



## South Somerset District Council



# Draft Core Strategy (incorporating Preferred Options) **Sustainability Appraisal Report** October 2010

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 South Somerset District Council Core Strategy

1.1.1 The South Somerset District Council (SSDC) Core Strategy sets out the broad scale, type and location of future development in South Somerset, and is the key document within the Local Development Framework (LDF). The Core Strategy also incorporates topic based development management policies that will be applied more directly in the consideration of planning applications across the district.

## 1.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

1.2.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) (2004), all Development Plan Documents (DPDs) produced by local authorities as part of their LDF must undergo a process of Sustainability Appraisal. The Core Strategy is the key DPD which sits at the centre of the LDF (the LDF can be thought of as a 'portfolio' of individual documents), and so is subject to SA.

1.2.2 SA involves the identification and evaluation of the DPD's impacts on economic, social and environmental objectives – i.e. its compatibility with the three dimensions of sustainable development. The SA process incorporates the requirements of a European law requiring certain plans and programmes to undergo a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

1.2.3 In 2001, the EU legislated for SEA with the adoption of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive'). The Directive entered into force in the UK on 21 July 2004 and applies to a range of English plans and programmes, including DPDs.

1.2.4 SA and SEA are therefore both statutory requirements. The Government's approach to this dual requirement is to incorporate the requirements of the SEA Directive into the SA process. The SA, which considers all three pillars of sustainability, therefore incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive, but does not have any bias towards giving consideration to environmental issues. To this end, the Government published guidance on undertaking SA of spatial plans ('the Guidance') in November 2005. The combined SA / SEA process is referred to in the Guidance and in this document as 'Sustainability Appraisal (SA)'.

1.2.5 The principles of 'sustainable development' are central to the planning system. A common definition of sustainable development is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In order to ensure that sustainable development is promoted in the Core Strategy, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is used to appraise the social, economic and environmental effects of the Core Strategy.

## 1.3 Aim and Structure of the SA Report

1.3.1 This SA Report documents the SAs that have been undertaken on two iterations of the Core Strategy as it has been developed. These are:

- Core Strategy Issues and Options (I&O) – undertaken in late 2009/spring 2010;
- Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options – undertaken in 2010.

1.3.2 This SA Report has been published for consultation alongside the ‘draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options’ in October 2010 to assist the public and statutory bodies in better understanding the sustainability effects of the plan.

1.3.3 The remainder of the SA Report is structured as follows:

**Section 2** – Describes the SA methodology, update to the policy context, and SA Framework used to appraise the emerging Core Strategy

**Section 3** – Introduces the Core Strategy including the contents of the I&O and draft Core Strategy Preferred Options that have undergone SA

**Section 4** – Summarises the findings of the SA of the I&O

**Section 5** – Summarises the findings of the SA of the Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options

**Section 6** – Indicates potential indicators that will be used to monitor the significant effects of the Core Strategy

**Section 7** – Sets out how comments can be submitted on the SA

**Appendix 1** – Identifies where the requirements of the SEA Directive have been met (where appropriate)

**Appendix 2** – Includes the appraisal tables for the Core Strategy ‘issues and options’

**Appendix 3** – Includes the appraisal tables for the draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options

**Appendix 4** – Incorporates the various SA exercises carried out in appraising potential locations of Yeovil’s urban extension

**Appendix 5** – Maps showing potential growth options of the Market Towns

**Appendix 6** – Includes the appraisal tables of potential growth options of the Market Towns.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

