport, schools, health facilities, cultural, sporting and leisure activities;
- The site is able to accommodate on site facilities for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles, storage, play and residential amenity space and waste recycling and composting;
- The site is environmentally acceptable, Habitats Regulations (2010) compliant and compatible with neighbouring land uses; and
- The intended occupants meet the definition of Gypsies and Travellers as set out in Circular 1/2006 (or successor), or of Travelling Show People as set out in Circular 04/2007 (or successor).

Planning applications relating to sites not identified in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) will be granted permission providing the above criteria are clearly met.

Existing authorised Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People sites will be safeguarded, unless they are no longer required to meet identified need.

Delivery

5.112 As an interim approach sites will be delivered through individual applications. The Council will encourage pre-application discussions in order to provide positive guidance on the suitability of potential sites. It will also review any existing unauthorised sites and consider the appropriateness of granting planning permission on a temporary basis.

5.113 Following the completion of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment the Council will consider whether it is necessary to allocate specific sites to meet any identified needs.

Monitoring and Review

Table 5.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M27</td>
<td><em>Net additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches (core)</em></td>
<td>Additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches should be delivered in accordance with the requirements identified in the GTAA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sustainable Transport and Movement

Context

5.114 The Core Strategy’s Spatial Strategy aims to place homes, new jobs, services and facilities where they are easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Such modes of sustainable travel have clear and direct benefits to health and Policy D19: Health and Social Care specifically promotes walking and cycling as part of healthy and active living. However it is considered that a specific policy is required that sets out a high-level framework to assess how travel management strategies and development proposals support improvements to the existing transport network and encourage modal shift.

5.115 The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review has been saved until replaced. Given that the Regional Spatial Strategy has now been revoked there is no early prospect of this being replaced and therefore it still provides relevant policy context.

5.116 The County Council are currently progressing the Future Transport Plan, the replacement for the current Local Transport Plan. Informing this process are a number of technical studies that include the Bridgwater, Taunton & Wellington Future Transport Strategy 2009 - 2026.

Approach

5.117 Whilst the emerging Future Transport Plan will set the wider strategic context to guide transport policy across the County, the core strategy includes broad guidance that will ensure that new development contributes to the overall objectives of promoting sustainable growth. It is envisaged that sustainable travel objectives for development proposals will be captured by the policy below, whilst more detailed areas will be addressed by policy D10: Managing the Transport Impacts of Development.

5.118 The place specific policies set out more detail transport schemes and requirements to support the planned growth of the settlements. However, the Council’s Infrastructure and Delivery Study identifies key projects drawn from the emerging Bridgwater, Taunton, Wellington Future Transport Plan: Strategy, the existing Local Transport Plan and the specific requirements for the NE Bridgwater Strategic site. These are the following:

- A38 Corridor Transport Package - delivery throughout the plan
- Highways Infrastructure Programme (individual projects to ease local congestion points) - delivery throughout the plan
- Bridgwater Walking and Cycling Network - delivery throughout the plan
- A39 Public Transport Corridor - delivery during first half of plan in association with potential new nuclear build at Hinkley
- North East Bridgwater Railway Road Bridge - delivered prior to completion of 1,501st dwelling at NE Bridgwater
- North East Bridgwater Footbridge and Cycle Way - delivered in association with above
- Colley Lane Southern Access Road - delivered by 2013

5.119 The County Council’s Transport Implementation Plan is being developed to reflect the availability of public finance and will be published by April 2011. Future reviews of the Sedgemoor Core Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan should incorporate transport programmes and priorities set out in the most up to date County Council Transport Implementation Plan.
5 District Wide Policies

5.120 As an interim measure the existing car park standards set out in the Somerset Local Transport Plan 2006-2011: Parking Strategy (March 2006) will continue to be applied. These broadly suggests an average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling in all new residential developments but is variable depending upon bed spaces. New developments that are in close proximity to an abundance of on-street parking and served by average levels of public transport could in certain circumstances provide less parking. The Strategy also provides details on non-residential parking standards. These parking standards will be reviewed as new County Council Parking Policies are developed as part of the emerging Future Transport Plan.

Policy D 9

Sustainable Transport and Movement

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

Proposals will:

- Support the travel improvements identified in the Somerset Local Transport Plan (and successor Future Transport Plan transport policies, implementation plan and modal strategies) and Infrastructure and Delivery Study;
- Be compatible with the existing transport infrastructure or, if not, provision shall be made, where necessary, for improvements to infrastructure to enable development to proceed;
- Contribute to reducing adverse environmental issues, including air, light and noise pollution, vibration and surface water run-off, through appropriate mitigation measures, including tree planting along road corridors for shade, amenity and air quality;
- Enhance road and personal safety;
- Enhance the facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, those with reduced mobility and other users;
- Develop innovative and adaptable approaches that deliver higher quality and accessible public transport options;
- Encourage efficient, safe and sustainable freight transport; and
- Be resilient to climate change.

Delivery

5.121 Delivery of the identified schemes will be in partnership with specific developers and Somerset County Council. Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery sets out the approach to funding transport schemes through an interim tariff approach. Detailed supplementary planning guidance will be prepared by the Council setting out scheme priorities, tariff levels, and delivery mechanisms. This will be informed by a supporting Transport Topic Paper prepared jointly by the County Council and District Council. Funding has already been secured for a number of schemes through existing Section 106 Agreements.

5.122 Detailed consideration of individual planning proposals will ensure that they contribute to the overall objectives of the policy whilst the spatial strategy ensures that the location of new development will encourage sustainable modes of travel. Detailed design guidance will also be prepared that will ensure that detailed sustainable transport options are embedded into this process.
5.123 Car parking and cycle parking standards will be reviewed and developed as part of the Future Transport Plan County Council parking policy.

Monitoring and Review

Table 5.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>The proportion of new development reaching very good, good, average and poor ratings against ‘Building for Life’ criteria (core)</td>
<td>New developments having regard to the design and other appropriate policies should at a minimum be able to achieve a 'Building for Life' rating of 'good' (14 points out of 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M28</td>
<td>Cycle journeys (local)</td>
<td>Increase in the annual number of cycling journeys in line with the current Somerset County Council Transport Plan-Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M29</td>
<td>Travel to school (local)</td>
<td>Decrease in the number of pupils making the journey to school by car in line with the current Somerset County Council Transport Plan-Policies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Managing the Transport Impacts of Development

Context

5.124 To provide a development management policy that sets out the detailed aspects of how development proposals should seek to manage the transport impacts of development, including access by all modes, traffic generation and contributions to infrastructure.

5.125 This detailed policy provides additional guidance to complement the high-level framework set out in Policy D9 (Sustainable Transport and Movement).

Approach

5.126 The overall approach is to ensure that development proposals that have a significant transport impact are supported by an appropriate transport assessment consistent with DfT’s Guidance on Transport Assessment (GTA)\(^1\) and covering all modes of transport. The scope and requirement for this will be established through early discussion with the relevant County and District officers having regard to the advice of the GTA. Proposals will need to include an appropriate Travel Plan based upon the guidance included in the County Council’s Manual for Travel Plans in order to demonstrate how development will manage transport impacts and encourage sustainable modes of travel.

5.127 There is a need to ensure that additional traffic resulting from new development does not compromise the safe and efficient operation of the strategic route network. Any new access onto the strategic route network would therefore need to be carefully considered. The saved Structure Plan identifies the strategic route network as comprising the following national, primary, and county routes:

- M5 Motorway

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\(^1\) Guidance on Transport Assessment (Department for Transport & Communities and Local Government, 2007)
5 District Wide Policies

- A38
- A39
- A361
- A370
- A371
- A372

5.128 Policy D10: Managing the Transport Impacts of Development also seeks to protect transport schemes previously "saved" in the Local Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy D 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Managing the Transport Impacts of Development

Development proposals that will have a significant transport impact should:

- Be supported by an appropriate Transport Assessment, Air Quality Assessment, Noise and Vibration Assessment and Ecological Surveys where there are significant transport implications;
- Include an appropriate Travel Plan outlining how the development will manage transport impacts and encourage more sustainable modes of travel;
- Ensure provision is made for inclusive, safe and convenient access for pedestrians, people with disabilities, cyclists and users of public transport that addresses the needs of all;
- Provide safe access to roads of adequate standard within the route hierarchy;
- Ensure that the expected nature and volume of traffic and parked vehicles generated by the development would not compromise the safety and/or function of the local or strategic road networks in terms of both volume and type of traffic generated;
- Comprehensively address the transport impact of development and appropriately contribute to the delivery of the necessary transport infrastructure;
- Not prejudice existing and new safeguarded transport infrastructure (sites and routes) as shown on the ‘Saved’ Local Plan Proposals Map; and
- Enhance and develop rights-of-way as a means of managing transport impacts of development and should not reduce the convenience and safety of existing rights-of-ways, bridle paths and cycle paths, unless suitable alternative routes are provided.

Delivery

5.129 This policy is primarily a development management tool to ensure that new developments provide for safe and appropriate means of transport and access. It will be delivered through the individual consideration of planning applications.

5.130 The County Council’s Manual for Travel Plans will provide guidance to developers and landowners on how to manage transport impacts generated by their proposals and encourage sustainable modes of travel. The District Council intend to locally adopt a supplementary planning document on Travel Planning based on this guidance.
Monitoring and Review

Table 5.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td><em>The proportion of new development reaching very good, good, average and poor ratings against ‘Building for Life’ criteria (core)</em></td>
<td>New developments having regard to the design and other appropriate policies should at a minimum be able to achieve a ‘Building for Life’ rating of ‘good’ (14 points out of 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M30</td>
<td><em>Travel Plans (local)</em></td>
<td>All major development proposals should be supported by a Travel Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ensuring Economic Wellbeing

Economic Prosperity

Context

5.131 The Council is a pro-business authority with clear aims for shaping and delivering investment to achieve a prosperous economy. As set out in the Spatial Strategy, the Council is pursuing an employment led approach to manage growth across the District and improve economic self-containment. In recent years it has been extremely successful in attracting new inward investment that takes advantage of the District’s excellent connections to the strategic transport network. This has included significant growth within the logistics sector, although there has been concern that this has not provided the number or higher quality job opportunities that the Council wishes to encourage.

5.132 Since the early 1990’s the Sedgemoor economy has grown significantly averaging 776 new jobs per annum although there have been significant fluctuations during this period. More recently there has been a net decline in employment with the loss of over 900 jobs between 2006 and 2008. Given that this period only covered the start of the recent recession, it is reasonable to assume that there have been continued job losses whilst the impact of public sector spending cuts will also result in further decline in jobs. Despite these extremely challenging economic conditions the Council continues to attract new investment, the new Regional Distribution Centre at NE Bridgwater that will create over 1,000 new jobs being one such example. The "Housing requirement for Sedgemoor and Bridgwater (August 2010)" report provides further information on the Sedgemoor economy.

Economic Masterplan and Employment Land Review

5.133 Key evidence for developing the economic development policies and approach for the Core Strategy include the Sedgemoor Economic Masterplan 2008-26 and the supporting Employment Land Review. The Economic Masterplan sets the goal of moving to a higher value-added knowledge driven economy during the Plan period. Whilst Bridgwater is recognised as the focus for inward investment, the coastal and rural areas of the District and Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge have an important role in driving economic growth and prosperity as an integral part of a modern, living, working countryside.

5.134 The Masterplan identifies issues to be tackled including: low skills levels in the workforce; below average educational attainment; pockets of multiple deprivation and lack of aspiration in some communities; negative perception of Sedgemoor/Bridgwater; physical constraints on development; and poor quality of town centres (including retail offer). It also sets out a number of priorities and a detailed action plan for achieving economic prosperity within Sedgemoor and recognises the importance of the Core Strategy as one of the key delivery mechanisms.

5.135 The Employment Land Review includes a portfolio of deliverable sites for potential employment use across the District. It provides the Council with an ongoing supply of employment land to meet identified and future requirements. However it does not take account of wider policy objectives and it is for the Core Strategy and subsequent development plan documents to determine suitability of individual sites.

Employment Land Requirements and Distribution

5.136 As set out in the Spatial Strategy, there is a requirement to provide for at least 94609.620 new jobs within the District. This is based upon a review of previous economic growth projections as well as other factors such as past performance and the Council's ambitious approach to inward investment and set out in full in Section 3 of the Core Strategy. Area based spatial policies have
identified preferred locations for accommodating this growth, but common to the whole of the Sedgemoor economy is a need to enhance performance in order to ensure that the District is well placed to deliver sustainable employment growth that will support the wider transformational vision for the area. Planning consent was granted in 2010 for the mixed use urban extension at North East Bridgwater that includes 110,000 square metres of employment land that will provide approximately 2700 jobs.

**Economic Implications of Hinkley Point C**

5.137 Current proposals for new nuclear build at Hinkley Point C would generate significant demand for additional employment land and premises to support the construction phase, including related supply chain businesses. The Core Strategy addresses this issue in Section 4: Major Infrastructure Projects and associated policies. Employment opportunities generated as a result of the proposals will be in addition to 9160 jobs identified above.

**Mix and Type of Employment**

5.138 Over recent years, a number of town centre employment sites have been lost to residential uses as a consequence of the prioritising housing delivery on brownfield sites coupled with the lack of investment and changing operator requirements. This has led to a significant reduction in locally accessible employment opportunities and exacerbated the need to travel by less sustainable travel modes for jobs. This has also led to a decline in smaller and affordable units suitable for start-up businesses.

**Approach**

5.139 The Core Strategy will support the appropriate expansion of existing business and new employment proposals that contribute to delivering a diverse, robust, thriving and resilient economy that provides local and higher quality job opportunities. The plan promotes an employment led strategy based upon the evidence set out in the ‘Sedgemoor and Bridgwater Housing Requirement’ report. The policy approach is to identify a range of sites and opportunities to ensure that inward investment can be accommodated within a planning framework. The policy provides a clear priority for B1 (b)(c), B2 and B8 on brownfield and consented sites and a need to demonstrate that such sites are not available before alternatives are considered. As such, the policy does not suggest that all opportunities set out in Table 5.12 will be released. This is consistent with PPS4 and reflects a positive and flexible approach. Office uses are prioritised on town centres or land already committed for that purpose.

**Managing Employment Delivery**

The Council will focus the delivery of large-scale employment proposals at Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge in accordance with the following priorities:

- Firstly on brownfield sites including the former Royal Ordnance Factory Site (Puriton Energy Park) and on sites that have been 'saved' from the Sedgemoor District Local Plan 1991-2011 (as referred to in Policies P1: Bridgwater Urban Area and P3: Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge);
- Secondly on the preferred greenfield locations set out in Policies P1: Bridgwater Urban Area and P3: Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge;
- Thirdly, exceptionally on other greenfield sites identified in the Employment Land Review which have locational requirements that could not reasonably be accommodated on the above sites.

5.140 Table 5.152 below identifies significant employment land supply and includes an indicative jobs trajectory (based upon standard job densities by use class) for the District over the Plan period. This supply is split into five year periods to represent short, medium and long-term delivery (2010-2015,
5 District Wide Policies

2015-20, 2021-2026. Given the uncertainties associated with predicting employment creation it is important to ensure a range of sites is available to meet emerging needs. This trajectory will be the basis for monitoring delivery and ensure that an adequate supply of deliverable employment land is maintained. Additional locations may exceptionally be considered where it can be demonstrated that identified sites are either unsuitable or unavailable within the first half of the plan period. However, the Council is committed to delivering employment in line with the policy below and therefore evidence to support such an exception will need to be robust.
### Table 5.12: Employment Land Supply and Jobs Trajectory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Use(s)</th>
<th>Constraints</th>
<th>Area (/Net m²)</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Phasing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NE Bridgwater</td>
<td>B1(a)</td>
<td>Site now has outline consent. Development of B8 to commence in Autumn 2010. Ongoing delivery requires investment in infrastructure including new access from A38. Funding secured through S.106.</td>
<td>27,500</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1(b)(c)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Short/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B8</td>
<td></td>
<td>72,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset Bridge</td>
<td>B8</td>
<td>Dependant upon construction of Colley Lane Access Route, funding secured and delivery anticipated by 2013. Poor ground conditions and potential contamination. Flood zone 3a.</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellworthys</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Contaminated land, flood zone 3a, access will be improved through construction of Colley Lane Access Road.</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of Retail Park</td>
<td>B1(b)(c)</td>
<td>Contaminated land, flood zone 3a, likely to come forward as part of wider package of development.</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showground Business Park</td>
<td>B1(b)(e)</td>
<td>Peer-ground conditions.</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgwater Town Centre</td>
<td>A2/B1(a)</td>
<td>Small sites, much of town centre in flood zone 3a. A1 floorspace linked to Northgate town centre extension.</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A1</td>
<td></td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>Short/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puriton Energy Park</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Contaminated site, flood zone 3a (although detailed FRA undertaken), access</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Medium/Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>15,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>750</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## District Wide Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Use(s)</th>
<th>Constraints</th>
<th>Area (m²)</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Phasing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B2/B8</td>
<td></td>
<td>constraints require significant investment, need for comprehensive masterplan. Site uses, sizes and job numbers are illustrative only.</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>4,900</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sui Generis (energy generation)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Bridgewater (adjacent to A38)</td>
<td>B1/B2 and ancillary uses</td>
<td>Specifically reserved for business uses that will support Hinkley C NNB. Part of site potentially required for park and ride facility. Access constraints to be fully resolved. Likely that part of site developed in short term with P &amp; R site developed in the long term.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol Road Corridor</td>
<td>B1(a)</td>
<td>Flood zone 3a and contributions towards strategic flood defences required. European Protected Species habitat (great crested newts)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>260</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1 (b)(c)</td>
<td></td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>440</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B8</td>
<td></td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnham Town Centre (office cluster)</td>
<td>A2, B1(a)</td>
<td>Limited opportunities currently identified. Likely to require consolidation and conversion of existing properties to provide suitable modern accommodation.</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isleport extension (†) (Committed)</td>
<td>B1 (b)(c)</td>
<td>Access constraints</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Use(s)</td>
<td>Constraints</td>
<td>Area (Net m²)</td>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>Phasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site within urban area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isleport extension (2)</td>
<td>B1 (a)</td>
<td>Site will be identified through subsequent allocations DPD. Broad location adjacent to Isleport.</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1 (b)(c)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>235</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B8</td>
<td></td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>560</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheddar Business Park (phase 3)</td>
<td>B1 (b)(c)</td>
<td>Access constraints.</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Short/medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.141 For office uses, locational priorities are firstly the town centres, secondly edge of centres and only out of centre if no suitable sites are available that meet the specific operational requirements.

5.142 Employment proposals outside of the towns but within or adjacent to the identified settlements will be supported where it provides local job opportunities and is compatible with the scale and character of the area. In line with the Economic Masterplan, employment proposals within places should contribute to the restructuring of the local economy and provide opportunities for managed workspace, enhanced infrastructure, business incubation units and home-working to contribute self-containment objectives.

5.143 Elsewhere, in the countryside small-scale employment proposals that require such a location will be supported. Place specific policies P4: Key Rural Settlements, P5: Other Sustainable Settlements and P6: Countryside provide further context and guidance.

**Safeguarding Existing Employment Land and Buildings**

5.144 The Council will continue to safeguard existing sites and buildings for employment uses where they continue to be sustainable for employment development, continue to meet the needs of the market and are required to maintain a local balance between housing and employment. Where retention of existing sites and buildings is not viable, encouragement for either mixed commercial uses or in some cases mixed commercial and residential schemes may be appropriate in order to retain modern employment premises that meet the needs and demands of the local economy.

5.145 In taking into account viability the Council will require a full development appraisal, including financial viability assessment to be submitted. Negotiations will be based on an ‘open book’ approach and any demonstration should be based on an agreed financial appraisal model. Where the Council are required to seek independent financial advice to assess the viability issues, this will be funded by the developer or promoter of the scheme.

**Skills and Local Labour**

The Council has adopted an Employment and Skills Charter that seeks to ensure employment proposals include an agreed proportion of local labour, training and recruitment plan and commitment to a proportion of local procurement and supplies.
Policy D 11

Economic Prosperity

In general employment proposals will be supported where they contribute to the following objectives:

- Accord with the Spatial Strategy;
- Deliver a minimum of 9,460 9,620 new jobs between 2006-2017;
- Encourage a diverse, robust, thriving and resilient (in terms of both climate change and economic resilience) economy;
- Enhance the image of the area as a business location;
- Provide or retain appropriate work spaces to meet local demand;
- Provide local and higher quality job opportunities;
- Improve the skills of the resident work force;
- Increase self-containment, reduce the need to travel and accessible by sustainable transport modes;
- Are compatible with the scale and character of their location.

Managing Employment Delivery

All large-scale proposals (over 1,000m² of gross floor space) for research and development, light industry, general industrial and distribution (B1b, B1c, B2 and B8) should be focused at Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge in accordance with the following locational priorities:

Firstly, on brownfield sites through the remodelling and redevelopment of existing employment land and buildings within established industrial/business areas, including the former Royal Ordnance Factory site owned land at Puriton and on existing 'saved' employment allocations and consented sites;

Secondly, where it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable brownfield sites outlined above, taking into account operational requirements and deliverability, then on preferred greenfield locations set out in Policies P1: Bridgwater Urban Area and P3: Burnham-on-Sea / Highbridge where all the above policy objectives are met;

Thirdly, exceptionally on other greenfield sites identified in the Council's Employment Land Review that meet all the policy objectives above, taking into account operational requirements and deliverability. Exceptional circumstances include Exceptionally other greenfield sites may be considered for development that is of national or regional significance and has locational requirements that could not reasonably be accommodated on brownfield or the preferred greenfield locations. Any such sites would need to meet all of the policy objectives above, taking into account operational requirements and deliverability.

Recognising the demands on the area from the distribution and logistics sector, the Council will seek to ensure where proposals for warehousing development are potentially acceptable they are supported by associated support facilities that help to attract higher skilled and better paid jobs.

Taking into account operational requirements and deliverability, proposals for office uses at Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge should be located in accordance with the following locational priorities:
1. Firstly, in the existing town centres or on land already committed for this purpose;

2. Secondly, where no suitable sites are available in the centres, then edge of centre; and

3. Finally, out of centre.

Elsewhere, small-scale employment development that meets the above objectives will be supported within or adjacent to Key Rural Settlements and Other Sustainable Settlements where it is appropriate to the scale and character of the community and promotes local job opportunities. Priority should be given to the redevelopment or remodelling of brownfield sites above greenfield.

Employment proposals that contribute to the restructuring of the local economy to support knowledge-based industries and smaller businesses will be encouraged, especially in the Key Rural Settlements and Other Sustainable Settlements; this will include the provision of managed workspace, business incubation units and opportunities for home-working.

Outside of the identified settlements small-scale economic activity that meets a specific countryside need, such as that relates to agriculture, forestry or local food production, will be supported. In addition, schemes for farm diversification, which contribute to the long-term operation and viability of the farm holding, and proposals for the conversion and re-use of appropriate existing buildings that encourage rural enterprise and provide new employment space will be encouraged.

The expansion of businesses in their existing locations will be supported, dependent upon the nature of the activities involved, the character of the site and its accessibility. Priority should be given to the redevelopment, remodelling and/or enhancement of existing sites in the first instance.

In all cases development will need to demonstrate that there are no significant adverse impacts on biodiversity interests as set in Policy D14: Natural Environment.

**Safeguarding Existing Employment Land and Buildings**

Proposals to change the use, redevelop or convert existing employment sites and buildings to non-employment uses will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there is no likelihood of a viable employment use or redevelopment; and

- It would be preferable for the existing activity, as a result of adverse environmental impact, to be relocated to a more suitable site and its reuse for employment is not feasible or appropriate; or
- No suitable alternative provision for the proposed use has been made elsewhere in the Local Development Framework Development Document.

The same principle applies to sites with planning permission for employment uses that have not been implemented.

Where it is accepted that employment use or redevelopment of such sites is not viable or suitable, priority will be given to alternative uses in the following order:

1. Mixed use schemes;

2. Residential only schemes.

**Skills/local labour**
The council will encourage partnership working between employers and local training providers to help develop the skills of the resident workforce and sections of the community that are disadvantaged in the labour market. For employment developments that propose 10 or more jobs in total, the Council will seek to enter into a local labour agreement with the developer/applicant in accordance with the Council’s adopted Employment and Skills Charter that sets out the following:

- An agreed % target for local labour
- A training and recruitment plan and
- Commitment to an agreed proportion of local procurement of services and supplies.

### Delivery

#### 5.146
Planning consent has now been granted for the strategic mixed use urban extension at North East Bridgwater consisting of 2000 houses and 110,000 square metres of employment space. Funding of over £11m has been secured that will guarantee early delivery of key infrastructure. The detailed consent includes a regional distribution centre that is due to be operational in 2011, that will provide at least 1300 new jobs.

#### 5.147
In partnership with the site promoters a Masterplan will be prepared in line with the above policy for the Energy Park at Puriton, emphasising renewable and low carbon energy generation objectives.

#### 5.148
The Employment Land Review will provide the mechanism for managing employment land requirements to ensure that a continued supply of land is available and deliverable. This will inform the preparation of a site allocations document for the greenfield locations identified above. This will include design principles for the sites and the phased delivery of infrastructure working with landowners and developers.

#### 5.149
The Council is committed to supporting economic development and funds dedicated officers to provide specific business advice. In particular it will work with education and training partners including Bridgwater challenge to ensure that training is available to meet business needs. It also works with other District and County officers as part of the "into Somerset" economic development partnership.

### Monitoring and Review

#### Table 5.13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M31</td>
<td>Employment land (core)</td>
<td>Maintain a current record of uptake and availability of employment land and premises that is updated at least annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M32</td>
<td>Additional employment floorspace (core)</td>
<td>540,000m² of additional B1(a), B1(b), B1(c), B2 and B8 floorspace at the locations identified above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tourism

Context

5.150 It is recognised that the benefits of tourism need to be maximised, in particular ensuring that development is able to reach its potential to contribute to tourism and for local communities to enjoy those benefits.

5.151 Tourism is a significant component of Sedgemoor’s economy, although a high proportion of this is seasonal, accounting for about 14% of local employment. It includes significant seaside based attractions and accommodation concentrated along the coastal strip north of Burnham-on-Sea, the natural attraction of the famous Cheddar Gorge, rural attractions including the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal, and walking, cycling and riding within the Quantock Hills, Mendip Hills and Levels and Moors. The annual tour of the Carnival which starts with the Bridgwater Carnival in the autumn/winter attracts visitors from all over the country. Sedgemoor is also an excellent centre for other tourist destinations and centres in the region for example Glastonbury, Wells, Bath and Minehead.

5.152 Bed and breakfast accommodation and holiday parks at Burnham-on-Sea, Brean and Berrow make up a large component of Sedgemoor's tourist industry and provides employment for many people. Unfortunately the industry has been affected by the popularity of overseas holiday destinations which has reduced the two-week summer holiday market. However, there has been an increase in shorter breaks. Tourist visits to the coastal areas remain strong and there has been significant investment in facilities in the Brean area. The Council has actively supported improvements into existing caravan and camping sites although recognises that there remain long term issues in respect of flood risk which makes future investment plans problematic. The flooding issue needs to be resolved before a substantial increase in development takes place. Updating the seaside/coastal offer as well as extending the length of the tourist season is a high priority for Sedgemoor’s tourist industry.

5.153 Cheddar Gorge and the associated caves are the most famous tourist attraction within Sedgemoor and are known, not only nationally but internationally and have a substantial number of visitors. However, the technical annexe of Sedgemoor’s Economic Masterplan 2008-2026 highlights Cheddar Gorge a being an ‘under-utilised’ asset for the district and is identified as an area with a need for new investment. Many of the visitors to the Gorge are day visitors staying outside of the district. Increased marketing and new investment is required in order to maintain and increase visitor numbers and accordingly, the increase in the provision of high quality hotel accommodation would benefit the district.

5.154 Sedgemoor’s environmental assets include parts of the Quantock Hills and Mendip Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Somerset Levels and Moors and the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal making the district particularly attractive for more sustainable forms of tourism activity, including extensive walking, cycling and horse riding opportunities.
5.155 The Economic Development Masterplan has identified opportunities to develop walking and cycling opportunities that would stimulate associated economic activity such as accommodation, retail and food and drink outlets in the rural areas. It also identifies opportunities for more active outdoor pursuits such as caving, climbing and mountain biking based around the creation of a 'sustainable activity' holiday focal point in the Cheddar area.

5.156 Broadening the tourism offer and enhancing the tourism product to include further variety and develop higher value niches will increase the sustainability and competitiveness of Sedgemoor’s tourist product and will address the lack of a significant indoor offer, other than Cheddar Caves, that would support extension of the holiday season.

Approach

5.157 To improve Sedgemoor’s tourism offer and to extend the tourism season, support will be given to sustainable tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses, communities and visitors. These benefits should utilise and enrich, rather than harm, the character of the countryside, towns, villages, buildings and other features. Re-investment and modernisation of sites will result in the improvement in the quality and diversity of facilities. Tourist assets and tourist accommodation should be more accessible by sustainable means of transport and needs to incorporate green tourism and climate change adaptation. These key issues will be addressed by meeting the objectives of the following policy.

5.158 There is no requirement for specific reference to managing caravan and chalet site proposals including new and extended sites as these are addressed by Policy EC7 (Planning for tourism in rural areas) of PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth. Within this Core Strategy Policy P3: Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge provides specific guidance on development along the Brean Berrow coastal strip including the circumstances in which enhancements and extensions may be supported. Given the potential vulnerability to tidal flooding in this area, any such proposals will need to pass the sequential and exceptions tests as set out in Policy D1: Managing Flood Risk.

5.159 Tourist development has the potential to result in increased recreational pressures on sensitive habitats including nationally and internationally designated sites. Any such proposal will need to demonstrate that there are no adverse impacts or, in exceptional circumstances if this is unavoidable, appropriate mitigation provided as outlined in Policies D14: Natural Environment and D15: Bats in the Landscape.

Policy D 12

Tourism

Proposals for tourism related initiatives including accommodation will be supported where they contribute to the following objectives:

- Improving the quality and diversity of the tourism offer and enhancing the image of the area as a tourism location;
- Improving the resilience of the local economy through the provision of higher quality local job opportunities and extending the tourism season;
- Promote education and interpretation of the natural, built and historic environment;
- Promoting sustainable tourism taking into account the impacts and effects of climate change;
- Increase accessibility to the District’s tourist assets, facilities and accommodation through sustainable modes of travel including cycling and walking;
• Managing visitor pressure to prevent harm to the natural and built environment and local communities; and
• Enhance social cohesion and benefit the local community through access to facilities.

Proposals for new hotels or similar accommodation will particularly be encouraged within the towns of Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge or where there is an opportunity for the conversion and re-use of suitable existing buildings in the countryside.

In all cases development will need to demonstrate that there are no significant adverse impacts on biodiversity interests as set out in Policy D14: Natural Environment and Policy D15: Bats in the Landscape and be compliant with the Habitats Regulations (2010).

Delivery

5.160 Delivery will primarily be through private sector investment although the Council will support proposals through its wider economic development function.

Monitoring and Review

Table 5.14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M35</td>
<td>Tourism accommodation development (local)</td>
<td>Increase in the number of bed spaces in hotels or similar accommodation in Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Retail Hierarchy

Context

5.161 Sedgemoor will experience population and employment growth over the next 20 years. This will mean a need for more retail and leisure provision and for different types of provision. However, shopping generally is changing rapidly, particularly with the rise of internet shopping. It is important therefore that the District’s centres adapt to changing circumstances, are accessible to all and meet the needs of both existing and new residents and visitors.

5.162 The Government provides guidance on town and other centres in PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth stating that flexible policies should be set for centres which are able to respond to changing economic circumstances and encourage, where appropriate, high-density development accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. Town Centres and District Centres should be the preferred locations for retailing and other town centre uses which attract a large number of trips.

5.163 The Sedgemoor Town Centres and Retail Study (2009) provides detailed information on how the main centres function. The report indicates that only 42% of comparison expenditure is retained in the district, with 24% of this going to Bridgwater town centre. This is a low retention rate that reflects the draw of stronger nearby centres at Taunton, Weston-Super-Mare and Bristol. The district does however retain 84% of convenience expenditure, with 47% going to the three main stores in Bridgwater.
5.164 The key retail objective of the Core Strategy is therefore to retain and promote a range and mix of retail facilities within the towns and villages to meet the needs of the community and which will preserve and enhance the character and vitality of those centres.

Approach

5.165 The Spatial Strategy Policy S1: Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor and place making policies P1 - P5 provide further guidance on retail development. However, it is important to identify a retail hierarchy and set out detailed policy to control town centre uses. The Core Strategy identifies Town Centres for Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea where it is expected that new shopping proposals will be accommodated. There will be support for mixed use development that will benefit the vitality of the towns at all times of the day. In order to retain existing retail uses within the Primary Shopping area, applications for non-retail uses will be restricted. However, other uses appropriate for the town centre will be encouraged within the Secondary Shopping areas. Retail and non-retail uses are as defined within the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended), for information these are summarised in the glossary.

5.166 District Centres are identified at St. John Street, Bridgwater, recognising the important role this mixed retail area has in the town as well as Highbridge and Cheddar, where encouragement is given to appropriate retail and complementary uses that meet the needs of the local community. Within those areas the loss of retail units and appropriate non-retail uses shall be resisted. Neighbourhood Centres, which include the nine areas listed within the Retail Hierarchy table below provide valuable facilities to meet the needs of the local community and the loss of such facilities will be resisted.

5.167 The Cheddar Gorge Commercial Area is identified on the as defined on the saved Local Plan Proposals Map. This area has a concentration of shops, restaurants, teashops and other commercial activities which are associated with the tourism function of the area rather than the general needs of Cheddar. This area is not considered to be appropriate for general retailing and the policy seeks to encourage only retail uses that are associated with tourism.

5.168 Local retail provision of an appropriate scale and the retention of existing facilities in key rural settlements and other settlements is generally supported, Policies P4: Key Rural Settlements and P5: Other Sustainable Settlements provide specific guidance. Specialist retail provision may in some cases be appropriate in the countryside, examples include farm shops and some forms of garden centres. Restriction of the type and range of goods will usually be appropriate in such cases in order to ensure that they do not become centres for general retailing that should be located within the identified centres.

Policy D 13

Retail Hierarchy and Centres

Existing and new town centre uses (as defined in PPS4) will be supported where they contribute to the following objectives:

- Compatible with the role and function of the centre as set out in the retail hierarchy below;
- Improve the vitality and viability of the centre (and not harm other centres in the District) including its economic resilience;
- Enhance the image of the centre;
Managing Retail Uses

The retail hierarchy for Sedgemoor is set out in Table 5.13 below. This identifies the role of Town Centres (including primary shopping areas and primary and secondary shopping areas retail frontages), District Centres and Neighbourhood Centres.

Within Primary shopping areas retail frontages (as defined on the Proposals Map) proposals for ground floor retail (A1) will be supported, proposals for ground floor non-retail uses (A2 – A5) will only be allowed if it does not form a prominent part/ link of the shopping frontage or it does not form a continuous frontage with one or more existing non-retail uses and does not cause harm to the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.

Within Secondary shopping areas retail frontages (as defined on the Proposals Map), proposals for ground floor retail (A1) and non-retail uses (A2-A5, D1, and D2) will be supported provided that they do not result in a concentration of single uses where the cumulative impact results in a loss of retail units damaging to the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Within the Primary and Secondary shopping areas retail frontages support and encouragement will be given for mixed-use schemes that provide for office and residential accommodation above appropriate ground floor retail, leisure or other town centre uses.

Within the district centres (as defined on the Proposals Map), support will be given for appropriate retail and complementary uses that meet the needs of the local community. Retail (A1) and non-retail uses (A2-A5) at ground floor level will be supported within the defined district centre boundaries and the loss of such uses will only be allowed if an overriding justification can be demonstrated.

Within Neighbourhood Centres (as defined on the Proposals Map and the 'Saved' Local Plan Proposals Map) the loss of existing services and facilities that meet the day to day needs of the local community will be resisted unless an over-riding justification can be demonstrated.

Within the identified Cheddar Gorge Commercial area (as defined on the 'Saved' Proposals Map) any new retail proposals should be associated with the tourism function of the area.

Proposals for retail and leisure uses that exceed 2,500m² gross floor space outside of the identified town centres should be supported by an impact assessment that meets the requirements of PPS4.

Retail Uses in the countryside

Proposals for specialist retail provision in the countryside such as farm shops and garden centres and associated extensions will be supported where there is no significant impact on the viability of existing shops within adjoining settlements and proposals meet other relevant policies in the Core Strategy. In some cases it may be appropriate to limit the range or source of goods and floor space through conditions or legal agreement.
Table 5.15 Retail Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Designation</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Town Centre</td>
<td>Bridgwater</td>
<td>Identification of town centre, primary and secondary retail frontages and primary shopping areas (as defined on the Proposals Map). Focus for additional retail development with up to 16,000m² of new comparison floorspace. Potential new leisure facilities, restaurants, and cafés to strengthen and diversify the centre and to retain expenditure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Centre</td>
<td>Burnham-on-Sea</td>
<td>Identification of town centre, primary and secondary retail frontages and primary shopping area (as defined on the Proposals Map). Focus for small scale retail development with up to 5,000m² of new comparison floorspace. Also focus for leisure, restaurants, cafés etc that support and strengthen tourism role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Centre</td>
<td>Highbridge</td>
<td>For Highbridge, identification of consolidated district centre boundary focused on Market Street (as defined on the Proposals Map). Focus for small-scale retail development to meet local needs. For Cheddar, retention of existing retail boundary (as defined on the Proposals Map) as the focus for non-tourist related town centre uses to meet the needs of the local community. For St John Street (as defined on the Proposals Map), focus on small-scale provision to meet local needs and specialist/start up retail businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cheddar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St John Street, Bridgwater</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Centre</td>
<td>North Street, Taunton Road, Westonzoyland Road, Bower Manor, Wills Road, Parkway, Rhode Lane, South Bridgwater, Rosewood Farm</td>
<td>Retain existing identified &quot;local centres&quot; (as defined on the 'Saved' Local Plan Proposals Map) with addition at South Bridgwater (as defined on the Proposals Map). Emphasis on retention of existing uses, resisting inappropriate change of use and supporting enhanced provision that meets local needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Delivery**

5.169 This policy primarily seeks to control the provision of new retail and associated town centre uses. Delivery will principally be through private investment and in conjunction with other policies in the Core strategy. The Council owns a significant number of retail properties within Bridgwater and will therefore contribute to the provision of appropriate new town centre uses through the use of flexible leases and rental agreements.
5.170 The Council will publish annual town centre reports identifying the mix of uses within the centres and changes that have taken place during the previous twelve months. This data will be of direct interest to potential new investors. It will also continue to support new retail investment through innovative use of new initiatives such as "shop Jacket" that has been installed on a Council owned shop.

**Monitoring and Review**

**Table 5.16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M36</td>
<td>Additional floorspace for ‘town centre uses’ (core)</td>
<td>Increase in A1, A2, B1a, and D2 floorspace in the town centres, including a minimum of 16,000m² of comparison retail floorspace in Bridgwater town centre and 5,000m² in Burnham-on-Sea town centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M37</td>
<td>Vacant retail premises (local)</td>
<td>Maintain a low rate of vacant retail premises in all centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M38</td>
<td>Loss of ground floor retail units in district centres (local)</td>
<td>Minimise the loss of retail units to non-retail uses within the defined district centre boundaries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.171 In addition to the above monitoring indicators that will be reported in the Annual Monitoring Report each year, the Council will also carry out a more comprehensive biennial Town Centre Health Check in line with recommendations outlined in PPS4.

**Enjoying and Achieving**

**Natural Environment**

**Context**

5.172 Sedgemoor’s natural environment is unique. As well as having 12 miles of coastline, the District is home to two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in the Mendip and Quantock Hills, 28 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The Somerset Levels and Moors are designated as internationally important wetlands, for nature conservation at a European level as a Special Protection Area (SPA) for its wintering and migratory birds and internationally as a Ramsar for its birds and aquatic invertebrates. The Bridgwater Bay component of the Severn Estuary SPA/Special Area of Conservation(SAC)/Ramsar is designated for its wintering, migratory and breeding birds, its marine habitats and migratory fish. Also at a European level there are four Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in the District: Exmoor & Quantocks Oak Woodlands; Mendip Limestone Grasslands; Mendip Woodlands; and Mendip & North Somerset and Mendip Bats. The whole of the Core Strategy has therefore also been the subject of a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

5.173 The District Council recognises the value of our natural assets and has been working with Somerset County Council, the District/Borough Councils, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Environment Agency and other conservation agencies as part of the Somerset Biodiversity Partnership to identify species and habitats that are important in Somerset and to draw up plans to care for them.
5.174 ‘Wild Somerset’ is the Strategy that covers the whole area of Somerset and describes how the partnership will work together and involve local communities and other agencies in activities to protect and enhance wildlife.

5.175 Local Biodiversity Action Plans are developed by local partnerships. These identify local species and habitat priorities and set out ways to protect them and describes the actions that Sedgemoor and other partners will take locally to protect and enhance wildlife in the district. The Somerset Biodiversity Partnership has recently reviewed and re-written Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) for Somerset and include: Species Action Plans (SAPs) for Bats, Lapwings and Otters, and Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) for: Hedgerows and hedgerow trees; Gardens and urban greenspace; Wood pasture, parkland and veteran trees; Roadside verges and green lanes; Ditches and ponds; Water and wetlands and Traditional orchards.

Approach

Landscape

5.176 The policy seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment wherever possible and will resist development that may have an adverse impact on its character as well as ensure that proposals enhance or maintain conserve the natural beauty of AONBs and the distinctive landscape features identified in the Sedgemoor Landscape Assessment and Countryside Design Summary. The Policy seeks to ensure that development that could result in having a significant impact on the landscape (including the historic landscape) incorporates appropriate mitigation and compensation measures. Tranquility can be a significant attribute of some landscapes and Policy D16: Pollution Impacts of Development and Protecting Residential Amenity is also relevant.