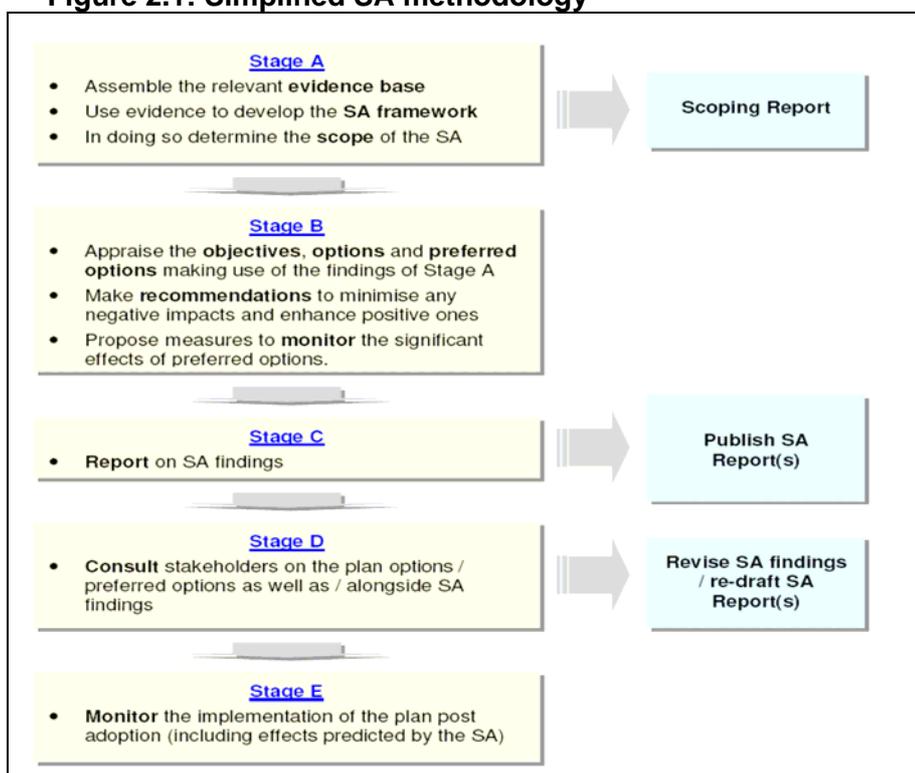
2.1.1 This section broadly describes the SA methodology that has been used for the appraisal of the I&O and Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options. It also includes updates to the policy context in which the plans and the SA are developed.

### 2.2 Approach to SA

2.2.1 The methodology for carrying out Sustainability Appraisal is prescribed by the Government, which advocates a five stage approach. Stage A involves gathering an evidence base and defining SA Objectives, which are documented in a Scoping Report that undergoes a five week consultation period. The appraisal of the plan including alternative options is conducted at Stage B – elements of this stage are carried out more than once as preparation of the Core Strategy develops. The outcome of SA findings are recorded in preparation of the SA Report during Stage C. Following consultation alongside the draft Core Strategy the SA Report may require updating to reflect changes made in response to representations (Stage D). Finally, Stage E involves the ongoing monitoring of significant effects (detailed within the Annual Monitoring Report).