Biodiversity

5.177 The policy seeks to support development which protects and delivers net gain for biodiversity and retains and enhances natural features. New development where it is reasonably likely that species and/or habitats of nature conservation significance may be impacted upon will be required to demonstrate, through an Ecological Impact Assessment, how conservation of biodiversity is taken into account in its design and implementation. In particular, such an survey Impact Assessment should include an assessment of how a development would affect biodiversity in a landscape setting (i.e. through the loss or changes to habitats and their effects on the viability of species populations) and show how priority habitats and species identified in the Somerset and Sedgemoor Biodiversity Action Plans and related Habitat Action Plan (HAP) and Species Action Plan (SAP) will be safeguarded. Particular regard should be had to enhancement opportunities within the Strategic Nature Areas identified in the South West Nature Map. These represent the best areas to maintain and expand wildlife habitats through their management, restoration and/or re-creation. The Policy also seeks to ensure that development that could result in having a significant impact on nature conservation shall incorporate appropriate mitigation and compensation measures.

5.178 As a ‘competent authority’ under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 the District Council is responsible for ensuring that populations and distribution of European Protected Species are maintained at a ‘Favourable Conservation Status’ as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive. Applicants must provide all necessary information to enable such an assessment to be conducted, including any necessary survey work, reports and avoidance / mitigation measures with the planning application. Those responsible for project-level Ecological Impact Assessments should, in respect of European sites, utilise Core Strategy HRA reports as context where appropriate by summarising / referencing this (rather than duplicating).
Policy D 14

Natural Environment

Landscape

Development proposals within the Mendip Hills AONB or the Quantock Hills AONB will only be supported where they enhance or maintain conserve the natural beauty, or the exceptional character or quality of the landscape in these areas.

Elsewhere in the District proposals should ensure that they enhance the landscape quality wherever possible or that there is no significant adverse impact on local landscape character, scenic quality and distinctive landscape features as identified in the Sedgemoor Landscape Assessment and Countryside Design Summary. In particular through:

- Siting and landscaping that takes account of visibility from publicly accessible vantage points;
- The form, bulk and design of buildings having proper regard to their context in respect of both the immediate setting and the defining characteristics of the wider local area.

Where there are reasonable grounds to suggest that a development proposal may result in a significant adverse impact on the landscape, the Council will require planning applications to be supported by Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments.

In exceptional circumstances, where development is necessary and could result in significant impact on the landscape, appropriate mitigation and compensation measures should be provided.

Biodiversity

All development proposals should contribute to enhancing and maintaining biodiversity, taking into account climate change and the need for habitats and species to adapt to it. Particular regard should be had to:

- The targets set out in the Somerset and Sedgemoor Biodiversity Action Plans;
- The presence of, or potential impact on, European Protected Species;
- Potential impact on internationally and nationally designated sites of nature conservation importance; and
- Enhancement opportunities within the Strategic Nature Areas identified in the South West Nature Map.

Ecological Survey Impact Assessments will be required where it is reasonably likely that species and/or habitats of nature conservation significance may be impacted on by the proposed development. In addition, a Construction Environmental Management Plan will be required where there is potential for significant environmental effects during the construction stage.

Development will be supported where:

- As well as ensuring the protection of internationally and nationally designated sites, it protects the nature conservation interest of local sites designated for their nature conservation value; non-statutory Nature Reserves and other important habitats including Calcareous and Neutral Grassland, coastal and marine, heathland and woodland;
5 District Wide Policies

- It retains or enhances features such as wetlands, watercourses, coastal features, hedgerows, trees, copse and ponds which provide wildlife corridors, links or stepping stones from one habitat to another; and
- It makes positive provision for wildlife through appropriate urban and rural habitat creation/restoration (having particular regard to BAP habitats and Strategic Nature Areas), including tree and hedgerow planting, and subsequent management.

In exceptional circumstances, where development is necessary and could result in significant indirect or direct adverse impacts to nature conservation appropriate mitigation and compensation measures should be provided.

Delivery

5.179 This policy is primarily a development management tool and delivery will therefore be through the individual consideration of planning applications. Policy D2: Promoting High Quality and Inclusive Design is also relevant and further design guidance will include references to minimising landscape impacts. Green infrastructure is also directly relevant and will contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural landscape. Policy D20 and the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy will therefore support delivery of the policy objectives.

5.180 The Council will seek to implement key actions set out in the Sedgemoor Biodiversity Action Plan and to work with key partners such as Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>Change in areas of biodiversity importance (core)</td>
<td>There should be no net losses of biodiversity habitat areas (including sites of international, national, regional, sub-regional and local significance and UK BAP priorities) due to development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bats in the Landscape

Context

5.181 The District supports two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), which have horseshoe bats as features, the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC and the Mendip Limestone Grasslands SAC. In addition to these two SACs, Sedgemoor contains habitat used by bats from the Exmoor and Quantocks Oak Woodlands SAC, which supports barbastelle bats, and the Hestercombe House SAC, which supports lesser horseshoe bats. As ‘competent authority’ under the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2010 (the ‘Habitats Regulations’) Sedgemoor 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.

5.182 Bats forage across wider areas of the landscape than are actually designated as SAC and it is therefore possible that development in a wider area can impact on the SAC. Bats rely on a number of features in order to maintain its population, 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 permanently reducing the amount of habitat required to maintain the population.
Approach

5.183 As advised through the Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Core Strategy, 'Bat Consultation Zones' have been defined. The Bat Consultation Zone marked on the Proposals Map are areas which bats are known to regularly use for commuting and/or foraging and night roosting. The mapping was provided by Somerset County Council and is drawn from radio tracking studies and aerial photographic interpretation of habitat use by horseshoe and barbastelle bats. Applications occurring within the Bat Consultation Zone will require the District Council to carry out a ‘test of significance’ under the Habitats Regulations, including consultation with Natural England. Applicants will be required to provide all necessary information required to satisfy this process. Given the location of the consultation zone there are unlikely to be many development proposals. However, all such proposals should contact the District Council in advance of a planning application in order to establish the scope (if needed) of the test of significance.

5.184 In addition to the Bat Consultation Zone, British bat species are widespread in Sedgemoor and may be using habitats and roost sites anywhere in the administrative area. As a ‘competent authority’ under the Habitats Regulations the District 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. The protection of bats and other European Protected Species is addressed further in Policy D14: Natural Environment.

Policy D 15

Bats in the Landscape

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, including consultation with Natural England. Applicants must provide all necessary information to enable such a test to be conducted, including any necessary survey work, reports and avoidance / mitigation measures with the application.

Delivery

5.185 This is a development management policy and delivery will therefore be through the individual consideration of planning applications. Prospective applicants should contact the Council’s Ecologist at an early stage in the preparation of a scheme in order to establish the potential effects and implications.

Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M39</td>
<td><em>Number of planning permissions granted within a Bat Consultation Zone contrary to Natural England advice (local)</em></td>
<td>No permissions should be granted in cases where a Natural England objection cannot be overcome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.186 PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control sets out the need for local planning authorities to consider the direct and indirect impacts of potentially polluting development on health, general amenity and the environment. It also identifies that where development is proposed close to a source of potential pollution, the risk of pollution from its normal operation or its potential impacts and the extent to which the risks can be addressed will influence whether or not development should proceed.

5.187 Development can have a harmful impact on the amenity enjoyed by residents and it is important that the amenity of residents is protected from ‘unneighbourly’ development proposals as these can cause problems through overshadowing/loss of light, visual domination, loss of privacy and noise and disturbance.

Approach

5.188 The policy will ensure that any potential pollution impacts of development will have no adverse impact on the quality of land, air, water, human health or biodiversity. This will help to ensure that new developments do not harm existing residents, future residents or the natural environment. This includes minimising air, noise, light or water pollution, vibration or soil contamination that would be harmful to other land uses, human health, tranquillity or the natural and built environment. Developers will be required to demonstrate the potential impact of proposals on the environment and on residential amenity.

5.189 A precautionary approach to the location of potentially polluting development will be appropriate and the Council will have regard to Groundwater Source Protection Zones as defined by the Environment Agency and shown on their website. Development proposals within these areas should meet the requirements of ‘saved’ Local Plan Policy CNE16: Groundwater Source Protection Zones and Aquifers.

5.190 Careful consideration will be given to development that is proposed close to an existing source of potential pollution, to ensure that the development proposal will not be adversely affected by the existing potential pollution source.

5.191 All development proposals ranging from large schemes to household proposals will be assessed in terms of whether the development would harm residential amenity. The extent to which potential residential amenity problems arise is usually dependent upon factors including location, separation distance, height, depth, massing and window positions. Policy D2: Promoting High Quality and Inclusive Design is also relevant.

Policy D 16

Pollution Impacts of Development and Protecting Residential Amenity

Pollution Impact of Development

Development proposals that are likely to result in levels of air, noise, light or water pollution (including groundwater), vibration or soil contamination that would be harmful to other land uses, human health, tranquillity, or the built and natural environment will not be supported.
Where there are reasonable grounds to suggest that a development proposal may result in a significant adverse environmental impact, the Council will require planning applications to be supported by assessments relating to:

- Air pollution;
- Noise pollution and/or vibration;
- Light pollution;
- Carbon Emissions;
- Contaminated Land/soil;
- Waste;
- Water pollution;
- Odour; and
- Any other sources.

Where it is demonstrated that it is possible to manage the potential adverse impacts of the development proposal through its design or mitigation measures, the Council will, by means of condition or legal agreement, seek to ensure such measures are effective, for example by imposing limitations on matters including hours of operation, emission of fumes, noise and light, parking and servicing for both construction and operational stages.

**Development in the Vicinity of Existing Sources of Pollution**

Where development is proposed close to an existing source of potential pollution, the following matters should be taken into consideration:

- The risk of pollution from the normal operation of the potential pollution source;
- The impacts of the potential pollution source, taking into account the sensitivities of the proposal; and
- The extent to which the risks can be managed through the design of the proposal.

Where the development proposal will be adversely affected by the existing potential pollution source the proposal will not be supported.

**Residential Amenity**

Development proposals that would result in the loss of land of recreational and/or amenity value or unacceptably impact upon the residential amenity of occupants of nearby dwellings and any potential future occupants will not be supported. Particular consideration will be given to the extent that the proposal could result in unacceptable noise and disturbance, overshadowing, overlooking and/or visual dominance.

**Delivery**

5.192 This is a development management policy and delivery will therefore be through the individual consideration of planning applications. In addition residential amenity will be considered as part of the additional design guidance to be prepared by the Council, as identified in Policy D2 - Promoting High Quality and Inclusive Design.
Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on water quality grounds (core)</td>
<td>No permissions should be granted in cases where an Environment Agency objection cannot be overcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>Local Air quality management (local)</td>
<td>Meet or exceed relevant Air Quality objectives as set out in Air Quality regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M40</td>
<td>Complaints to Environmental Health Officer or Somerset County Council Enforcement (in the case of operations associated with waste processing, quarrying and major highways) relating to noise, light or vibration (local)</td>
<td>Reduction in the number of complaints in relation to noise, light and vibration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Historic Environment

Context

5.193 The value of the historic environment, and the contribution it makes to our cultural, social and economic life, is set out in the Government’s Statement on the Historic Environment for England, 2010. The role that planning should play in conserving our heritage assets and utilising the historic environment in creating sustainable places is set out in PPS5 (Planning Policy Statement 5 - Planning for the Historic Environment).

5.194 In addition to over 1,100 listed building and 14 designated conservation areas, Sedgemoor contains historic landscapes, areas of high archaeological potential, ancient woodlands, heritage settlements and scheduled ancient monuments as well as a wide range of outstanding examples of industrial archaeology and buildings associated with land drainage schemes or traditional industries.

5.195 The richness of our history has significant tangible benefits to our local economy, attracting significant numbers of tourists and visitors annually, and should be seen as a key attribute in securing future economic prosperity for Sedgemoor. Ensuring the protection of the historic environment for current and future generations should be balanced with the delivery of other sustainability objectives.

Approach

5.196 The Council will work positively with owners and developers to ensure historic assets are maintained and enhanced. This will include preparation of appropriate guidance, identification of local buildings at risk and strategies to protect them, support for communities to identify locally significant historic buildings (local lists) and preparation of management plans for conservation areas.

5.197 Development proposals within conservation areas will be supported where they positively enhance their quality and character, including the use of contemporary solutions where appropriate.
5.198 The presumption is against the demolition or total loss of listed buildings but alternative viable use will be positively encouraged where these are consistent with the historic character and features of the building. Where the loss of historic buildings or features is exceptionally permitted the Council will require the recording of features of interest as agreed with the Council’s Conservation Officer.

5.199 Nationally designated archaeological sites are protected under existing primary legislation whilst development proposals that will affect locally designated sites of archaeological interest (including Areas of High Archaeological Potential and other sites of County Importance) will need to meet the requirements of ‘saved’ Local Plan Policies HE9 and HE12.

5.200 Other policies that are relevant to the Historic Environment include S3 - Sustainable Development Principles, S4 - Mitigating the Causes and adapting to the effects of Climate Change and D2 - Promoting High Quality and Inclusive Design.

### Policy D 17

#### Historic Environment

All development proposals should contribute to enhancing and maintaining the historic environment, ensuring a continued role in distinguishing the District’s unique sense of identity and place. In all cases proposals should take into account the need for buildings and landscape (including archaeological remains, battlefields and historic parks and gardens) to adapt to climate change and the positive contribution heritage makes to regeneration. Where development is proposed within the vicinity of historical assets (including archaeological sites) the Council will support schemes that promote management, interpretation and improved public access.

The Council will work with partners to:

- Provide relevant guidance for owners and developers on particular aspects of the historic environment and their responsibilities, including information on owning listed buildings, interpretation and public access as well as preparing development schemes;
- Carry out regular surveys to identify local historic buildings at risk and developing strategies to protect them;
- Encourage and help communities to develop Local Lists;
- Prepare management plans for the conservation areas in the District.

Development will be supported where it proposes:

- Appropriate design, including contemporary solutions which positively enhance the character and quality of conservation areas;
- The development of local skills and crafts relevant to the historic environment;
- A viable use for listed buildings, consistent with their historic character, with a clear presumption against their demolition;
- An emphasis on the importance of the setting of listed buildings and other historic assets;
- Appropriate energy efficiency measures where the principles of minimum intervention and reversibility are adopted.

Where development resulting in the loss of an historic asset is exceptionally permitted, the Council will require the recording of features of interest that would be destroyed in the course of any proposed work.
5 District Wide Policies

Delivery

5.201 This is a development management policy and delivery will therefore be through the individual consideration of planning applications. In addition the Council is committed to delivering conservation area assessments and management plans and to consideration of additional designations. It has published guidance for owners of listed buildings and prepared an initial assessment of locally significant buildings that could be included within "local lists". Such local lists could be included within parish plans and promoted through village design statements which will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

5.202 The Council also maintains a local buildings at risk register and in exceptional circumstances will be prepared to use its statutory powers to ensure that listed buildings are repaired. In addition working with partners, including English Heritage and Somerset County Council, the Council will prepare an assessment of the District's heritage assets to inform future decisions and actions.

Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M41</td>
<td>Number of planning permissions granted for applications relating to listed buildings and conservation areas contrary to English Heritage or conservation officer advice (local)</td>
<td>No permissions should be granted for applications relating to listed buildings and conservation areas in cases where an English Heritage or conservation officer objection cannot be overcome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education and Learning

Context

5.203 Housing development increases the pressure on the educational system and can increase the number of children in an area and place greater demand for pupil places in local schools and other children focused services.

5.204 Provision of suitable education facilities is a fundamental element of delivering truly sustainable development. Education provision includes early years (Ages 0 - 4), primary, secondary and further education. The Council’s Infrastructure Delivery PlanSomerset County Council data suggests that twentyapproximately 250 additional 40pre-school placesChildren's centres will be required during the plan period. The preference for delivering such facilities is to co-locate with primary schools. Maintaining existing facilities in rural areas is, however, likely to prove challenging due to falling attendance rolls.

5.205 The Infrastructure Delivery PlanSomerset County Council data also identifies a potential need for approximately 2,2401,750 primary school places across the district although over 800 of these have already been secured at Bridgwater through developer contributions at South Bridgwater and North East Bridgwater. In terms of secondary education, approximately 1,250 additional places are likely to be required across the district during the plan period. The Building Schools for the Future programme will partially meet the future requirements in Bridgwater. Elsewhere in the district there is a potential need for an additional 243 spaces at Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge.
Further education is provided at Bridgwater College, Brymore School, Cannington, Kings of Wessex School, Cheddar, and King Alfred's School and Burnham-on-Sea. Bridgwater College is the largest provider and Policy P1: Bridgwater Urban Area seeks to support the continued expansion of the facility. It is also a key partner in the proposals to develop a University of Somerset.

Investment in skills is a key component of the Economic Masterplan. Investment in new nuclear at Hinkley Point is likely to place significant additional training needs, particularly in construction and energy sectors. The Energy Skills Centre currently under construction at Bridgwater College demonstrates the commitment to meeting such needs.

Approach

The Policy will ensure that adequate educational facilities are provided where a need is created from new development, either by the direct provision of such facilities as part of the proposal or by developer contributions via a Section 106 legal agreement or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as set out in Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery. Such need may be generated by both residential and commercial development. Policy D11: Economic Prosperity emphasises the need for new employment proposals to enter into local labour agreements that include commitment to support appropriate training and work based apprenticeships.

The location of any such facilities should be consistent with the overall Spatial Strategy unless there is a justifiable need to consider exceptional sites. Examples of such needs include small scale field study centres that require a countryside location. In all cases educational facilities should be accessible by a range of sustainable transport choices.

Support and encouragement will be given to the extended community use of educational facilities as these can provide important local community focus.

Policy D 18

Education Provision

The Council will work with the County Council, Bridgwater College and other partners to provide additional, extended or enhanced education facilities to address educational needs. New development that creates a need for additional educational facilities, including pre-school, that cannot be met through existing facilities will be expected to meet any identified shortfall.

Development proposals for education facilities will be supported where they are at suitable locations within Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge, key rural settlements and other sustainable settlements, are of high quality and sustainable design and are accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes.

Delivery

Delivery will primarily be through Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery and subsequent supplementary Planning Document. In the interim the Council will work closely with education partners and developers to ensure that necessary additional investment into education is secured.
### Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M29</td>
<td><em>Travel to school (local)</em></td>
<td>Decrease in the number of pupils making the journey to school by car in line with the current Transport Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M42</td>
<td><em>School capacity (local)</em></td>
<td>Sufficient number of school places to accommodate all pupils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Being Healthy

Health and Social Care

Context

5.212 Good mental and physical health is closely linked to factors such as the ability to earn a reasonable wage, good quality housing, education, access to open space, an active lifestyle, healthy food, the provision of cultural and community facilities and easy access to health care facilities. Equally, environmental factors, the design of buildings and places, and the quality and maintenance of the public realm are all recognised as factors which can have significant influences on health. These factors can be influenced through planning policy, although addressing health inequalities also requires a comprehensive approach working with a wide variety of organisations and departments such as health providers, education and housing.

5.213 Health care provision is primarily provided through a range of GP surgeries and restricted hospital care at Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea. There are also health facilities at Shepton Mallet and Glastonbury serving residents in the east of the District that provide in-patient and out-patient care including minor injury units. More comprehensive hospital services and 24-hour A&E are available at Weston-super-Mare General and Musgrove Park hospital in Taunton. It will therefore be important to work particularly closely with NHS Somerset, as well as with Somerset County Council who are the primary provider of social services in Sedgemoor.

Approach

5.214 The Core Strategy supports and encourages enhanced health care provision across the District. The Council is keen to ensure that everyone has access to appropriate health care facilities and the overall spatial strategy seeks to ensure that services are available within the towns and key rural settlements in line with the spatial strategy, while Policy D5: Housing supports the provision of care homes or similar specialist accommodation. This may include complementary uses such as pharmacies where these are ancillary to the health facility and restricted by condition or legal agreement.

5.215 It is also essential that new development does not place additional burdens on health care services and that where necessary, appropriate funding or new facilities are provided. This issue is addressed more comprehensively in Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery.

5.216 New healthcare and complementary facilities should be easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Facilities such as cycle parking, motor cycle parking and disabled parking spaces should be provided to support such access. The measures required should be identified through a travel plan and be in line with county wide parking standards.

5.217 All major development (developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1,000m² floor space or sites of over 1 hectare for other developments) should take into account the potential effect on the health and wellbeing of the local population. Health Impact Assessments will be required to support major planning applications to identify the potential health gains and potential risks to health that the development might have and to identify additional measures required to avoid such risks.

5.218 The Council will be supportive of proposals that promote healthy lifestyles, for example by enhancing open spaces, improving access to sport and leisure facilities or by providing further opportunities for walking and cycling. Natural England have developed ambitious standards for accessible green space (Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard, or ANGSt), which will be a long-term aim of the Council to achieve. This is further addressed in Policy D20: Green Infrastructure.
Policy D 19

Health and Social Care

Health Care Provision, Retention and Enhancement

The Council will work with partners to provide additional, extended or enhanced health care provision to address existing health inequalities. New development that creates a need for additional health care that cannot be met through existing facilities will be expected to meet any identified shortfall.

Development proposals for health care facilities and complementary facilities will be supported where they are at suitable locations within Bridgwater, market towns, key rural settlements and other sustainable settlements, are of high quality and sustainable design and are accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes.

Existing health care facilities will be retained, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- The use has ceased and there is no longer a demand; or
- The facility is no longer fit for purpose; or
- Suitable alternative provision is available within the locality; or
- There will no adverse impact on the health of the local community.

All major planning applications will be required to provide a Health Impact Assessment that:

- Identifies vulnerable population groups;
- Identifies the potential health effects of the project;
- Shows how mitigation measures, if necessary, have been included in the development proposal.

In preparing a Health Impact Assessment, developers should engage with relevant stakeholders and community groups where appropriate.

Healthy Lifestyles

All development proposals where appropriate should promote healthy and active living. Proposals which promote the following will be supported:

- Walking and cycling;
- Accessibility of green spaces and contributing to enhancing the green infrastructure network;
- Enhancement of the quality and quantity of recreational, sport and leisure facilities and children’s play space and access to them.

Delivery

5.219 This is primarily a development management policy and therefore delivery will be through the individual consideration of development proposals. Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery sets out the overall approach to securing infrastructure and subsequent supplementary planning document will develop a more comprehensive mechanism based upon community infrastructure levy or similar.
5.220 The spatial strategy and other policies in the Core Strategy seek to promote healthy lifestyles through the appropriate location of development and the support for walking and cycling. Saved policies from the Local Plan (Policies RLT2 and RLT3) also ensure financial contributions toward the provision of children’s play areas and outdoor sports facilities.

Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M43</td>
<td>Major Planning Applications providing a satisfactory Health Impact Assessment (local)</td>
<td>All major development proposals should be accompanied by an appropriate Health Impact Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Green Infrastructure

Context

5.221 The term Green Infrastructure is used to describe the environmental resources within and between our towns and villages. It is a network of natural assets and spaces, including formal parks, gardens, historic landscapes, woodlands, green corridors, waterways, street trees and countryside.

5.222 Green Infrastructure is seen as part of the life-support system of an area; providing functions and environmental services to a community, such as employment, tourism, culture, recreation, physical health and mental well-being, social interaction, contact with nature, drainage and flood management, climate change adaptation and pollution mitigation. In Sedgemoor it is recognised that there are vast resources that can perform a green infrastructure role.

5.223 The Council has been securing on-site provision and/or developer contributions for off-site provision of children’s play space and outdoor sport through Local Plan Policies RLT2 and RLT3. It has also sought to protect existing recreational space through Local Plan Policy RLT1. The Council has had additional evidence about these functional uses through such documents as the Sedgemoor Playing Pitch Strategy (2004) and Sedgemoor Play Strategy 2007 – 2017 (2007). The Council has also established baseline mapping and appraisal of the wider range of open space sites relevant to PPG17 and this has been used to inform the Burnham-on-Sea, Berrow and Highbridge Green Space Strategy (2009) and the Bridgwater and Wemeldon Green Space Strategy (2009).


5.225 The substantial number, area and variety of designated nature conservation sites in the District are protected in their own right. The presence of habitats and species of European importance is a very particular consideration, whilst they do form part of the green infrastructure resource, plans or projects that might adversely affect them are subject to close scrutiny through the Habitat Regulations Assessment.

Approach

5.226 Green Infrastructure planning is based on a strategic approach to ensuring that environmental assets of natural and cultural value are integrated with land development and growth management and built infrastructure planning at the earliest stage. This approach enables land management to
be more proactive and better integrated with managing growth and development at a spatial planning level. To ensure that the benefits of significant growth in the District can be harnessed it is essential that the Core Strategy provides a framework for an integrated approach to green infrastructure.

5.227 The Council has commissioned a Green Infrastructure Strategy that will identify the drivers of change to be addressed by Green Infrastructure, existing assets, linkages, opportunities and constraints and will also set out a framework of guidelines and general principles which will assist in directing future implementation of green infrastructure projects and integration in development proposals.

5.228 An integral part of the concept of multi-functional open space is that spaces can often perform more than one function. The Council considers that functions such as sport and children’s play will still be appropriate for assessment against space standards and is aware that Natural England is keen that local authorities make use of their ‘Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard’ (ANGSt) that recommends that people living in towns and cities should have:

- an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home
- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home
- one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.

5.229 The Habitats Regulations Assessment specifically recommends that housing projects of 20 dwellings and over within 5 kilometres of a Natura 2000 site should comply with the ANGSt standards. However in reality the existing natural greenspace resource in Sedgemoor is not compliant with all levels of the ANGSt hierarchy and as a consequence it would frequently be impossible for a development to be located in appropriate proximity to existing sites or add sufficient new land to meet requirements.

5.230 The emerging Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy and the PPG17 Assessment may lead to a refinement as to how the ANGSt standards can be interpreted locally based on local circumstance and evidence. In the interim the Council will continue to ‘save’ Local Plan Policies RLT2 and RLT3 for play and sport, and utilise the ANGSt standard for access to nature wherever possible. Local Plan Policy RLT1: Protection of Recreational Open Space will continue to be ‘saved’ including those sites identified on the 'Saved' Local Plan Proposals Map until reviewed as part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

5.231 In addition all development proposals will be assessed in terms of impacts on the natural environment (as set out in Policy D14) and will be expected to appropriately contribute to the implementation of the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy.

5.232 The protection of nature conservation interests in particular are subject of specific legislation and assessment requirements, whilst also a key consideration in GI, biodiversity is therefore also subject of a separate coverage in Policy D14: Natural Environment. In addition the protection of historic landscapes is dealt with under Policy D17: Historic Environment.

5.233 The provision of new GI such as the proposed Ecology Park at The Meads in Bridgwater will serve as proposed mitigation of potential adverse effects from recreational disturbance arising from population growth in the Bridgwater area. This is a key transformational project specifically included in Policy P1: Bridgwater Urban Area.
Figure 5.3 Extract from the Draft Sedgemoor Green Infrastructure Study: Sedgemoor Map
5 District Wide Policies

Figure 5.4 Extract from Bridgwater Vision: The Green Network
Habitats Regulations Recommendation 2

The Appropriate Assessment identifies that the Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor, in proposing growth, will have a direct impact on the number of people using the internationally designated nature conservation areas for recreation and has the potential to result in increased recreation and has the potential to result in increased recreational disturbance to birds and habitats from population growth and increased recreation within the region. Whilst one net additional dwelling alone may not lead to a significant adverse impact, in combination with the other small developments occurring across Sedgemoor within the catchment of Special Areas of Conservation the cumulative effect could be significant.

To address this concern, Policy D20: Green Infrastructure makes specific reference to giving priority to projects that meet Natural England's "Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard" (ANGSt) which will contribute to reducing pressure on recreational disturbance on sensitive nature conservation sites. However for the reasons set in the 'Approach' above it is not considered appropriate or achievable that all housing projects of 20 dwellings and over within 5 kilometres of a Natura 2000 site are should comply with the ANGSt standard as recommended by the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Policy D 20

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure (GI) will be safeguarded, maintained, improved, enhanced and added to, as appropriate, to form a multi-functional resource which meets the following objectives:

- Provide an accessible network of green spaces which meet recreational needs, cultural needs including education and interpretation, are safe and secure, and support physical health and mental wellbeing;
- inclusions of arts, cultural landscape interpretation
- Provide opportunities for attractive walking and cycling routes and also horse riding if appropriate
- Contribute to climate change adaptation (shade, sustainable drainage systems, cooling etc);
- Maintain and improve biodiversity and contact with nature;
- Support essential life-support functions such as air and water quality and food production;
- Maintain or enhance amenity, landscape character and the image of the area;
- Provide enhanced settings for existing and proposed developments and create pleasant and sustainable places in which to live in, work in or visit; and
- inclusions of arts, cultural landscape interpretation
- Identifying, safeguarding and developing sites and routes, within and around urban areas, which will facilitate efficient pedestrian and cycle access in an attractive setting (continuous green corridors and/or punctuation of on-road routes)

Priority will be given to:

- The protection and enhancement of parks and gardens, play areas, sports pitches, recreation grounds and allotments;
5 District Wide Policies

- The provision of green spaces in association with all major developments, having particular regard to extending the connectivity of a green infrastructure network;
- The protection and planting of trees for public amenity and climate change mitigation;
- Increasing the services / environmental benefits delivered by existing / new public open spaces, where appropriate and achievable, through taking a more multi-functional approach to their design and management;
- The continued development of a network of green spaces, water bodies, paths and cycle routes in and around the urban areas, including improved or enhanced access to canal, river and other waterside locations as well as improved connections to the National Cycle Network;
- The development of strategic green corridor routes from urban areas and coastal tourist areas to surrounding villages and countryside;
- Safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity including contribution to targets and actions identified in Biodiversity Action Plans;
- Projects that help to meet the Natural England ‘Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard’ (ANGSt);
- Projects identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Development should include green infrastructure of an appropriate type, standard and size, and make appropriate provision for future maintenance. Where on-site provision is not possible, contributions will be sought for appropriate off-site provision. All residential development should be ANGSt compliant or otherwise appropriately contribute to improving access to natural greenspace.

New green infrastructure provision should be an exemplar of best practice and innovation in the design and management of new green infrastructure and make appropriate use of natural resources, encourage the use of sustainable materials and minimise the production of waste. All activity should aim to maximise the multiple uses of green infrastructure from the detailed scale to the sub regional scale.

If loss of existing green infrastructure assets is unavoidable in order to accommodate necessary development, appropriate mitigation of the loss will be required.

In all cases, including proposals for increased access to rural areas, development will need to demonstrate that there are no significant adverse impacts on biodiversity interests as set in Policy D14: Natural Environment.

Delivery

5.234 It is anticipated that the Green Infrastructure Strategy will identify specific actions for the short, medium and long term.

5.235 The provision of green infrastructure serving new development should be an integral part of the design process from the outset in order that features such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and the multi-functional aspects of green space provision can be fully considered.

5.236 In respect of those green space components that can be expected to meet particular standards of provision, regard should be had to any relevant play strategy, playing pitch strategy, green space strategy, saved Local Plan Policies RLT1, RLT2 and RLT3 (and the associated planning guidance note adopted in August 2007), and Natural England’s ANGSt standard.
5.237 The Council will work with other partners and bid for available funding opportunities to bring Green Infrastructure projects to fruition.

5.238 Modification of existing public open spaces will be largely a matter for the District and Town / Parish Councils, including working with local community groups.

Monitoring and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on water quality grounds (core)</td>
<td>No permissions should be granted in cases where an Environment Agency objection cannot be overcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>Change in areas of biodiversity importance (core)</td>
<td>There should be no net losses of biodiversity habitat areas due to development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>Local Air quality management (local)</td>
<td>Meet or exceed relevant Air Quality objectives as set out in Air Quality regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>New development reaching very good, good, average and poor ratings against Building for Life criteria (core)</td>
<td>New developments having regard to the design and other appropriate policies should at a minimum be able to achieve a Building for Life rating of 'good' (14 points out of 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M44</td>
<td>Access to Natural Greenspace (local)</td>
<td>All new developments should comply with Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) wherever possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M45</td>
<td>Change in areas of parks and gardens, play areas, sports pitches, recreation grounds and allotments (local)</td>
<td>There should be no net losses of parks and gardens, play areas, sports pitches, recreation grounds and allotments due to development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community and Cultural Facilities

Context

5.239 Community and cultural facilities provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. They include a wide variety of services and facilities and may include community centres, libraries, advice centres, youth facilities, village halls, childcare facilities, cultural centres and venues, places of worship, educational establishments and training centres, health and social care facilities, sport and recreation facilities and civic and administrative facilities. It may also include other uses whose primary function is commercial but perform a social or community role, for example sport, recreational and leisure facilities including local pubs.
5.240 Such services and facilities provide a focus for local people, helping to promote better personal contact between groups and individuals as well as generating community spirit and a sense of place. Together, they are all essential to the quality of life of people living and working in Sedgemoor and can help to reduce levels of deprivation and social exclusion.

5.241 New development has an important role to play in supporting communities through the provision or protection of necessary community infrastructure. Development can however place pressure on existing community services and facilities and often creates additional need for new or enhanced infrastructure to improve health and wellbeing.

Approach

5.242 New development will be expected to provide or facilitate necessary community infrastructure. This should come forward either as part of the development or as a financial contribution. Infrastructure provided as an integral part of the development, should ideally be within adaptable mixed-use buildings and made available for use at an early stage.

5.243 The location of community infrastructure will depend upon its function and service users. Day-to-day facilities will need to be within the communities they serve and should be located within local centres. Policies P4: Key Rural Settlements and P5: Other Sustainable Settlements provide protection for services and facilities within rural settlements and Policy D13: Retail Hierarchy supports the provision of retail services in sustainable locations. Higher-level infrastructure should be located within the most accessible parts of the towns.

5.244 It is important that all community infrastructure is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, and is open to all members of the community. Where it is proposed to relocate community facilities it will be necessary to ensure that the community served is not disadvantaged by the change in location. Facilities such as cycle parking, motor cycle parking and disabled parking spaces should be provided to support such access. The measures required should be identified through a travel plan and be in line with county wide parking standards.

5.245 Existing community infrastructure land and buildings can be vulnerable to proposals for new uses or redevelopment. In such cases the council will need to assess the loss in terms of the social, economic and physical impact on the local community and the harm caused to the level of community infrastructure provision in the area. Where the retention of community infrastructure land or buildings is found to be uneconomic, the council will consider the need for appropriate replacement infrastructure in line with the needs of the community.

5.246 The policy will ensure that adequate provision of community and cultural facilities will be provided where the need for additional facilities arises as a result of new development taking place. Furthermore, support will be given for planning applications that provide such facilities, while applications that threaten the provision of existing facilities will be discouraged.

Policy D 21

Community and Cultural Facilities

The Council will work with partners to provide additional, extended or enhanced community and cultural facilities. New development that creates a need for additional provision that cannot be met through existing facilities will be expected to meet any identified shortfall.
Development proposals for community and cultural facilities will be supported where they are at suitable locations within Bridgwater, market towns, key rural settlements and other sustainable settlements, are of high quality and sustainable design, accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes or where there is an identified need.

Existing facilities will be retained, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- There is appropriate alternative provision available locally; and
- There is no longer a demand for the use and/or it is not viable; and
- The facility is no longer fit for its intended purpose.

**Delivery**

5.247 This is primarily a development management policy and therefore delivery will be through the individual consideration of development proposals. Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery sets out the overall approach to securing infrastructure and subsequent supplementary planning document will develop a more comprehensive mechanism based upon community infrastructure levy or similar.

**Monitoring and Review**

Table 5.17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M46</td>
<td>Retention of community and cultural facilities (local)</td>
<td>There should be no losses of community and cultural facilities</td>
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</table>

5.248 The annual facilities survey will monitor both new developments and losses of community and cultural facilities. It will be especially important to monitor losses of facilities in places where these are the only facilities of their kind, such as is often the case with, for example, village halls and primary schools in rural areas.
Bridgwater Urban Area

Context

6.1 As set out in the Spatial Strategy, Bridgwater is the main town in Sedgemoor and the focus for employment, retailing, housing and a range of supporting functions. It has a strong relationship with Taunton and in planning for its future the complementary nature of this relationship is an important consideration. There is currently considerable out-commuting to Taunton and therefore whilst one objective is to improve self containment through the provision of new employment, there is also a need to ensure that investment is directed to the A38 corridor that connects the two towns in order to promote more sustainable travel opportunities. Within the town centre there are a number of particularly congested junctions and a large proportion of car trips are for short distances of less than 3 Km. Therefore opportunities for walking and cycling are good, however there are several issues that need addressing namely accessibility to and facilities at the bus and train stations; bus and train frequencies; gaps in the bus and rail timetables; and the low level of bus and rail patronage within Somerset. The cycle network is also of mixed quality as it suffers from fragmentation and lacks continuity in some areas.

6.2 The Council working with partners has recently undertaken a comprehensive visioning exercise setting out an ambitious place shaping agenda for the next 50 years. This process known as the Bridgwater Challenge, has directly informed the Core Strategy and the spatial vision for the town set out in Section 3 has been drawn from this. The overall vision is that by 2026 the town will be an energy conscious town known for its ambitious approach to sustainability and low carbon living. The final Bridgwater Vision Report has identified seven transformational themes to support delivery of the vision:

- A town with a strong identity that promotes a positive and friendly image to both investors and visitors;
- An environmentally conscious, vibrant and contemporary town based on sustainable growth;
- A town of enterprise and innovation;
- A culturally rich, colourful and historic Bridgwater;
- An accessible and well connected Bridgwater;
- A diverse, socially conscious town, with a strong sense of civic pride and local community and
- A town which promotes opportunities that are financially deliverable and realisable long term.

6.3 Both the themes and the specific transformational projects are important context for the core strategy although it will not be possible to deliver all of the vision within the plan period to 2026. However, important progress will be made to deliver short and medium term projects and to clearly set in place the policies and proposals that will ensure that the ambitious place shaping agenda is embedded. Subsequent reviews of the Core Strategy will consider the appropriateness of the longer term projects.

6.4 Large parts of the town are at risk from flooding and there is a need to deliver a long term strategic flood defences. The preferred solution is currently a combination of the construction of a tidal surge barrier, ‘The Parrett Barrier’ and downstream bank improvements. These will not be needed until between 2030 and 2050 but it is important that funding is secured and that there is a clear delivery strategy in place in order that development within the areas of risk can continue. At the present time a Supplementary Planning Document for an interim tariff has been adopted that seeks to raise approximately 40% of the current capital costs of the barrier, the remainder will be raised through national or regional funding bids, contributions from major national infrastructure projects, or potentially an Environment Agency capital bid in the future.
6.5 In terms of education provision, the two secondary schools as well as one special school are due for rebuilding as part of the former Building Schools for the Future programme. Further education opportunities are provided by Bridgwater College that has an important role to play in terms of providing training opportunities and equipping its students with skills for a modernising economy. The College has a number of ambitious expansion plans including the development of a new University Centre as part of the Somerset University project, Logistics Centre, Energy Skills Centre offering science, engineering and specialist energy skills, and a new performing arts centre.

6.6 Bridgwater still has a functioning port facility, Dunball Wharf, located to the north of the town on the River Parrett. At the present time this is only used to import aggregates and is privately owned. There are two further wharf facilities in the same location that are inactive but which could be brought back into commercial use.

Approach

6.7 In order to guide proposals a number of key objectives drawn from the Bridgwater Challenge and other supporting evidence are set out. Proposals will be expected to contribute to all relevant objectives. This policy approach covers the wider urban area that includes the adjoining Key Rural Settlement of Wembdon (as defined on the Proposals Map). Further detailed policy guidance for the town centre is set out in Policy P2: Bridgwater Town Centre.

Transformation Projects

6.8 The policy approach seeks to support development that contributes to the overall vision for the town and meets key objectives that will shape the ambitions transformational agenda set out in the Bridgwater Vision. Seven transformational projects from the Bridgwater Vision are identified and will act as a catalyst for delivering this change. These projects can realistically be delivered in full or in part within the plan period and new development will be expected to support their implementation.

- Docks Renaissance/Northgate as an extension to the town centre introducing new retail, leisure and cultural offer, Policy P2: Bridgwater Town Centre, provides further details on the key development principals.
- The Clink as a high profile office, residential and retail area integrated with the town centre, opportunities exist to provide for additional mixed-use developments close to the town centre.
- Bridgwater Riverside as a vibrant town centre quarter adjacent to the river, creation of an enhanced mixed-use and leisure orientated area that will include redevelopment or refurbishment of vacant/redundant buildings including Bridgwater Hospital following its relocation.
- Elements of Celebration Mile, the ultimate ambition is to deliver a pedestrian priority route from the railway station to the docks celebrating the town’s history though the provision of coordinated high quality public realm. The Northgate and Riverside projects will deliver elements although full implementation will also be dependent upon wider transportation schemes.
- The Meads as an Ecological Park drawing on and enhancing its natural qualities and sustainability credentials, this multi-functional green space will provide both habitat creation and recreational benefit through enhanced public access and interpretation.
- Puriton Energy Park as a significant employment area for energy related uses linked to renewable or low carbon energy production and associated green technologies. Policy P1: Bridgwater Urban Area provides key development principals that will shape the sustainable redevelopment of this unique brownfield site. This will include significant areas of public access and wildlife habitat.
- North East Bridgwater as a new sustainable mixed use neighbourhood for Bridgwater, planning consent has been granted for a comprehensive scheme that includes a regional distribution centre and 2,000 new homes.
6 Housing

6.9 New housing is to be prioritised on brownfield sites and the strategic mixed-use urban extension at North East Bridgwater. It will therefore directly contribute towards regeneration and the delivery of one of the key transformational projects. Evidence from the council’s housing trajectory and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) suggest that greenfield sites may be required in the second part of the plan period and therefore broad locations are identified based upon previous consultation. These sites comprise the following three areas:

- Land South of Durleigh Road - adjacent to the existing urban area and Meads Ecological Park
- Land at Wembdon - adjacent to Wembdon development boundary and north of the A39
- Land at South Bridgwater - within the existing urban area and adjacent to current development at Willstock Farm, South Bridgwater

6.10 These sites would be released in accordance with Policy D5: Housing, that exceptionally allows for the early release if this would provide the opportunity to deliver transformational projects. However, it is anticipated that a future allocations document or review of the core strategy will be the primary tool to bring sites forward. This would include any necessary prioritisation of sites based upon the sustainability assessment, relationship to the existing urban area, and efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure.