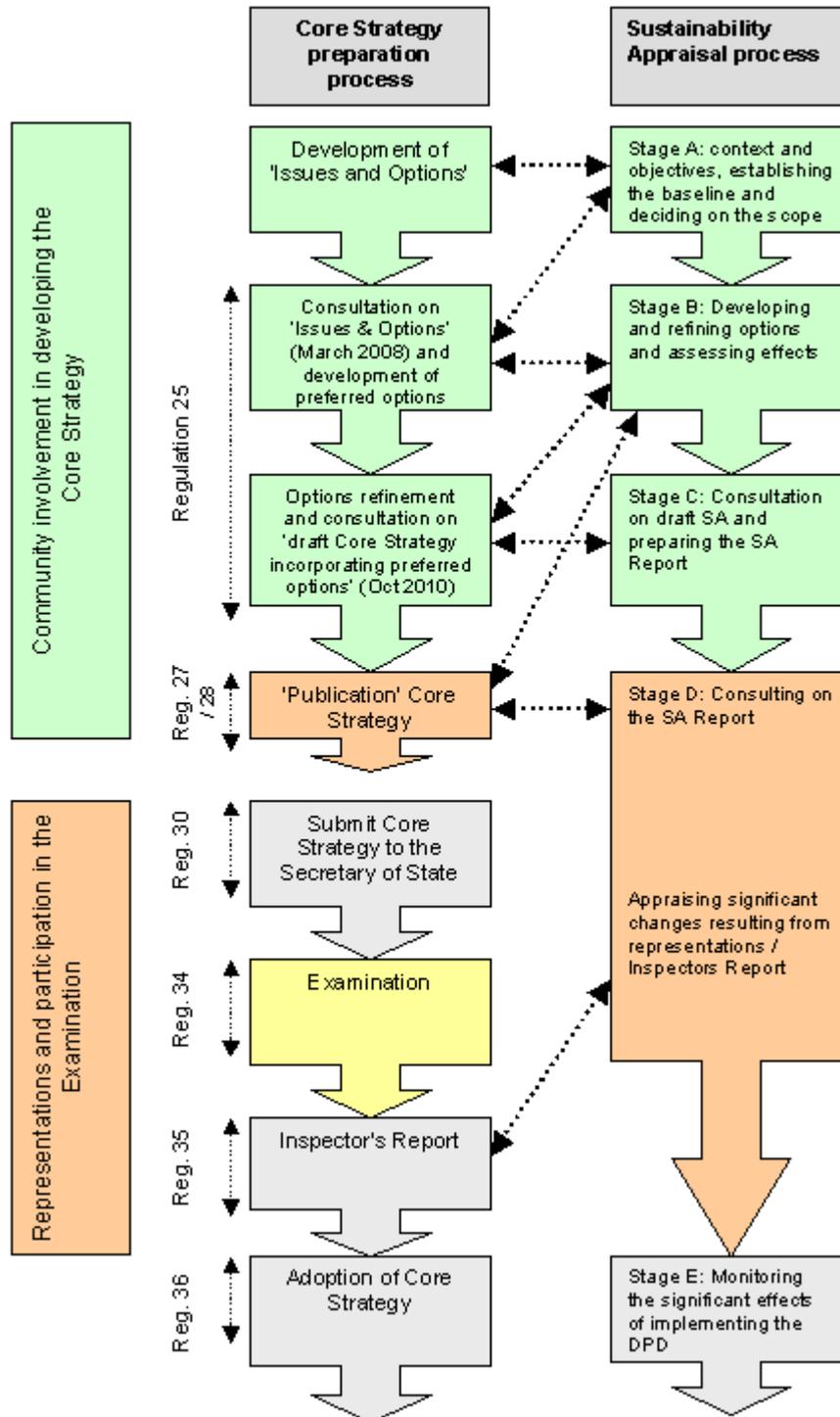
2.2.2 This report documents Stage B of the SA process to date by developing and refining policy options in the emerging Core Strategy and assessing the effects of these options. A simplified version of the SA methodology is illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

**Figure 2.1: Simplified SA methodology**



2.2.3 The following diagram (figure 2.2) shows how the various stages of the Sustainability Appraisal and Core Strategy processes are integrated with each other.

**Figure 2.2: The Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal preparation process**



## 2.3 Stage A

2.3.1 Stage A of the SA process was largely undertaken between 2007 and 2009. South Somerset District Council commissioned 'Scott Wilson' (planning consultants) to assist with the LDF Sustainability Appraisal by carrying out initial work on the SA (Stage A) culminating in production of the Scoping Report in September 2007. Some contextual amendments were made to reflect updated national and regional policy before the Scoping Report was published for consultation with key stakeholders in Spring 2009. The revised Scoping Report, including an appendix of the comments received and the council's response, was published in September 2009.

### Update to the SA Context

2.3.2 Despite the relatively recent publication of the Scoping Report (2009), the national and regional policy context has evolved considerably in the last 12 months. In addition, new evidence has emerged as part of the ongoing production of the LDF 'evidence base'. These policies/studies are being reviewed to identify their key messages for the SA.

2.3.3 Arguably the most significant of these changes is the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) by the Coalition Government in July 2010. This removes the requirement for local authorities to meet housing targets set in the RSS, meaning that decisions on the scale of housing supply now rest with local planning authorities.