Housing Renewal

6.11 Given the existing deficiencies in much of the housing stock, renewal areas are identified in those wards with an emphasis on partnership working to deliver environmental improvements. Homes In Sedgemoor are likely to be a key partner given their responsibility for much of the council housing stock and the need to meet decent homes standards. Opportunities will therefore be taken to improve such areas through a combination of high quality and sensitive in-fill, redevelopment where appropriate and targeted environmental and social improvements that might include trees and landscaping, home zones, improved pedestrian priority, and new or improved local community facilities. Such improvements have clear linkages to both improving health and reducing crime or the fear of crime.

Employment

6.12 The broad approach is to focus employment opportunities at Bridgwater where in particular they provide for higher skilled jobs that support the restructuring of the local economy. Overall there is a presumption in favour of re-use and redevelopment of existing land and buildings, including the former Royal Ordnance Factory site at Puriton that is specifically allocated for renewable or low carbon energy uses and associated green technologies. Where such sites are unavailable or unsuitable, preferred greenfield sites are identified that will meet a range of business requirements including research & development, light industry, general industrial and distribution uses. Policy D11: Economic Prosperity sets out the managed approach to ensuring an appropriate supply of employment land in more detail.

6.13 Given the projections for significant office based employment, particularly in knowledge-based industries, new office floorspace will be prioritised within or adjoining the existing town centre unless there are specific locational requirements or associations with other businesses that would support an edge of town location.

6.14 In addition, as set out in Section 4, it is probable that a new nuclear power station will be built at Hinkley Point. This will result in additional employment land demands to meet associated transport and employment requirements including park and ride facilities (if included in the preferred transport strategy), freight transfer, supply chain business and training. Policy P1:
Bridgwater Urban Area identifies an additional preferred greenfield location that is specifically reserved to accommodate such uses and could be released specifically for this purpose. Only in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that brownfield sites or preferred greenfield locations are not available to meet employment needs, will this site be considered for general B1 and B2 use.

**Employment Renewal**

6.15 Recognising the need to promote better quality business space the Council, working with partners will support the enhancement of existing employment areas through refurbishment, redevelopment and local environmental improvements. It is not the intention of this approach to negatively impact on existing businesses that through their very nature are less environmentally sensitive than others. Examples include scrap metal dealers or heavy engineering.

**Education**

6.16 It is unclear as to the level of public funding that will be available for modernising the remaining two secondary schools and therefore both this and primary and early needs provision may need to be delivered through the approach set out to infrastructure provision in Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery (Policy D18: Education Provision is also relevant). The Council will work with Bridgwater college in support of the University status as part of the Somerset University initiative. It will also seek to ensure that college expansion, in particular any new residential development for students, is integrated with the needs of the town and that there is an agreed strategy for this. It will also support integration of research and design facilities in Bridgwater to help retain newly skilled and educated workers.

**Green Infrastructure**

6.17 Green infrastructure has a vital role to play in terms of open space, biodiversity and habitat creation, healthy living, sustainable transport and in transforming the town. The approach is to support the retention and development of a comprehensive and linked multi-use green space network based upon a detailed green infrastructure strategy and subsequent Supplementary Planning Document. Important green edges and wedges will be protected and enhanced to ensure that the impact of new development is balanced with the need to protect the natural environment. The existing Meads area is proposed as an ecological park, one of the key transformational projects that will provide both opportunities for active learning and recreation, as well as enhanced and new wildlife habitats. The provision of new and accessible natural green space will offset the potential recreational pressures upon more environmentally sensitive parts of the district resulting from the overall increase in population and is therefore an important mitigation component as recommended in the Habitats Regulation Assessment. Policy D20: Green Infrastructure provides reference to more detailed guidance and standards.

**Flood Defence**

6.18 Actual funding of the Parrett Barrier is included as part of the wider infrastructure delivery approach set out in Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery, that will supersede the Bridgwater Strategic Flood Defence Tariff Supplementary Planning Document. Whilst the Core Strategy does not need to propose the actual flood defence solution it is important that the potential location is safeguarded to ensure that future delivery is possible. At the present time until detailed design and ground condition survey work is undertaken, an area in the locality of Chilton Trinity will be safeguarded. This safeguarded area also includes Chilton Trinity sewerage treatment works and it is possible that expansion of this may be required during the plan period, although there are no known firm proposals in the short to medium term. It is essential that through close partnership working, both the delivery of the barrier and if necessary, expansion of the sewerage treatment works can both be accommodated.
6.19 The Parrett Barrier will be subject to detailed design and consultation that will include a full environmental impact assessment. However, proposals would not be supported where adverse impacts on water quality and/or Water Framework Directive targets were identified.

Transport

6.20 Given that public funding for transport is likely to be significantly less in the future it is likely that significant elements of this strategy will need to be funded from new development and will therefore be considered within the wider infrastructure delivery plan. Specific schemes are identified that form part of the emerging Future Transport Plan or the Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington Transport Strategy and emerging County Council Transport Implementation Plan (see also Policy D10: Managing the Transport Impacts of Development).

6.21 The Council will develop a car parking strategy that supports the economic viability of the town centre whilst providing encouragement to more sustainable modes of transport. Reducing the overall number of trips within the town centre will support transformational projects including the Celebration Mile and Bridgwater Riverside and enable walking and cycling to be prioritised over cars on certain parts of the local highway network.

6.22 As part of the wider integrated sustainable travel strategy, opportunities to increase the use of Combwich wharf will also be supported where the requirements of Policy D16 Pollution impacts of development and protecting residential amenity at met.
Picture 6.1 Bridgwater Spatial Diagram
Policy P 1

Bridgwater

Development proposals in Bridgwater will be supported if they contribute to meeting all of the relevant following objectives:

- To ensure that new development is of the highest quality in terms of sustainability and design and celebrates the town’s past whilst signposting its new future;
- To contribute to the delivery of the Parrett Barrier strategic solution to flood risk in the town;
- To attract new industry and business with particular emphasis on higher skilled local jobs;
- To deliver a range of housing that meets the needs of both existing and newly forming households and inward migration;
- To deliver an integrated transport strategy with an emphasis on public transport, walking and cycling, but that also meets the needs of the motorist and delivers adequate parking provision and network improvements;
- Creating connections and linkages between the town centre, residential neighbourhoods, employment areas and retail parks;
- To promote a new green network including parks, green corridors, habitat creation and tree planting and to sustain existing environmental assets within and around the town;
- Contributing where appropriate to improving or creating vital public realm that includes active public spaces, recreational routes and safe and calm streets;
- Creation and improvement of facilities and spaces that support leisure, sport and cultural activities.

Bridgwater Vision Transformational Projects

The following transformational schemes outlined in the Bridgwater Vision and expected to be delivered in the Plan period are identified as key catalyst projects for the Core Strategy:

- Docks Renaissance/Northgate as an extension to the town centre introducing new retail, leisure and cultural offer;
- The Clink as a high profile office, residential and retail area integrated with the town centre;
- Bridgwater Riverside as a vibrant town centre quarter adjacent to the river;
- Elements of Celebration Mile;
- The Meads as a Ecological Park drawing on and enhancing its natural qualities and sustainability credentials;
- Puriton Energy Park as a significant employment area for energy related uses linked to renewable low carbon energy production;
- North East Bridgwater as a new sustainable mixed use neighbourhood for Bridgwater.

All development proposals must demonstrate how they appropriately contribute to or facilitate the delivery of the above projects where relevant. Where this cannot be demonstrated, proposals that would prejudice their future implementation will not be supported.

Housing
Proposals for housing will be supported that maximise brownfield development within the existing urban area (as defined on the 'saved' Local Plan Proposals Map) through appropriate infill and redevelopment opportunities where they meet local housing priorities, particularly the provision of family and affordable housing. A minimum of 1,700 dwellings will be delivered from brownfield sites identified on the Councils Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Therefore all proposals for housing at Bridgwater should meet the following sequential priorities:

- Firstly on brownfield sites and the strategic mixed use urban extension at North East Bridgwater
- Secondly, on the following broad locations where it can be demonstrated that a five year supply of deliverable land for housing is not available (in accordance with Policy D5: Housing) and where proposals contribute to the above objectives.
  - Land South of Durleigh Road, Bridgwater - adjacent to the existing urban area and the Meads
  - Land at Wembdon - adjacent to Wembdon development boundary and north of the A39
  - Land at South Bridgwater - in Willstock Farm area, immediately adjoining the defined settlement boundary
- Thirdly on other greenfield sites identified in the SHLAA as having ‘future potential’ which meet the above objectives only where it can be demonstrated that a five year supply of deliverable land for housing is not available and the above broad locations cannot be delivered within a time frame to meet the under supply.

In exceptional circumstances the early release of greenfield sites will be considered where it provides the opportunity to deliver the Bridgwater Vision transformational projects identified above.

**Housing Renewal Areas**

The Council will work with relevant partners including Homes in Sedgemoor to promote and deliver the enhancement of existing residential areas of Hamp, Newtown and Victoria, Sydenham and Eastover through appropriate environmental and social improvement. Such improvement may include: trees and landscaping, homezones, improved pedestrian priorities, new or improved community facilities, including health care, education facilities and measures to manage or reduce the fear of crime. Where development proposals for housing are promoted, these will be expected to contribute positively to the enhancement of the area.

**Employment**

All employment proposals in Bridgwater will be supported where they add higher value to the economy through the provision of local employment opportunities, the promotion of higher skilled jobs and/or allow for the expansion of appropriate existing businesses.

The Council will encourage knowledge intensive sectors including Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) related manufacturing, research and development and environmental technologies including low carbon/renewable energy.
Large-scale employment proposals (over 1,000m² of gross floor space) for research & development, light industry, general industrial and distribution (B1c, B1b, B2 and B8) will be supported where they meet the requirements of Policy D11: Economic Prosperity and the policy objectives above. Priority will be given to brownfield sites through the redevelopment and remodelling of existing employment land and buildings within established industrial/business areas, including the Former Royal Ordnance Factory site at Puriton allocated as an Energy Park, and 'saved' allocated employment sites, followed by preferred greenfield locations.

Energy Park

The Former Royal Ordnance Factory site at Puriton is allocated as an Energy Park, with priority given to renewable or low carbon energy generation and other energy-related or complementary uses, including green technologies, supply components and support services. The Council will work with interested parties to develop an overall Masterplan for the site, this will include the following elements:

- About 90 hectares of developable employment land identifying a range and mix of appropriate uses;
- Phased delivery of the site and essential infrastructure;
- Habitat enhancement through the creation of an Ecological Park;
- Accessibility through the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, improved road infrastructure and the feasibility for reinstating the former rail link;
- Opportunities for passive energy production including photovoltaics;
- Community, recreational uses;
- Publicly accessible green space;
- Strong internal landscape structure;
- Network of footpaths and cycleways linking the site to the villages of Puriton and Woolavington;
- Consideration of industrial heritage;
- High quality design and sustainability standards;
- Safeguarding existing sites and premises.

Preferred Greenfield

The following preferred greenfield locations are identified for Bridgwater:

- North East Bridgwater
- Bristol Road Corridor, Bridgwater

In addition, where the construction of a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point requires the additional release of employment land to meet the associated transport and employment requirements and supply chain businesses (including training) the following greenfield location is identified as a preferred greenfield location:

- Land to the south of Bridgwater, adjacent to the A38

**Only in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that brownfield sites or preferred greenfield locations are not available to meet employment needs, will this site be considered for general B1 and B2 use.**

Enhancement of Existing Employment Areas
The Council will work with relevant partners to promote and deliver the enhancement of the existing employment areas at Colley Lane and Wylds Road through refurbishment, redevelopment and environmental improvement. Such improvements will include encouraging a greater mix of modern employment accommodation, riverside frontage development and improving accessibility or associated infrastructure.

Where development proposals for employment are promoted, these will be expected to contribute positively to the enhancement of the area.

Further and Higher Education

The provision of further and higher education, training initiatives and facilities, particularly with regards to the role and expansion of Bridgwater College as a focus for higher education within the District, will be supported, especially where this integrates new facilities with the Town Centre.

Green Network

In order to improve the town’s green space resources and to mitigate the overall impacts of new development at the town, particularly through the potential recreational impacts on environmentally sensitive areas including habitats of European importance, the Council will work with relevant partners to establish a comprehensive town-wide green infrastructure network. Development proposals will be expected to contribute to this through the enhancement of existing areas including the river and canal corridors, parks and open spaces, formal and informal recreational space, the provision of new linking green corridors, habitat creation and tree planting.

Flood Defence

The Council will work with partners including the Environment Agency to deliver a strategic flood defence solution for the town. To ensure that this can be delivered the area shown on Map 14.3 will be safeguarded for this purpose. The safeguarded area can also facilitate the potential expansion of the Chilton Trinity Sewage Treatment Works, therefore stakeholders including Wessex Water will work closely to ensure all infrastructure needs can be accommodated, taking into account the timing, layout and detailed design of the flood defence solution. Development proposals will not be supported if they prejudice these objectives.

Transport

Proposals that provide opportunities for cycling, walking and enhanced public transport both within the town and between key destinations including Taunton and Burnham (A38 corridor), Street and Minehead (A39 corridor) and the town’s surrounding rural areas will be supported.

The Council will work with partners including the County Council to deliver and implement a robust car parking strategy that broadly seeks to support the retail function of the town centre whilst encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of travel.

In addition, opportunities to improve accessibility and the use of Bridgwater Railway Station will be encouraged.

The following transport improvements for Bridgwater will be prioritised:

- Transformation of the principal routes including the A38, A39 and the A372 through environmental improvements, dedicated pedestrian and cycle ways, and priority bus lanes in conjunction with public realm improvements and signage;
6 Place-making Policies

- Junction improvements at Cannon (Cross Rifles) roundabout and Crandon Bridge (Silver Fish);
- Delivery of the Colley Lane Southern Access Road;
- Completion of the Leggar Link;
- New bridge over the railway linking A38 Bristol Road with North East Bridgwater;
- Improvement of junctions of The Drove and Wylds Road with Bristol Road.

Development proposals that would prejudice the future implementation of these priorities will not be supported.

The Council will support the continued operation and potential development of Bridgwater Port including Dunball Wharf and Combwich Wharf (Policy D16 applies). It will also support the re-establishment of active commercial wharfs at suitable locations elsewhere on the River Parrett. In all cases the construction or operation of new wharfs should not adversely impact upon the Severn Estuary internationally designated site.

Delivery

6.23 Planning consent has now been granted for the strategic mixed use urban extension at North East Bridgwater consisting of 2000 houses and 90,000 square metres of employment space. Funding of over £11m has been secured that will guarantee early delivery of the first phase of affordable housing and key infrastructure. The detailed consent includes a regional distribution centre that will provide at least 1300 new jobs and secured substantial financial contributions towards strategic flood defences and transport infrastructure.

6.24 The Council in partnership with the Bridgwater Challenge Partnership will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document for Bridgwater town centre that will provide a detailed framework for the delivery of transformational projects set out above and in the Bridgwater Vision. In addition this will develop specific design guidance for key sites and town centre commercial development including shop fronts as well as providing a framework for enhanced public realm and the development of a town centre parking strategy. In advance of this a design principles and key outcomes document will be published for the Meads Ecological Park key transformational project that will inform the town centre SPD.

6.25 In partnership with the site promoters a Masterplan will be prepared in line with the above policy, emphasising renewable and low carbon energy generation objectives, for the Energy Park at Puriton.

6.26 A site allocation document will be prepared to ensure that a continued supply of housing land is available and deliverable. This will include design principles for the sites and the phased delivery of infrastructure working with landowners and developers. Given current land supply this is likely to only be required in the second half of the plan period.

6.27 The Council will implement as an interim measure a planning obligations tariff to secure contributions towards core infrastructure including the delivery of strategic flood defence, transport infrastructure and public realm improvements. In addition individual developments will be required to make appropriate on-site and off-site contributions for other infrastructure requirements through negotiated S106 agreements. In 2014, this will be superseded by the Community Infrastructure Levy approach or its subsequent successor.
6.28 Other forms of funding, including capital investment into secondary education, potential mitigation and compensation from major infrastructure proposals as set out in Section 4, capital bids by other partners and investment into existing Council housing estates in order to meet the decent homes standard, will be utilised.

6.29 Additional guidance on the potential use of Combwich wharf as part of the new nuclear build project at Hinkley C will be set out in a Hinkley SPD.

Monitoring and Review

Table 6.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>New housing and employment development located in Bridgwater over the Plan period (local)</td>
<td>70% of the district's housing and employment growth should be located in Bridgwater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>Net additional dwellings in Bridgwater (core)</td>
<td>At least 7,406,455 dwellings should be developed in Bridgwater over the Plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M32</td>
<td>Additional employment floorspace (core)</td>
<td>477,000m² of additional B1(a), B1(b), B1(c), B2 and B8 floorspace at the locations identified in Table 5.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M33</td>
<td>Total number of jobs by sector (local)</td>
<td>Create a minimum of 6,406,720 new jobs in Bridgwater over the plan period, particularly in higher skills sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M44</td>
<td>Access to Natural Greenspace (local)</td>
<td>All new developments should comply with Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) wherever possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M47</td>
<td>Bridgwater Vision Projects (local)</td>
<td>Progress in line with timetable set out in the Bridgwater Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M48</td>
<td>Bridgwater strategic flood defence (local)</td>
<td>All new development should make financial contributions to the delivery of the Parrett Barrier according to a standard charge tariff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M49</td>
<td>Bridgwater transport improvements (local)</td>
<td>Support the delivery of identified and future priority projects in line with the timetable set out in the current transport plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bridgwater Town Centre

Context

6.30 Bridgwater town centre is the highest order retail centre in Sedgemoor but the range of comparison offer is poor, partly as a result of competition from other larger centres, particularly Taunton. A rising vacancy rate is a sign of the declining nature of the town centre. The greatest concentration of these is in the Eastover and St John’s Street area, which is the main route from the railway station to the town centre and presents an uninviting entrance to Bridgwater. Whilst Policy
6 Place-making Policies

P2: Bridgwater Town Centre provides specific guidance on retail development in the town, it should be read in conjunction with the above Policy P1: Bridgwater Urban Area, that in particular identifies transformational projects that will start to address these issues within the Plan period.

6.31 In the early part of the plan period evidence suggests there is little requirement for additional floorspace as existing commitments, particularly at the Bridgwater Retail Park, will meet current demand. However, over the plan period up to 16,000m$^2$ could be accommodated that would respond to the planned growth and increase the amount of expenditure retained in the town. There is less quantifiable need for convenience floorspace, current evidence suggests only 1,600m$^2$. However, it will be important to ensure that convenience provision, currently considered as being good, is maintained and enhanced throughout the plan period.

6.32 The quality of much of the public realm and legibility of the centre is poor. The town centre is split by the River Parrett that separates primary and secondary shopping areas and at the present time little positive use is made of the river frontage. Whilst the town centre is designated a conservation area and has a rich built heritage, this is compromised by localised traffic congestion.

6.33 The town centre also supports a limited range of leisure activities including a cinema, a vibrant night time economy based upon pubs and clubs and is a centre for cultural activity, including the annual Bridgwater Carnival.

Approach

6.34 Bridgwater’s comparison sector lacks the range of prominent, medium to high quality retailers sought by many residents and at the present time interest from national retailers is subdued. The Core Strategy seeks to improve this through measures such as enhancing the public realm and increasing store sizes through supporting the conversion of existing units to attract multiple retailers, and by extending the town centre to include the Northgate site to provide high quality retail development complementing the town centre as a whole and linking the Docks through the Celebration Mile transformational project (as set out in Policy P1: Bridgwater Urban Area). This area is in the joint ownership of the District and County Councils who have agreed in principle the disposal of the site to a national retail developer.

6.35 In accordance with Policy D13: Retail Hierarchy, primary and secondary shopping areas have been identified to manage the distribution of uses and support vitality in the town centre. These facilitate the provision and retention of retail uses in the primary area and encourage other complementary non-retail uses elsewhere in the centre. Such complementary uses include leisure, financial and professional services, food and drink and other uses that support and strengthen the shopping experience of the town.

6.36 As the current town centre is fragmented and the main A39 (Broadway) severs St. John Street from the rest of the retail area, it is appropriate to consolidate the retail function of the town centre with the primary shopping area focused on Fore Street, Cornhill, and eastern end of High Street/Angel Place. Secondary shopping is focused on the western end of High Street, St Mary Street and Eastover. St John Street is re-designated as a district centre with the town centre boundary amended accordingly.
Policy P 2

Bridgwater Town Centre

Development proposals in Bridgwater town centre will be supported which contribute to the following objectives:

- Re-establish the town centre as a key destination, in particular through additional comparison floor space and leisure uses;
- High quality and varied retail and leisure offer;
- Regenerate the town centre, enhance the setting of the River Parrett, and deliver high quality public realm improvements, whilst taking into account important views of and to landmarks;
- Integrate the town centre within the wider town through improved connections and linkages;
- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport.

Existing Town Centre:

In accordance with Policy D13: Retail Hierarchy the following areas are identified as primary and secondary shopping areas as shown on the Proposals Map:

Primary

- Fore Street;
- Cornhill and
- Eastern end of High Street, including the Angel Place Shopping centre

Secondary

- Eastover;
- Western end of High Street and
- St Mary Street

Development proposals that offer opportunity to merge and/or redevelop existing town centre units in order to create larger stores that might attract national multiples to the town Centre primary shopping area will be supported. Any such opportunities will need to respect and positively contribute to the historic value of the existing town centre.