2.3.4 The key updates to the suite of national planning policy statements since production of the Scoping Report are set out below:

- PPS: Eco Towns – a supplement to PPS 1 (July 2009).
- PPS 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (December 2009).
- PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (March 2010).
- PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk (revised March 2010).
- PPS 3: Housing (revised June 2010).
- Consultation draft PPS's on 'Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment' and 'Planning for a low carbon future in a changing climate' (both March 2010).

2.3.5 As well as the SEA Directive, another important piece of European legislation that directly impacts upon the content of the Core Strategy is EC Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), and its implementation in the UK under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994. A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) (also known as 'Appropriate Assessment') is required for a plan or project which, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on a 'European Site' and which is not directly connected with the management of the site. The term 'European Site' incorporates Special Area's of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area's (SPA) and Ramsar sites.

2.3.6 There is only one 'European Site' within South Somerset: 'Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area / Ramsar'. A Habitats Regulations Assessment has therefore

been carried out to ascertain the potential impact of the Core Strategy on this site. Additionally, a HRA has been carried out for Bracket's Coppice SAC located just outside the South Somerset district boundary (south east of Crewkerne). The results of the HRA process have informed consideration of policy options in the sustainability appraisal, and will feed directly into preparation of the Core Strategy.

2.3.7 New evidence base studies published to inform South Somerset's Core Strategy since the Scoping Report which has been produced include:

- Completion of 'peripheral landscape studies' of the main settlements (March 2010).
- Appropriate Assessment for Somerset Authorities Core Strategies: 'Somerset Levels and Moors and Severn Estuary (Bridgwater Bay) Natura 2000 sites' Scoping Report (October 2009).
- Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Somerset Levels and Moors of South Somerset's draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options (October 2010).
- Habitats Regulations Assessment of South Somerset's draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options – update Report for Bracket's Coppice SAC (September 2010).
- European Protected Species in South Somerset – Strategic Ecological Assessment of potential strategic housing sites (November 2009).
- The distribution of European Protected Species in South Somerset – Guidance for Spatial Planning (November 2009).
- Yeovil Eco Town biodiversity strategy baseline and scoping report (June 2010).
- Affordable Housing Threshold Viability study (May 2010).
- Employment Land Review – stages 1, 2 and 3 (August 2009; July 2010).
- South Somerset Retail Study update (September 2010).
- Historic Environmental Assessment of Yeovil Periphery (July 2010).

### **SA Framework**

2.3.8 SA Objectives provide a way in which the sustainability effects of plans can be described, analysed and compared. Together these objectives form the SA Framework.

2.3.9 The SA Framework was developed by the Council and included in the Scoping Report. These objectives are:

1. Improve access to essential services and facilities.
2. Reduce poverty and social exclusion.
3. Provide sufficient housing to meet identified needs of the community.
4. Improve health and well being.
5. Improve education and skills of the population.
6. Reduce crime and fear of crime.

7. Support a strong, diverse and vibrant local economy.
8. Reduce the effect of traffic on the environment.
9. Protect and enhance the landscape and townscape.
10. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment.
11. Reduce contribution to climate change and vulnerability to its effects.
12. Minimise pollution (including air, water, land, light, noise) and waste production.
13. Manage and reduce the risk of flooding.
14. Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.

### Scoring Methodology

2.3.10 It is only necessary to assess the “likely significant effects” of the Core Strategy, not all possible effects. Annex II of the SEA Directive sets out the general criteria of significance and these have been considered in the scoring approach that has been used for SA of SSDC’s Core Strategy, set out in figure 2.3 below.

**Figure 2.3: Scoring methodology**

Scoring Symbol	Description
+ +	Significant positive effect
+	Positive effect
0	Neutral
-	Negative effect
- -	Significant negative effect
?	Uncertain effect

## 2.4 Stage B

2.4.1 Following Section 3, the remaining sections of this SA Report document the findings of Stage B so far.

## 3 South Somerset's Core Strategy

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section summarises the two drafts – 'Issues and Options' and 'Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options' - of the Core Strategy that have been prepared and undergone SA.