The Council will support the regeneration of the Eastover area (part of the Bridgwater Riverside transformational project – See Policy P1 Bridgwater) through the encouragement of active uses such as cafés, restaurants, bars, local and specialist shops and services and specialist/independent retail including along the river edge.

Extended Town centre

The area at Northgate shown on the Proposals Map is identified for a retail-led mixed-use development to meet the retail demands of new and existing residents and re-establish the core shopping function of the town centre. Proposals will include the following key elements:

- Demonstrating the highest quality design and sustainability standards;
- New spaces and buildings that encourage enjoyment, activity, are safe and secure and create a sense of place;
6 Place-making Policies

- A range of large footplate retail premises including new provision of up to 16,000m² of comparison floorspace;
- Leisure uses that could include cafés, bars, restaurants and a cinema;
- Enhancement of Brewery Fields to provide multi use high quality green space;
- Appropriate office and residential uses on upper floors;
- Provision of enhanced links between the town centre and the docks;
- Adequate parking provision to meet existing demands and the future needs from development.
- Any proposals must be accompanied by a statement setting out they meet the objectives of Policy P2 above

The town centre boundary will be extended to include the Northgate area and this will be identified as included within the primary shopping area once development has commenced or is committed. St John Street will be re-designated a district centre and the town centre boundary amended accordingly.

Delivery

6.37 The Council in partnership with the Bridgwater Challenge Partnership will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document for Bridgwater town centre that will provide a detailed framework for the delivery of transformational projects set out in Policy P1: Bridgwater Urban Area and in the Bridgwater Vision. This will also include a regeneration framework for the Eastover area that will identify development opportunities, transport management proposals and enhancement of the river edge. In addition this will develop specific design guidance for key sites and town centre commercial development including shop fronts as well as providing a framework for enhanced public realm.

6.38 Somerset County Council and Sedgemoor District Council will dispose of land holdings that comprise the proposed town centre extension at Northgate. Negotiations are at an advanced state with a preferred bidder that will secure the comprehensive delivery of a mixed-use scheme that meets the policy requirements and it is anticipated that this scheme will be implemented during the first half of the plan period.

6.39 The Council will work with community safety organisations, local retailers, businesses, landowners, and community groups to develop a town centre management strategy that supports a vibrant, attractive and safe environment. It will also work in partnership with Somerset NHS to ensure that the redevelopment of Bridgwater Hospital, following the relocation to a new greenfield site, supports the regeneration objectives for the town.

Monitoring and Review

Table 6.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M36</td>
<td>Additional floorspace for ‘town centre uses’ (core)</td>
<td>Increase in A1, A2, B1a, and D2 floorspace in the town centres, including a minimum of 16,000m² of comparison retail floorspace in Bridgwater town centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M37</td>
<td>Vacant retail premises (local)</td>
<td>Maintain a low rate of vacant retail premises in the town centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Monitoring Indicator</td>
<td>Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M50</td>
<td>Large retail units (local)</td>
<td>Increase in the number of larger retail units (100m² or more) in Bridgwater</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.40 In relation to monitoring indicator M50 'Large retail units' the Council acknowledges that while national multiple retailers are generally more likely to require larger premises, exact requirements will differ in each case. Most recent information from local commercial agents suggests that premises over 100m² with good service access are preferred by national retailers.

6.41 In order for this indicator to remain relevant, annual monitoring will therefore have to observe not only the creation, and subsequent occupation, of larger retail units, but will also need to monitor requirements for larger premises as expressed by retailers on an ongoing basis.
6 Place-making Policies

Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge

Context

6.42 The town of Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge is a seaside tourist destination and home to about 20,000 residents. It plays an important service and employment centre role for northern Sedgemoor.

6.43 The location of the town adjacent to the Severn Estuary is a major asset but also a cause for concern in respect of flood risk and ecological sensitivity. Other common issues across the urban area include perceived poor quality of parts of the built environment and high levels of out-commuting to other centres. It is also recognised that individual localities within Burnham and Highbridge have different roles and challenges.

6.44 Burnham's role as a coastal resort, supported by a major concentration of holiday accommodation (chalets, static caravans, touring caravans and camping) at Berrow and Brean, has left it vulnerable to the general decline in seaside holidays in Britain. The town has also had to cope with the trend of major holiday parks increasing the scope and quality of leisure, entertainment and catering facilities on site in order to retain visitor expenditure.

6.45 Burnham’s attraction for visitors is also lowered by the poor quality public realm of the town centre and seafront. The need for improvements has long been recognised by regeneration strategies, including the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTI) and the Burnham-on-Sea Civic Pride Project, that have raised ambitions for upgrading the built environment. The strategies have focused on the part-pedestrianisation of High Street, improved east to west links between the centre and the seafront and the enhancement of South Esplanade. As yet, adequate funding has not been secured despite significant community and stakeholder commitment over a number of years.

6.46 Burnham offers the resident population a range of facilities including a relatively vibrant town centre with a range of shops and services. However, local employment opportunities are limited to the town centre, those connected to tourism and the business parks and industrial estates at Highbridge. The town as a whole has significant levels of out-commuting to higher order centres to access a wider range and more highly skilled jobs, encouraged by good motorway accessibility and its appeal as a place to live.

6.47 Similarly, Burnham has limited redevelopment opportunities for new housing with an absence of any known large brownfield sites. In recent years housing completions for Burnham have been lower than Highbridge and have come primarily from intensification and small redevelopment sources. This has meant that there has been less opportunity to deliver affordable housing and other forms of essential infrastructure through private sector development.

6.48 Highbridge has a more industrial past (wharf, railway, brick and tile manufacture etc) and this role now continues in its industrial and business estates. Highbridge no longer hosts a livestock market and the town centre’s role is focused towards its local community. The existing centre serves only an immediate catchment area and is characterised by high vacancies, a poor built environment and traffic passing through. This, alongside pockets of significant levels of deprivation, has contributed to the relatively poor image of Highbridge.

6.49 Highbridge’s industrial tradition has provided significant opportunities for the redevelopment of brownfield sites and some tangible benefits in terms of replacing poor quality and often vacant buildings. However, there are concerns that this has been primarily housing market led and piecemeal. Furthermore, the design quality and housing mix of some recent developments have been called into question.
6.50 Highbridge’s connectivity by road and rail has meant out-commuting is high even though there are a number of important manufacturing and distribution focused employment areas.

6.51 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identifies that both tidal flooding (through the overtopping and breaching of defences) and surface water are the main areas of flood risk for Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge. In terms of mitigation for tidal flooding, two areas are identified in the SFRA as having potential for strategic flood risk management solutions. These locations are in the vicinity of the Highbridge Boatyard on the River Brue and the tourism area at Brean (which is at risk from potential overtopping from the River Axe). The SFRA suggest that mitigating flooding from surface water will also need to be considered at a strategic level to ensure the town is adequately protected from flood risk.

Approach

6.52 The key critical issues the Core Strategy seeks to address for Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge are ensuring the relative roles of the town are strengthened whether that be as a significant tourist destination, service centre or local centre; improving the towns’ self-containment and reducing the need to travel; promoting regeneration that contributes to the priorities of the area; ensuring development delivers essential infrastructure; and taking into account the environmental sensitivities of the area including national and international nature conservation designations and high flood risk. To do this, the Core Strategy identifies the following areas of policy approach:

Housing

6.53 New housing will be prioritised on brownfield sites within the existing urban area including saved allocations shown on the spatial diagram (Picture 6.2) and supported where proposals contribute to local housing priorities. These priorities will include the need to address affordability issues and to provide a wider range of housing types, including family housing, to create a better balance between local housing demand and supply as recommended in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

6.54 A brownfield only strategy is unlikely to be sufficient to deliver much needed investment in infrastructure including flood defences, education and public realm improvements. Therefore, a mixed-use/residential-led greenfield urban extension could be beneficial during the Plan period. Policy P3 identifies land at Brue Farm, Highbridge as a broad location to accommodate this urban extension. This will be identified in a subsequent site allocations development plan document. In addition to infrastructure delivery, these objectives will include raising design and sustainability standards, improving the mix and type of housing available in the area, improving walking and cycling access through the funding of the delivery of a new bridge across the River Brue, providing local employment opportunities and acting as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the town and investment into services and facilities.

Employment

6.55 To help increase self-containment there is a need to encourage employment proposals that provide higher skilled and higher earning job opportunities locally, in turn reducing the attractiveness of out-commuting to other centres. At the same time it is important to retain existing employers in the area by supporting proposals for expansion and remodelling, particularly where this encourages the enhancement, redevelopment and refurbishment of existing employment areas.
6.56 The Economic Development Masterplan anticipates Burnham’s employment growth to be within the office and tourism sectors and have more limited land requirements. In contrast, the Masterplan suggests Highbridge’s growth will focus on manufacturing and distribution uses, which generally require more land.

6.57 The lack of suitable office accommodation outside of the main shopping area in Burnham has meant that a number of units within the retail core are occupied by offices not relying on passing trade or a town centre location. To address this, the Sedgemoor Economic Masterplan identifies that within the town centre, but outside of the primary shopping area, opportunities to create a dedicated business zone as a focus for office uses should be supported. This would not only provide higher quality local job opportunities to contribute to self-containment objectives, but could also build critical mass in the town centre to the benefit of the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.

6.58 Given that the current employment sites are located in Highbridge, a focus on existing locations of manufacturing uses will allow for business attraction and expansion of existing facilities, Highbridge is best placed to accommodate the majority of this requirement. However, it will be important that any employment development responds to a range of business requirements, including meeting the needs of small growing businesses and local start ups to stimulate local enterprise and capture the talent of local entrepreneurs. The Council’s Employment Land Review identifies the existing Isleport Business Park as a focus for such development and also highlights the potential for its expansion to meet the additional employment land requirements identified in the spatial strategy.

Shopping

6.59 The Sedgemoor Town Centres and Retail Study identifies some opportunity for encouraging further retail within Burnham town centre through redevelopment opportunities and potential relocation of non-retail uses to upper floors. The Study suggests that this approach could result in some 5,000m² of additional comparison floorspace. This refocusing of the main retail core would allow more active frontages to be introduced, enabling greater choice to retailers and shoppers alike and assisting in the marketing of the town and uplift in perception, alongside public realm improvement.

6.60 To adequately manage this distribution of uses in Burnham town centre, the Core Strategy identifies primary and secondary shopping areas to facilitate the provision and retention of retail uses in the core shopping area and to encourage other complementary non-retail uses in the centre as a whole that are appropriate in a shopping environment. Such uses include leisure, financial and professional services, food and drink and other uses that support and strengthen Burnham’s tourism role.

6.61 The Town Centres and Retail Study identifies Highbridge as the fourth ranked centre in Sedgemoor, below Bridgwater, Burnham and Cheddar and represents only a ‘minor district centre’ with low demand from both local consumers and retail operators. The study suggests that the focus for Highbridge should be as a district centre rather than a town centre with a primary role to meet the needs of its immediate community.

6.62 The role of a district centre would reflect and support the local function of the centre, and encourage small-scale retail development at Market Street, making this a clearer focal point for the town’s shopping function and public realm improvements. By excluding Church Street as part of the district centre will give rise to redevelopment opportunities for uses that complement the consolidated centre including residential as well as improving the built environment generally.

6.63 The Proposals Map identifies the primary and secondary shopping areas for Burnham and the extent of the Highbridge district centre boundary. The role of the centres and their functions, including how retail and non-retail uses will be managed are outlined in Policy D13: Retail Hierarchy.
Tourism

6.64 Widening and increasing the quality of Burnham's tourism offer and providing opportunities to extend the tourist season to all year round is fundamental to improving the local economy, not just by increasing tourist spend but also in securing investment in the physical fabric of the town. To do this, the Core Strategy supports proposals that improve the tourism offer overall, including the provision of new weather facilities and a wide range of holiday accommodation.

6.65 The coastal area at Brean and Berrow is an important element of Burnham's seaside offer. The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identifies the Brean area as being at high risk from flooding and recommends that the continued development of caravan and camping within this location will need to be carefully considered in terms of long-term sustainability, of which flood risk management will be a key issue. The long term strategy for dealing with the flood risk of the area is still emerging as part of ongoing work on the North Devon and Somerset Shoreline Management Plan (SMP), in addition to ongoing discussions between the Council and the Environment Agency. The SMP proposes further studies by 2020 to identify and appraise all long term sustainable options for managing flood and coastal erosion risk in this area.

6.66 Given the continued uncertainties of a long-term strategy, the Core Strategy takes a precautionary approach and seeks to balance the need to manage the flood risk whilst allowing for appropriate or necessary further investment into new or extended sites. Facilitating the upgrading and remodelling of existing sites within or adjacent to their current boundaries in recognition of the importance they play in the local tourist economy and the continuing need to enhance facilities and the visual appearance of the area will be supported subject to satisfying the requirements of the sequential and exception tests set out in Policy D1: Managing Flood Risk.

Public Realm and Transport

6.67 Although public sector funding has been difficult to secure for the regeneration strategies for the town and is likely to continue to be so, it is important that the opportunities for public realm improvements are not lost, given the many economic, social and environmental benefits that would arise. Key elements of the public realm improvements for Burnham are closely aligned with a future transport strategy that seeks to improve conditions for walking and cycling and as a result could increase passing trade for local businesses, create better links between the shopping area and the seafront as well as reducing congestion. For Highbridge, improving linkages to the railway station will maximise the benefits of this facility to the town and the public transport accessibility of the area.

6.68 Similarly, strengthening walking and cycling linkages between Burnham and Highbridge and between the centres to the coastal holiday sites and wider countryside will better connect the town with its wider tourism role and encourage more visitors to its centres from its holiday parks. Improvements to cycling networks in the area, identified as an element of the green infrastructure strategy for the District, could also provide the opportunity for cycling and activity focused tourism.

6.69 Whilst external funding options will be pursued where appropriate, it is likely that the above improvements will need to be funded from new development and will therefore be considered within the wider infrastructure delivery strategy outlined in Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery.

6.70 In all cases where improvement to the transport and public realm infrastructure is proposed, potential direct and indirect impacts on internationally designated sites need to be carefully considered, even where this focuses on more sustainable transport options. Such infrastructure should be conceived so as to encourage visitors away from more sensitive areas and towards those locations where their impacts can be managed so as to have no adverse effects.
Policy P 3

Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge

Proposals for development in Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge will be supported if they contribute to meeting all of the relevant following objectives:

- Increasing self-containment by reducing the need to travel;
- Enhancing the service centre role of the towns and their relationship to the wider rural hinterland;
- Providing development opportunities that meet the needs of the local community including addressing known areas of deprivation and social exclusion;
- Promoting regeneration of the built environment and improvements to the public realm;
- Encouraging investment and complementary development opportunities that support and strengthen the area’s role as a significant tourist destination;
- Consolidating and enhancing existing local services, facilities and infrastructure including education, open space and other social infrastructure;
● Delivering a strategic flood defence solution that is sensitive to its location adjacent to internationally important nature conservation sites;
● Protecting and enhancing the ecological sensitivities of the area including national and international nature conservation designations.

Housing

Housing proposals that maximise brownfield development within the existing urban area (as defined on the 'saved' Local Plan Proposals Map and spatial diagram above) through appropriate infill and redevelopment opportunities will be supported where they meet local housing priorities, particularly the provision of family and affordable housing. In addition, new housing development will be supported on an identified mixed-use urban extension on land at Brue Farm, Highbridge (to be identified in a subsequent development plan document) where all the above objectives are demonstrably met it contributes to meeting all the relevant objectives above.

Employment

Employment proposals that encourage local employment opportunities, promote higher skilled jobs and/or allow for existing businesses to expand will be supported. In addition, the Council will encourage the enhancement, redevelopment and refurbishment of existing employment areas. Within Burnham town centre, opportunities for the development of a new office cluster to provide a dedicated business zone, outside of the main retail area, will be supported. For Highbridge, land adjacent to Isleport Business Park is identified as a preferred greenfield location to facilitate an extension to provide additional employment land (B1, B2 and B8) will be identified (in a subsequent site allocations development plan document) to facilitate an extension to Isleport Business Park to accommodate approximately 1,000 jobs.

Town Centre

Shopping proposals and other town centre uses will be supported in the centres where they enhance their role and function.

For Burnham, this means proposals that encourage the expansion and retention of retail uses, other complementary town centre activities and improvements in its public realm compatible with its town centre and tourism role.

In accordance with Policy D13: Retail Hierarchy, the following areas in Burnham are identified as primary and secondary shopping areas retail frontages as shown on the Proposals Map:

Primary

High Street, Pier Street

Secondary

Northern end of High Street, Victoria Street, College Street, Cross Street and Adam Street

For Highbridge, this means proposals that contribute to the regeneration of the centre, enhance its role as a District centre and provide for the needs of the local community will be supported. The District centre boundary is defined on the Proposals Map and is focused on Market Street.
6 Place-making Policies

**Tourism**

Tourism proposals that promote a higher quality tourist experience will be supported. This will include extending the tourism season, providing new all-weather facilities, delivering a range of good quality holiday accommodation and contributing to an enhanced seaside offer at Burnham.

Within Brean/Berrow, proposals for new or improved holiday accommodation and associated tourist development will be supported within or adjacent to existing sites where they meet the requirements of Policy D1: Managing Flood Risk. Until the implications of flood risk and sea level rise, and potential solutions for this area, are fully understood, new sites will not be permitted in Flood Zone 3.

**Transport**

Transport proposals that reduce local congestion and contribute to local traffic management by managing parking and providing opportunities for cycling, walking, increased public transport or emerging transport technologies both within and between Burnham, Highbridge, Brean, Berrow and the wider countryside will be supported.

For Burnham, proposals that improve the linkages between the town centre and the sea front will be encouraged.

For Highbridge, opportunities to improve accessibility and use of Highbridge Railway Station will be supported.

**Delivery**

6.71 The Council working with landowners, developers and the local community will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (or Development Plan Document if following scoping the project this is more appropriate) for Burnham and Highbridge that will provide a detailed framework for the delivery of key regeneration projects and public realm improvements. This will establish key principles for addressing current areas of concern including flood defence, housing range and mix, design standards and green infrastructure. It will also include a Masterplan and design principles for the identified preferred greenfield location for employment on land adjacent to Isleport Business Park.

6.72 The Supplementary Planning Document will also include a Masterplan and design principles and identify the phased delivery of infrastructure (including the new footbridge across the River Brue) for the urban extension, working with landowners and developers be prepared to ensure that a continued supply of housing land is available and deliverable from brownfield development opportunities and when required will identify the mixed-use urban extension following a site search. Any such search the Masterplan and design principles will need to be mindful of the recommendations of the Habitat Regulations Assessment in terms of the potential impacts of residential development close to the southern bank of the River Brue and the need to avoid/mitigate the potential for recreational disturbance through the scale of development and green space provision. The site allocations document will include design principles for the sites and the phased delivery of infrastructure working with landowners and developers.

6.73 The Council will implement as an interim measure a planning obligations tariff to secure contributions towards core infrastructure including the delivery of strategic flood defence, transport infrastructure and public realm improvements. In addition individual developments will be required to
make appropriate on-site and off-site contributions for other infrastructure requirements through negotiated S106 agreements. This will be superseded after 2014 by the Community Infrastructure Levy approach or its subsequent successor.

6.74 Discussions will continue with the Environment Agency and other partners and stakeholders regarding a long term and sustainable solution for flood risk within the coastal strip, with further technical work undertaken as appropriate informed by the emerging Shoreline Management Plan.

Monitoring and Review

Table 6.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>New housing and employment development located in Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge over the Plan period (local)</td>
<td>15% of the district's housing and employment growth should be located in Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>Net additional dwellings in Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge (core)</td>
<td>At least 4,591,575 dwellings should be developed in Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge over the Plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M32</td>
<td>Additional employment floorspace (core)</td>
<td>48,000m² of additional B1(a), B1(b), B1(c), B2 and B8 floorspace at Isleport Business Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M33</td>
<td>Total number of jobs by sector (local)</td>
<td>Create a minimum of 4,4001,470 new jobs in Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge over the plan period, particularly in higher skills sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M36</td>
<td>Additional floorspace for ‘town centre uses’ (core)</td>
<td>Increase in A1, A2, B1a, and D2 floorspace in the town centres, including a minimum of 5,000m² of comparison retail floorspace in Burnham-on-Sea town centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M37</td>
<td>Vacant retail premises (local)</td>
<td>Maintain a low rate of vacant retail premises in the town and district centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rural Sedgemoor

6.75 The now revoked South West Regional Strategy approach of focusing development at the larger cities and towns sought to address sustainability concerns over the scale and nature of development that had occurred in rural areas in the past, recognising there was a need for this to be more carefully managed. This follows the principle that population and housing growth in small towns and villages does not necessarily prevent rural service decline, and instead may increase dependence on other centres and as a result increase the need to travel in areas where public transport options are more limited.

6.76 However this approach has recently come under challenge, in particular by the Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing carried by the Government in 2008. This suggests that focusing housing and employment at the larger urban areas has led to significant barriers for rural development and created a ‘sustainability trap’ where the development required to assist the sustainability of places is only allowed in those places already considered sustainable. In this case if people in rural areas not considered sustainable cannot live near where they work because it is unaffordable, or work close to their homes as development is directed to the larger settlements, restricting development only makes these communities less sustainable environmentally, economically and socially.

6.77 The Spatial Strategy provides a balance between these approaches. It focuses growth at the urban areas and provides for greater management of development in the rural areas by almost halving the number of identified settlements in the adopted Local Plan. However it also recognises that limited growth in places which provide a reasonable level of existing services and facilities can contribute to the overall sustainability of communities, for example through the provision of affordable housing or small-scale employment opportunities. To do this it identifies Key Rural Settlements and Other Sustainable Settlements.

Key Rural Settlements

Context

6.78 Seventeen Key Rural Settlements (KRS) are identified based on the findings of the Council’s Role and Function of Sedgemoor Settlements report and other evidence. These are the places that, aside from Bridgwater and the Market Towns, perform best in terms of size of existing population, the range and volume of local services and facilities, employment profile and accessibility.

6.79 The identified Key Rural Settlements are: Ashcott, Axbridge, Berrow, Brent Knoll, Cannington, Cheddar, East Huntspill, Lympsham, Mark, Nether Stowey, North Petherton, Pawlett, Puriton, Wedmore, Wembdon, Westonzoyland, Woolavington. Wembdon and Berrow, whilst identified as Key Rural Settlements in their own right, do have a role as part of the larger urban areas to which they adjoin and so Policies P1: Bridgwater Urban Area and P3: Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge are also relevant when considering development proposals in these places. Detailed portraits of the individual settlements are available in the Role and Function of Sedgemoor Settlements report.

6.80 The Key Rural Settlements vary significantly in size, role and function, local priorities and constraints so whilst Policy P4: Key Rural Settlements is relevant to them all, its interpretation will depend on the individual settlement scale and character, for example appropriate employment proposals for Cheddar (given there is an existing large business park) may not be appropriate for Pawlett. Furthermore assessment under the Habitats Regulations has identified specific concern for Cheddar and Nether Stowey in respect of bats in the area which may have an impact on development proposals (see Policy D15: Bats in the Landscape).
Approach

6.81 In allowing opportunities for development in the Key Rural Settlements it is essential that development proposals contribute to their local service centre function, support the priorities of local communities, improve self-containment, and respect environmental limits. To do this the Core Strategy identifies the following areas of policy approach:

Housing

6.82 Housing supply in the Key Rural Settlements has traditionally come from small sites of less than 5 dwellings and in most cases single dwelling sites. Housing from infill, subdivision and conversion within settlement boundaries will continue to be an important source of housing growth in these places, however the overall levels of growth required by the spatial strategy do not justify comprehensively reviewing the extent of existing boundaries.

6.83 Previous consultation has suggested that this approach is too restrictive and would lead to pressure on garden areas and open spaces within the settlements and development unsympathetic to the local character. Although these negative impacts would be managed by other policies of the Core Strategy, for example Policy D2: Promoting High Quality and Inclusive Design, infill development provides only limited wider benefits to the community. Therefore providing further infill opportunities by extending settlement boundaries is not considered appropriate.

6.84 However, to assist in delivering housing growth in the Key Rural Settlements that provides opportunities to meet the needs and priorities of the local community, provision is made for the release of sites outside of existing settlement boundaries for a mix of market and affordable housing and other uses where this brings clear and demonstrable benefits. Such benefits could include: high standards of design and sustainable construction, environmental enhancement, improved accessibility to local services, local employment and contributions to local infrastructure.

6.85 This approach, in delivering a mix of affordable and market housing, would assist viability of schemes by enabling cross subsidy (particularly in a climate where grant funding has an uncertain future), contribute to local priorities and provide the opportunity for mixed and sustainable communities that otherwise may not be achievable through infill housing development alone. The key driver for such a scheme would be a demonstrable need for affordable housing for local people identified in an up to date Local Housing Needs Assessment.

6.86 It is generally expected that such schemes will be community-led providing measurable outcomes for Village Design Statements and Neighbourhood or Parish Plans. Promoters will need to demonstrate that robust engagement and consultation with local stakeholders has been carried out in advance of a detailed scheme being submitted. It will also normally be expected that there is support from the relevant town/parish council. Where appropriate sites will need to be subject to come forward following the preparation of specific site allocation development plan documents and will be community-led providing measurable outcomes for the preparation of Village Design Statements and Parish Plans. As the site allocations document will be the subject of assessment under the Habitats Regulations, any site proposal promoted in advance of this will need to be assessed under the Habitats Regulations, with the findings informing subsequent planning applications.

Employment

6.87 A number of the identified key rural settlements have existing local employment opportunities including Cheddar, Cannington and North Petherton. It is important that these are retained and where appropriate enhanced through remodelling to promote greater self-containment and make a contribution to reducing car travel. In addition proposals for new small-scale employment development in key
rural settlements will be encouraged, in particular where these provide opportunities for local employment, provided it is of an appropriate scale and compatible with the character of the settlement and does not have a significant effect on international or national nature conservation sites. Where housing sites are released, as outlined above, the provision of employment opportunities as an element of this would be beneficial.

**Local Services**

6.88 The overall spatial strategy seeks to ensure that a range of services and facilities that meet the day to day needs of communities continues to be provided in rural places. In key rural settlements some modest and sympathetic growth will support the viability of the existing services and facilities and enhance their local service centre role. Similarly preventing their loss from these settlements is a priority and will not be permitted unless there is an overriding justification that outweighs the loss of the service or facility to the community. This will include where an appropriate alternative service or facility has been provided or where it is demonstrated that it is no longer viable.

6.89 In demonstrating that a use is no longer viable the Council will expect submission of a full financial appraisal for the business and for it to have been subject to appropriate marketing. Appropriate marketing includes the following:

- Through two or more local agents;
- An independent valuation of price;
- For a reasonable period of time (about 18 months).

**Policy P 4**

**Key Rural Settlements**

Proposals for development in the Key Rural Settlements will be supported which meet the following objectives:

- Enhance their role as service centres for their local community;
- Improve self-containment;
- Support the needs of the local community
- **Respect environmental limits.**

**Housing**

Housing proposals for redevelopment, infill, subdivision and conversion within existing settlement boundaries will be supported where it is appropriate to the scale, design and character of the existing community.

**Local Priority Housing Sites**

Outside of the settlement boundaries of the identified Key Rural Settlements (as defined on the Proposals Map), housing proposals on sites specifically released for that purpose will be supported only where it is demonstrated that it meets all of the following:

- Fulfills an identified local housing need for affordable and market housing as evidenced by a Local Housing Needs Assessment;
The affordable housing provision (notwithstanding the requirements of Policy D6: Affordable Housing) will normally be at least 40% of the total number of housing units provided on the site; the scale of development should be appropriate to the size, accessibility, character and physical identity of the settlement; the development will integrate the open market and affordable housing and be well related to and complement the existing built form of the settlement, providing opportunities for walking and cycling to local services and facilities; improve access to local job opportunities, including on-site provision where appropriate; promotes high design standards and achieves a minimum of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 or equivalent; contributes to local infrastructure including education, service provision, accessible open space and community facilities; incorporates local environmental and landscape enhancement, including where appropriate habitat creation and community woodland planting.

It will generally be expected that schemes demonstrably accord with relevant parish plans and have the support of the appropriate Town/Parish Council following robust engagement and consultation with local stakeholders. Site proposals will be required to include assessment under the Habitats Regulations and have been informed by its findings. Following the adoption of the Core Strategy, it is the Council’s intention to prepare a small sites allocation document that will identify suitable sites where this approach may be appropriate. Any site proposals in advance of this will be required to include assessment under the Habitats Regulations and the findings considered when addressing planning applications.

**Employment**

Employment proposals will be supported within or adjacent to existing settlement boundaries where they are compatible with the scale and character of the community, and encourage local job opportunities. In addition the retention, remodelling or appropriate expansion of existing businesses will be supported. However employment proposals that have a potential significant effect on internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites will not be supported.

**Local Services**

Proposals to provide or enhance local services and facilities will be supported. In order to sustain the local service centre role of the Key Rural Settlements, the loss of existing services and facilities that meet the day to day needs of the local community will be resisted unless an over-riding justification can be demonstrated.

**Delivery**

6.90 Following the adoption of the Core Strategy, the Council, working with local communities, landowners, Registered Social Landlords, the Community Council and developers will facilitate neighbourhood or parish planning exercises (including where necessary the preparation of an up to date housing needs survey), prepare small sites allocation development plan documents where an up to date housing needs survey identifies a need for local affordable housing. This will include the identification of the key local priorities for the individual communities and potential development sites a site search, outline the likely housing profile in terms of mix, tenure, type and size, set out design and sustainable construction standards, identify infrastructure requirements and other key local community priorities and include an assessment of viability and delivery.
At Nether Stowey the assessment of the Core Strategy has identified potential disturbance to Barbastelle bat roosts arising from new housing development and requires that before any new housing is occupied, there must be signs at entrances to woodland west of Nether Stowey requesting users to keep to Public Rights of Way and that dogs are kept on leads. This requirement should be taken into account when preparing any potential housing development scheme undertaking a site allocations document specifically for that village.

The Council will continue to seek provision of onsite and offsite infrastructure through the use of planning obligations (Section 106 agreements) on a site by site basis as set out in Policy S2: Infrastructure Delivery. This will enable contributions towards a range of infrastructure to assist the overall sustainability of the settlements including affordable housing, education, sports facilities and open space, healthcare and community facilities. Planning obligations will also be used to secure local employment opportunities through the use of local labour agreements.

Working with key partners including Somerset County Council, parish councils, community transport providers, small business groups and individual service providers the Council will proactively encourage service providers to take the spatial strategy into account when developing their own strategies and plans to ensure that the retention and enhancement of service provision within the key rural settlements is a priority to the benefit of the local service centre role of those places.

### Monitoring and Review

#### Table 6.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>New housing and employment development located in Key Rural Settlements over the Plan period (local)</td>
<td>12% of the district's housing and employment growth should be located in Key Rural Settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>Net additional dwellings in Key Rural Settlements (core)</td>
<td>At least 1,200 dwellings should be developed in Key Rural Settlements over the Plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M33</td>
<td>Total number of jobs by sector (local)</td>
<td>Create a minimum of 99945 new jobs in Key Rural Settlements over the plan period, particularly in higher skills sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M51</td>
<td>Retention of significant community services and facilities in Key Rural Settlements (local)</td>
<td>There should be no net loss of significant community services and facilities in individual Key Rural Settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M52</td>
<td>Design standards for Key Rural Settlement exceptions site (local)</td>
<td>All development on Key Rural Settlement exceptions sites should achieve 'Code for Sustainable Homes' Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M53</td>
<td>Affordable Housing provision for Key Rural Settlement exceptions site (local)</td>
<td>All development on Key Rural Settlement exceptions sites should include a minimum of 40% Affordable Housing units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.94 It will be important to regularly review the identified Key Rural Settlements to ensure that their roles and functions remain consistent with the local service centre role envisaged in the spatial strategy. If during the annual monitoring process a settlement were found to have experienced significant changes in its provision of services, facilities or accessibility, its standing in the settlement hierarchy of the strategy would be amended accordingly.

6.95 In addition, monitoring (to be developed in detail as part of the later site allocations work) will need to assess the contribution that sites released for mixed tenure housing on the edge of settlements have had in achieving local objectives and priorities, including provision of affordable housing without reliance on grant funding, high design and construction standards and the delivery of community infrastructure. Where it is identified that the impact of this approach does not contribute to these objectives a review of this element of the approach for key rural settlements will be undertaken.
Other Sustainable Settlements

Context

6.96 The spatial strategy identifies eleven 'Other Sustainable Settlements'. These are: Catcott, Chilton Polden, Combwich, Cossington, Edington, Middlezoy, Othery, Shipham, Spaxton and Weare (including Lower Weare) and West Huntspill have been identified on the basis of the Council's Role and Function of Sedgemoor Settlements report. This report identified that, although smaller than the key rural settlements, these are villages that still retain at least a basic level of services and facilities for the needs of their immediate local community.

6.97 Assessment under the Habitats Regulations has identified specific concern for Shipham in respect of bats in the area which may have an impact on development proposals (see Policy D15: Bats in the Landscape).

Approach

6.98 Whilst the spatial strategy envisages these smaller settlements will be the focus for only very limited growth to enhance their role as local centres, this does provide some opportunity to meet local priorities. Therefore the guiding principle in allowing development in the Other Sustainable Settlements is to ensure it contributes to meeting the needs of the local community, including local employment opportunities, affordable housing provision, and access to services whilst respecting the environmental, economic and social limits of these places. To do this the Core Strategy identifies the following areas of policy approach:

Housing

6.99 As with the Key Rural Settlements the overall levels of growth required by the Spatial Strategy do not justify comprehensively reviewing the extent of existing settlement boundaries. Whilst the policy retains infill, subdivision and conversion within boundaries, given the lower levels of housing required in these places and local concerns over infill housing development and the pressure it places on garden areas and other spaces, this will be carefully managed. In addition, to help sustain rural communities and ensure local people can access affordable housing, the policy makes provision for small-scale local needs housing schemes for local people that are proven to meet an identified need and accord with the requirements of Policy D7: Rural Local Needs.

Employment

6.100 Rural employment opportunities within or adjacent to the Other Sustainable Settlements have an important role in the local economy and provide small-scale opportunities for local employment, contributing to the self-containment and reducing the need to travel. Proposals for new businesses, enhancement through remodelling and appropriate expansion will therefore be supported, particularly where this facilitates the retention of and/or provides additional job opportunities locally. In all cases proposals will need to be of an appropriate scale for its context and not have a significant effect on internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites.

Local Services

6.101 For the majority of the Other Sustainable Settlements the loss of a service or facility will mean a total loss to the local community resulting in the need to travel even for basic services. It is therefore essential that the policy starting point is to retain such services to maintain the local centre role of these villages unless alternative provision is made. Alternative provision could include combined use, for example post office facilities integrated within an existing shop, or other innovative solutions.
Demonstration that the existing use is no longer viable will not be justification on its own to support its loss where this would be a total loss of such service to the village without appropriate alternative provision.

**Policy P 5**

**Other Sustainable Settlements**

Development proposals within identified Other Sustainable Settlements will be supported provided they meet the following objectives:

- Sustain their role as local centres for their existing communities;
- Improve their overall sustainability, having regard to environmental, social and economic factors;
- Meets the need of the local community.

**Housing**

Housing proposals for redevelopment, infill, subdivision and conversion within existing settlement boundaries (as defined on the Proposals Map) will in exceptional circumstances be supported where it meets all of the following:

- It does not involve the loss of, or harm to spaces or facilities (public or private) which contribute to the character and role of the settlement;
- It is appropriate to the scale, design and existing character of the settlement;
- It would not harm the character or amenity of any nearby property.

Within or adjacent to existing settlement boundaries, small-scale affordable housing schemes on sites exceptionally released for that purpose will be supported where it can be demonstrated that this will meet an identified local need.

**Employment**

Employment proposals will be supported within or adjacent to existing settlement boundaries where they are compatible with the scale and character of the community, and encourage local job opportunities. In addition, the retention, remodelling or appropriate expansion of existing businesses will be supported. However, employment proposals that have a potential significant effect on internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites will not be supported.

**Local Services**

Proposals to retain local services and facilities through combined use, or other innovative solutions to service provision will be supported. In order to sustain the local centre role of the Other Sustainable Settlements, the loss of existing services and facilities will be resisted unless alternative provision can be demonstrated.
6 Place-making Policies

Delivery

6.102 The Council will continue working with parish councils, registered social landlords, the Community Council for Somerset, landowners, developers and the local community in bringing forward local housing needs surveys to identify the level and type of local need that exists for affordable housing and site opportunities. Rural housing schemes to meet these affordability needs will be facilitated through the Council's housing enabling role.

6.103 Working with key partners, including Somerset County Council, parish councils, community transport providers, small business groups and individual service providers, the Council will proactively encourage service providers to consider innovative and alternative ways of providing services and facilities within the Other Sustainable Settlements where the loss of existing is unavoidable.

Monitoring and Review

6.104 As with Key Rural Settlements, it will be important to regularly review the identified Other Sustainable Settlements to ensure that their roles and functions remain consistent with the local centre role envisaged in the spatial strategy. If during the annual monitoring process a settlement were found to have experienced significant changes in its provision of services, facilities or accessibility, its standing in the settlement hierarchy of the strategy would be amended accordingly.

Table 6.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>New housing and employment development located in Other Sustainable Settlements over the Plan period (local)</td>
<td>3% of the district's housing and employment growth should be located in Other Sustainable Settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>Net additional dwellings in Other Sustainable Settlements (core)</td>
<td>At least 300315 dwellings should be developed in Other Sustainable Settlements over the Plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M33</td>
<td>Total number of jobs by sector (local)</td>
<td>Create a minimum of 275290 new jobs in Other Sustainable Settlements over the plan period, particularly in higher skills sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M51</td>
<td>Retention of significant community services and facilities in Other Sustainable Settlements (local)</td>
<td>There should be no net loss of significant community services and facilities in individual Other Sustainable Settlements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Countryside

Context

6.105 The spatial strategy identifies the remainder of the District - outside of the towns, key rural settlements and other sustainable settlements - as countryside. Within this are significant environmental designations including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, coastal/estuary areas and internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites, and many small villages and hamlets. Under the adopted Local Plan some twenty six of these small villages had defined settlement boundaries within which some housing growth has taken place. However, these places now have only very limited services and facilities, if any, and many suffer from poor public transport accessibility.
6.106 In addition to providing highly valued, distinct and attractive landscapes and a diverse range of rural settlements, the countryside provides a valuable setting to the towns and villages of Sedgemoor contributing to the District's image and identity. It is also an important recreational and tourist asset for residents and visitors and acts as a resource for managing flood risk and the challenges of climate change adaptation.

Approach

6.107 Outside of the towns, key rural settlements and other sustainable settlements no other settlement boundaries are identified. Instead this countryside policy is relevant with the focus being on restricting development and protecting, enhancing and conserving countryside quality and character unless other policies of the Core Strategy or national planning policy support development proposals in the countryside.

6.108 It is recognised that in some cases a countryside location is essential or represents a more sustainable option where this relates to a specific countryside need, such as those of the agricultural industry or the enhancement of the environment, and other polices of the Core Strategy may not be relevant. This will include the following: Agricultural workers dwellings; small scale employment opportunities essential to the rural economy (including schemes for rural diversification); and recreation and leisure opportunities appropriate to a rural location.

6.109 Where this is the case development proposals will be expected to contribute to the local economy, protect and maintain the environment, taking into account the potential impacts on internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites and promote sustainable travel options where this is required to mitigate against significant transport impacts.

6.110 Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in the Countryside supports the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. The spatial strategy does not identify a need for general housing within the countryside as this would represent a less sustainable form of development given the limited access to services and facilities. Therefore the re-use and conversion of rural buildings for residential purposes will not be permitted outside of the identified settlements of the spatial strategy unless a countryside location is demonstrated as being essential. However Policy D11: Economic Prosperity and Policy D12: Tourism provides some support for rural conversions that encourage rural enterprise and/or tourism accommodation within the countryside.

6.111 The Assessment under the Habitats Regulations has identified that any potential loss of bat and barn owl roosts due to demolition of or structural changes to barns and agricultural buildings or tree felling as a result of this policy must be avoided or adequately mitigated.

Policy P 6

Development in the Countryside

Proposals for new development outside of identified settlements will be strictly controlled. Development will be supported where it accords with other relevant policies contained in the Core Strategy that provide, exceptionally, for development in the countryside.

Where development proposals in the countryside are not addressed by other policies of the Core Strategy, new development must relate to specific countryside needs, such as those of the local agricultural industry and local food producers, enhancement of the environment or where a countryside location is essential or more sustainable.
6 Place-making Policies

In all cases development should benefit economic activity, maintain or enhance the environment, and provide opportunities for sustainable transport options where impacts are likely to be significant.

Delivery

6.112 As the starting point for this policy is to strictly manage development in the countryside its delivery will be through the development management process.

Monitoring and Review

Table 6.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>New housing and employment development located in the Countryside over the Plan period (local)</td>
<td>None of the district's housing and employment growth should be located in the Countryside unless related to specific countryside needs as outlined in the policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Monitoring and Review of the Core Strategy

7.1 Assessing the effectiveness of the Local Development Framework is the role of the Annual Monitoring Report that the Council publishes each December for submission to the Secretary of State. The report examines the wider social, economic and environmental issues that affect the district, identifies key drivers of spatial change, monitors the progress of Local Development Documents and the implementation of adopted policies. Furthermore, the Annual Monitoring Report also examines whether a policy outlined in the Local Development Framework or its intended delivery mechanism may have to be amended or replaced if monitoring indicates a lack of effectiveness.

7.2 Each strategic objective and each policy of the Core Strategy is linked to one or more monitoring indicators, and targets have been established for each of these to show the level of progress necessary to meet the Core Strategy objectives. Wherever possible, these targets are very specifically derived from the evidence base or higher level policy, but where new indicators were introduced into the monitoring framework during the production of this plan, they may presently only indicate a direction of travel while further evidence is gathered through the annual monitoring and review process.

7.3 The set of indicators to monitor the LDF is based on guidance in the 'Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide (March 2005)' and 'Local Development Framework Core Output Indicators – Update 2/2008'. The indicators comprise:

- **Core Output Indicators**: These are indicators that all local authorities must monitor. They address topic areas such as Business Development, Housing, Flood Protection, Biodiversity, Retail and Renewable Energy.
- **Local Indicators**: These address outputs of policies that are not covered by the Core Indicators. Local indicators allow scope to address issues of local importance and reflect the local circumstances in the district of Sedgemoor and address areas such as Transport, Rural Service Provision and Town Centre Vitality.
- **Significant Effects Indicators**: These are drawn from the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and can help to measure the impact of a policy by looking at any unintended positive and negative effects of the policy.
- **Contextual Indicators**: These describe the wider social, environmental and economic background against which the Core Strategy policies operate.

7.4 In the event that monitoring finds progress is insufficient to meet the established targets the Council will, in the Annual Monitoring Report, identify relevant issues, analyse the problem and propose remedial action if necessary. In addition, a five yearly comprehensive review of the Core Strategy and subsequent implementation will be undertaken. This will be as an addition to the AMR and the first review will be undertaken in 2016. In all cases potential remedial actions might include the need for additional Development Plan Documents such as site allocations, Area Action Plans, or a revision to the Core Strategy. Any such action would be included in a revised Local Development Scheme.

### Habitats Regulations Recommendation 3

In adopting a precautionary approach to enabling future development and recognising the limited information relating to visitor behaviour and impact, Sedgemoor District Council could further commit to discussions with Natural England and other relevant Local Authorities (including Somerset County Council) into visitor management and monitoring at international sites within the district. A monitoring programme would enable early identification of any unforeseen future pressures and targeted actions could be determined and implemented.
Early implementation of this programme will enable pre-development baseline information to be collated. Over time it will be possible to assess the impact, if any, of future development on visitation and behaviour.

Consultation with interested parties, and in particular advice from Natural England, should be sought to ensure appropriate design of the monitoring strategy and to ensure the programme’s ambitions are met.
## Schedule of ‘Saved’ Local Plan Policies

8.1 The Table below relates to the Sedgemoor District Local Plan (1991-2011) policies that have been saved and indicates if these are to be replaced by policies in this Core Strategy or will continue to be saved. The list of Core Strategy Policy references is not exhaustive but identifies the policy areas where links with the Local Plan policies are most obvious. In preparing development proposals the Core Strategy should be read as a whole.

### Table 8.1 Schedule of Saved Local Plan Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Plan Policy Reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Core Strategy Policy Reference</th>
<th>Saved / Not Saved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STR1</td>
<td>Designated Rural Centres and Villages</td>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STR2</td>
<td>Development in Rural Centres and Villages</td>
<td>S1, S3, P4, P5</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STR3</td>
<td>Development Outside Settlement Boundaries</td>
<td>S1, S3, P6</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STR4</td>
<td>Development Location Strategy</td>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H60</td>
<td>Housing Land Requirements</td>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Residential Development Criteria for Towns</td>
<td>S1, S2, S3, P1, P2, P3</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Residential Development Criteria for RCs &amp; Villages</td>
<td>S1, S3, P4, P5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>The Cornmill, Bridgwater Docks, Bridgwater</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7</td>
<td>Land on east side of Taunton Road, Bridgwater</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H11</td>
<td>Monmouth Trading Estate, Bridgwater</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H15</td>
<td>Land east of Bristol Road, Bridgwater</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H49</td>
<td>MOT Garage, All Saints Terrace, Bridgwater</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H50</td>
<td>The Old Armoury, Blake Street, Bridgwater</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H52</td>
<td>Land at Wembdon Road, Bridgwater</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Saved Policies from the Local Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Plan Policy Reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>Saved / Not Saved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H17</td>
<td>West of Newtown Road, Boat Yard, Highbridge</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>H60</td>
<td>Land at Highbridge Market, Highbridge</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H59</td>
<td>Land at Trivett's Farm, Cossington</td>
<td>Site under construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>H31</td>
<td>Rural Housing for Local Needs</td>
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<td>H32</td>
<td>New Residential Caravans and Mobile Homes</td>
<td>S1, S3, D5</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
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<tr>
<td>H33</td>
<td>Existing Residential Caravans and Mobile Homes</td>
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<tr>
<td>H39</td>
<td>Agricultural Occ Conditions for Existing Dwellings</td>
<td>D5</td>
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<tr>
<td>H40</td>
<td>Removal of Agricultural Occupancy Conditions</td>
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<td>H41</td>
<td>Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>H42</td>
<td>Residential Curtilages</td>
<td>S3, P6</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
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<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Land at Somerset Bridge, Bridgwater</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E12</td>
<td>Land at Wellworthys playing field, Bridgwater</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Land at Isleport Business Park, Highbridge</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Land at Steart Farm, Cheddar</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
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<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>Employment Development</td>
<td>S1, S3, D11, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5</td>
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<td>E5</td>
<td>Employment in Rural Areas</td>
<td>S1, S3, D11, P6</td>
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<tr>
<td>E6</td>
<td>New and Existing Employment Sites</td>
<td>S1, S3, P4, P5, P6</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Plan Policy Reference</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Core Strategy Policy Reference</td>
<td>Saved / Not Saved</td>
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<tr>
<td>E7</td>
<td>Extension within Existing Employment Sites</td>
<td>S1, S3, P4, P5, P6</td>
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<tr>
<td>E9</td>
<td>Loss of Employment Sites and Buildings</td>
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<tr>
<td>SH4</td>
<td>Retail Development within the Main Retail Frontages</td>
<td>S1, S3, D13, P2, P3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SH5</td>
<td>Development within Main Shopping Areas</td>
<td>S1, S3, D13, P2, P3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SH6</td>
<td>Change of Use in Town Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>SH7</td>
<td>Preferred Location for Non-Retail Uses</td>
<td>S1, S3, D11, D13, P2, P3</td>
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<td>SH8</td>
<td>Non-Retail Development Outside Preferred Location</td>
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<td>SH13</td>
<td>Cheddar Gorge Commercial Area</td>
<td>S1, S3, D13, P4</td>
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<td>SH16</td>
<td>Garden Centres</td>
<td>S1, S3, D11, D13</td>
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<td>SH17</td>
<td>Markets and Car Boot Sales</td>
<td>S1, S3, D13</td>
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<tr>
<td>TM1</td>
<td>Safe and Sustainable Transport</td>
<td>S3, D9, D10</td>
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<td>TM2</td>
<td>New Roads and Park and Ride Sites</td>
<td>D10, P1</td>
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<td>TM6</td>
<td>Rail Facilities</td>
<td>D10, P1</td>
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<td>TM7</td>
<td>Port Facilities</td>
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<td>TM9</td>
<td>Servicing Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNE2</td>
<td>Landscape Character</td>
<td>S3, D14</td>
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<td>CNE17</td>
<td>Distinctive Features of the District</td>
<td>S3, D14, D17</td>
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<td>CNE3</td>
<td>The Conversion of Rural Buildings</td>
<td>S1, S3, D11, D12, P6</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNE4</td>
<td>Green Wedge, Green Edge or Strategic Gap</td>
<td>D20, D21, D22</td>
<td>Saved Proposals</td>
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</table>
## Saved Policies from the Local Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Core Strategy Policy Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td>CNE6</td>
<td>Agricultural and Equestrian Buildings</td>
<td>S1, S3, D11, P6</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNE9</td>
<td>Nature Conservation: Interest on Other Sites</td>
<td>S3, D14, D15</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNE12</td>
<td>Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands</td>
<td>S3, S4, D2, D14, D20</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNE16</td>
<td>Groundwater Protection Zones and Aquifers</td>
<td>S3, D16</td>
<td>Saved</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE1</td>
<td>Sustainable and Quality Development</td>
<td>S3, S4, D2, D3, D16, D20</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE2</td>
<td>Alterations and Extensions to Dwellings</td>
<td>D2, D16</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE3</td>
<td>Shopfronts</td>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE4</td>
<td>Advertisements</td>
<td>D2, D14, D17</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE5</td>
<td>Quality of the Public Realm</td>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE7</td>
<td>Open Areas Protected from Development – Villages</td>
<td>S3, D2 –but ‘saved’ proposals</td>
<td>Saved Proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE8</td>
<td>Local Materials</td>
<td>D2</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE11</td>
<td>Planting and Soft Landscaping</td>
<td>S3, S4, D2, D20</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE12</td>
<td>Public Art</td>
<td>S2, D2</td>
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<tr>
<td>HE2</td>
<td>St Mary Street Enhancement Scheme</td>
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<td>HE5</td>
<td>Retention of Listed Buildings</td>
<td>S3, D2, D17</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
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<tr>
<td>HE11</td>
<td>Archaeological Sites of National Importance</td>
<td>S3, D17</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE9</td>
<td>Areas of High Archaeological Potential</td>
<td>S3, D17</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE12</td>
<td>Archaeological Sites of Local Importance</td>
<td>S3, D17</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE13</td>
<td>Management/Interpretation of Archaeological Sites</td>
<td>S3, D17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Plan Policy Reference</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Core Strategy Policy Reference</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>HE10</td>
<td>Historic Landscapes</td>
<td>S3, D17</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLT1</td>
<td>Protection of Recreational Open Space</td>
<td>D20, D21 &lt;b&gt;but 'saved' proposals&lt;/b&gt;</td>
<td>Saved Proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLT2</td>
<td>Outdoor Playing Space and New Residential Areas</td>
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<td>RLT3</td>
<td>Outdoor Sports Facilities and New Residential Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLT4</td>
<td>Public Open Space – Between Wembdon and NDR</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLT6</td>
<td>Public Open Space – Burnham-on-Sea</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLT8</td>
<td>Public Open Space – Cheddar</td>
<td>Site specific</td>
<td>Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLT19</td>
<td>Public Open Space – Brean</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLT11</td>
<td>Countryside Recreation: Access</td>
<td>D20</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLT12</td>
<td>New Recreational Walking, Cycling, Riding Routes</td>
<td>D20</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLT13</td>
<td>Horse Riding Schools and Stables</td>
<td>S1, S3, D13, P6</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLT15</td>
<td>Hotels, Motels and Similar Accommodation</td>
<td>S1, S3, D12</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLT18</td>
<td>Improvement of Existing Holiday Sites</td>
<td>S1, S3, D12, P3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLT20</td>
<td>Safeguarding Existing Holiday Sites</td>
<td>S1, S3, D12, P3</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCS1</td>
<td>Public Utilities</td>
<td>S3</td>
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<td>PCS2</td>
<td>New Overhead Electricity Lines</td>
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<td>PCS3</td>
<td>Residential Development under High Voltage Lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCS4</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
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### 8 Saved Policies from the Local Plan

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<tr>
<td>PCS5</td>
<td>Renewable Energy</td>
<td>S1, S3, D3, D4</td>
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<td>PCS6</td>
<td>Energy Efficient Development</td>
<td>S3, D2, D3, D4</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCS7</td>
<td>Loss of Community Facilities and Services</td>
<td>S1, S3, D13, D21, P4, P5</td>
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<td>PCS11</td>
<td>Land Allocated for Educational Purposes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCS12</td>
<td>Pollution Control</td>
<td>D16</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCS15</td>
<td>Noise Pollution</td>
<td>D16</td>
<td>Not Saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCS17</td>
<td>Light Pollution</td>
<td>D16</td>
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</table>
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. Furthermore help is available from the comprehensive glossary of planning, published on the Planning portal.

Key Terms

Adoption - The final confirmation of a development plan or Local Development Document status by a local planning authority (LPA).

Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGst) - a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to a variety of greenspaces 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.

Allocated – Land which has been identified on the Proposals Map (or inset map) for a specific form of development.

Amenity – Those qualities of life enjoyed by people which 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 noise nuisance, air pollution etc. normally expected at home.

Ancillary – Use or development of a different subsidiary use, but which is related to and often found in association with primary use or development.


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 in Sedgemoor’s Third Revision Local Development Scheme.

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.

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)
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 - Climate change refers to the build up of man-made gases in the atmosphere that traps the sun’s heat, causing changes in weather patterns on a global scale. The effects include changes in rainfall patterns, sea level rise, potential droughts, habitat loss, and heat stress.

Coastal Change Management Area - Areas identified likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast.

Commercial Centre – the centre of larger market towns where there is a concentration of shops and other services which cater for customers for a group of nearby settlements.

Community and Cultural Facilities – Services available to residents in the immediate area to meet that provide for the day-to-day health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. Includes village halls, post offices, doctor’s and dentists’ surgeries, recycling facilities, libraries and places of worship.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Levy on development proposed by the government to fund infrastructure to support housing and economic growth.

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.

Committed Payment/Sum – 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.

Comparison Goods – Household or personal items which are more expensive and (often) larger than convenience goods and are usually purchase after comparing alternative models/types/styles and price of item (e.g. clothes, furniture, electrical appliances). Such goods generally are used for some time.

Conservation Area – Area 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.

Construction Environmental Management Plan - sets-out the framework and requirements for the management of environmental impacts associated with the construction phase of the project.

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.

Core Strategy - A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision and strategic objectives of the planning framework for an area, having regard to the Community Strategy. It comprises of a spatial vision and strategic objectives, a spatial strategy, core policies and a monitoring and implantation framework.

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 declared as an SSSI.
Curtilage – The area of land associated with a building. The curtilage of a dwellinghouse is normally its garden and the curtilage of a commercial building its ancillary open areas such as for parking/services and landscaping.

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 – See Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Development Consent Obligation - see S106 Agreements (S106)

Development Consent Order - Applicants promoting nationally significant infrastructure projects in the fields of energy, transport, water and waste will apply for a ‘development consent order’ rather than for planning permission under the Planning Act. A development consent order, when issued, combines the grant of planning permission with a range of other consents that in other circumstances have to be applied for separately, such as listed building consent. All applications for development consent orders will be made to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC).

Development Management Policies - A suite of criteria-based policies to ensure that all development within the areas meets the spatial vision and spatial objectives. Sedgemoor has decided to include these in the Core Strategy document.

Development Plan - A 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.

Development Plan Document (DPD) - A Local Development Document that has development plan status and is subject to community involvement and Independent examination. It outlines the key development goals of the local development framework and includes the core strategy, site allocations and area action plans.

Early Engagement - A very early stage for consultation and community involvement, when interested parties can comment on aspects of the local authority’s spatial planning, from this input the first Issues and Options consultation are formulated.

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 on the environmental impact of a project. This is then taken into account by the local planning authority when determining an application for planning permission.

Environmental Statement - Written statement, required to be submitted by the applicant with certain kinds of planning application.

Evidence Base - 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 PPS25, to ensure that development is permitted in flood risk areas in exceptional circumstances only.
**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.

**Greenfield Land** - Land (or a defined site) usually farmland, that has not previously been developed.


**Habitat Action Plan (HAP)** - A target programme of management measures aimed at maintaining/restoring a specific habitat.

**Habitat Regulations Assessment** - document to determine impacts on nearby Natura 2000 sites.

**Health Impact Assessment** - A combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, program or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population.

**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** – Small scale development filling a gap within an otherwise built up frontage.

**Infrastructure** – 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.

**Issues and Options** - Produced relatively early as part of the preparation of Development Plan Documents and used for consultation and community involvement.

**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** – see Section 106 Agreements (S106).

**Listed Building** – 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.

**Local Development Document (LDD)** - Any document within the Local Development Framework. These include Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan) and Supplementary Planning Documents (which do not form part of the statutory development plan). Local Development Documents collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority’s area.

**Local Development Framework (LDF)** - The portfolio of Local Development Documents which collectively delivers the spatial planning strategy for the area.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)** - A document that sets out what Local Development Documents are to be produced and the timetable for their production.

**Local Nature Reserve** - Area of botanical or wildlife interest where access and use by local people is encouraged through designation by the 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.

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.

Major Infrastructure Projects - Major or ‘nationally significant' infrastructure projects for energy, transport, water and waste.

Mitigation Measures - Any works or actions required to be carried out by developers to reduce 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 environmental importance, for example the coastal environment

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects - Major infrastructure developments, such as proposals for power plants, large renewable energy projects, new airports and airport extensions, major road projects etc.

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 Development Plan Documents and part of the consultation and community involvement process. The latest version of PPS12 has now removed this stage as a formal requirement.

Proposals Map - A component of a Local Development Framework and an important part of the development plan, or Development Plan Document itself, showing the location of proposals in all current Development Plan Documents, 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.
Public Realm - Any publicly owned streets, pathways, right of ways, parks, publicly accessible open spaces and any public and civic building and facilities.

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) - The Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West has been revoked. However, it was a strategy for how the region should look in the future. Identifies the scale and distribution of new housing in the region, indicates areas for regeneration, expansion or sub-regional planning and specifies priorities for the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, minerals and waste treatment and disposal.

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 – 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.

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 PPS25 to demonstrate that certain land is appropriate to develop as has less flood risk, after alternative sites have been ruled out.

Shoreline Management Plan - A document which sets out a strategy for coastal defence for a specified length of coast taking account of natural coastal processes and human and other environmental influences and needs.

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 Document - Allocations of sites for specific or mixed uses or development to be contained in Development Plan Documents. Policies will identify any specific requirements for individual proposals.

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). This is consistent with PPS12.
**Spatial Diagram** - A map to illustrate the broad locations of future development and found within the Core Strategy.

**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 ‘spatial’ vision and strategy specific to the area.

**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 generic 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.’

**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 availability for housing.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** - An assessment of housing need and demand within a housing market area.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - Sets out the standards which authorities will achieve with regard to involving communities in the preparation of Local Development Documents and development control decisions.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** - A Local Development Document that does not have development plan status and does not have an independent inquiry. Must be linked to policies or proposals in a Development Plan Document.

**Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)** - Additional advice issued by the Local Planning Authority expanding its statutory policies. To be replaced by Supplementary Planning Documents.

**Sustainability Appraisal** - An appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with 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 – Efficient drainage system which seeks to minimise wastage of water including the use of appropriate groundcover to enable maximum penetration of clean water run-off into the ground and, where appropriate, recycling grey water within the development. Designed to minimise the impact of development on the natural water environment.

Travel 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 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.

Map Appendix
10 KRS Development Boundaries

KRS Development Boundaries

Ashcott

Map 10.1 Ashcott Development Boundaries
Axbridge

Map 10.2 Axbridge Development Boundary
10 KRS Development Boundaries

Berrow

Map 10.3 Berrow Development Boundary
Brent Knoll

Map 10.4 Brent Knoll Development Boundary
10 KRS Development Boundaries

Cannington

Map 10.5 Cannington Development Boundary
Cheddar

Map 10.6 Cheddar Development Boundary
10 KRS Development Boundaries

East Huntspill

Map 10.7 East Huntspill Development Boundary
Lympsham

Map 10.8 Lympsham Development Boundary
10 KRS Development Boundaries

Mark

Map 10.9 Mark Development Boundary
Map 10.10 Nether Stowey Development Boundaries
10 KRS Development Boundaries

North Petherton

Map 10.11 North Petherton Development Boundary
Pawlett

Map 10.12 Pawlett Development Boundary
10 KRS Development Boundaries

Puriton

Map 10.13 Puriton Development Boundary
10 KRS Development Boundaries

Wembdon

Map 10.15 Wembdon Development Boundary
Westonzoyland

Map 10.16 Westonzoyland Development Boundary
10 KRS Development Boundaries

Woolavington

Map 10.17 Woolavington Development Boundary
Catcott

Map 11.1 Catcott Development Boundary
11 OSS Development Boundaries

Chilton Polden

Map 11.2 Chilton Polden Development Boundary
Combwich

Map 11.3 Combwich Development Boundary
11 OSS Development Boundaries

Cossington

Map 11.4 Cossington Development Boundaries
Edington

Map 11.5 Edington Development Boundary
11 OSS Development Boundaries

Middlezoy

Map 11.6 Middlezoy Development Boundary
Othery

Map 11.7 Othery Development Boundary
11 OSS Development Boundaries

Shipham

Map 11.8 Shipham Development Boundary
Spaxton

Map 11.9 Spaxton Development Boundary
11 OSS Development Boundaries

Weare

Map 11.10 Weare Development Boundary
Lower Weare (New)

Map 11.11 Lower Weare Development Boundary
11 OSS Development Boundaries

West Huntspill

Map 11.12 West Huntspill Development Boundary
Bridgwater Town Centre Retail Policies

Map 12.1 Bridgwater Town Centre Retail Policies
12 Retail Policies

Burnham Town Centre Retail Policies

Map 12.2 Burnham Town Centre Retail Policies
Highbridge District Centre Boundary

Map 12.3 Highbridge District Centre Boundary
12 Retail Policies

South Bridgwater Local Centre

Map 12.4 South Bridgwater Local Centre
Transformational Projects

Map 13.1 Transformational Projects
13 Other Maps

ROF Allocation Policy P1

Map 13.2 ROF Allocation
Parrett Barrier Safeguarding Area

Map 13.3 Parrett Barrier Safeguarding Area
Bat Consultation Zones

Map 13.4 Bat Consultation Zones

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Date: June 2010
Scale: 1:200,000

Sedgemoor Bat Consultation Zones
- Lesser Horseshoe Bats (SAC Hestercombe House)
- Barbastelle Bats (SAC Enever & Quarrtacks Oakwoods)
- Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bats (SAC North Somerset and Mendip Bats)