### 3.2 Issues and Options (2008)

3.2.1 The first stage in preparing South Somerset's Core Strategy culminated in public consultation on the 'Issues and Options' (I&O) report in March 2008. In addition to a draft vision and strategic objectives for development in South Somerset up to 2026, the I&O included 'strategy' options such as for the level and distribution of new development across the district, and potential policy options based around particular topics. Individual policies under these headings have all either undergone SA or been screened out for reasons that are documented in the appraisal appendices.

3.2.2 Potential **policy options** were based around the following six themes:

- Strategy;
- Housing;
- Economic prosperity;
- Transport and accessibility;
- Health and well-being; and
- Environmental quality.

3.2.3 The options for **levels of district-wide housing supply** for the period 2006 – 2026 were:

- 13,600 dwellings, including 6,400 at Yeovil;
- 16,600 dwellings, including 7,400 at Yeovil;
- 19,700 dwellings, of which 6,400 should be within Yeovil's urban area and 5,000 as an urban extension to Yeovil;<sup>1</sup> and
- Growth in excess of 19,700 dwellings.

3.2.4 The three broad options for the **distribution of development** across South Somerset (not including the Yeovil area) were:

- Concentrating development in 'B' (or 'Market Town') settlements only;
- A dispersed approach directing all development to 'B' (Market Towns) and 'C' (Rural Centres) settlements only; and

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<sup>1</sup> An option for 19,700 dwellings with no guidance on spatial distribution was also included.

- Distribute development to only some 'B' and 'C' settlements.

3.2.5 Additional options for the distribution of development were suggested during public consultation but they were not formally appraised because they were not considered to be 'reasonable alternatives'. For example, a new settlement was suggested – this was originally not subject to SA as it was contrary to the RSS Proposed Changes policy. Despite the recent revocation of the RSS (July 2010), a new settlement is still not considered a 'reasonable alternative' as the amount of development proposed in the Core Strategy (8,400 dwellings outside Yeovil) is not sufficient to justify a new settlement when existing housing commitments (of around 6,000 dwellings) are taken into account.

3.2.6 The SA of the I&O took place in late 2009 / spring 2010 after the Council had formally approved responses to consultation comments on the 'issues and options'. The findings of the SA were a key part of the evidence in developing the 'Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options'. For example, the SA outcome of the various options on the levels of development that should be accommodated in the district suggested that 16,600 dwellings performed best in sustainability terms – this was subsequently the preferred option for the level of development, setting the context for the entire Core Strategy.

### 3.3 Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options (2010)

3.3.1 Following I&O, SSDC prepared the Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options in 2010. In addition to a Vision and Strategic Objectives, this version of the Core Strategy includes policies grouped according to the following headings:

- Settlement Strategy (8 policies);
- Town Vision and Proposals (9 policies);
- Housing (9 policies);
- Economic Prosperity (16 policies);
- Transport and Accessibility (4 policies)
- Health and Well Being (4 policies)
- Environmental Quality (7 policies)

3.3.2 This SA Report documents the findings of the SA of the Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options. These findings will subsequently be used to inform the next stage of the Core Strategy known as the 'publication' version.

## 4 Issue and Options Sustainability Appraisal summary

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The SA of the Issues and Options systematically appraised policy options, potential levels of district-wide housing supply and broad options for the distribution of development. The findings of the appraisal are summarised in this section and the full results can be found in Appendix 2.

### 4.2 Policy Options

4.2.1 Some of the key SA findings of the thematically categorised policy options are summarised below:

#### Housing

4.2.2 Although the option for requiring a contribution to affordable housing on all sites and/or a higher affordable housing target would lead to the provision of more affordable homes in the District in theory, evidence shows that this would not be economically viable and could therefore preclude new development coming forward. The appraisal of the Gypsy and Traveller options showed that the inclusion of a criteria relating to proximity to local services would improve its sustainability. In terms of housing density, one broad density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) across South Somerset would have a negative impact in terms of loss of greenfield land around Yeovil and the Market Towns. Conversely the application of a district-wide density of 50 dph would be likely to have a negative impact on the townscape of Rural Settlements.

#### Economic Prosperity

4.2.3 The option of providing fewer jobs or land to accommodate the future economically active population is likely to have a significant negative impact on the vitality and viability of the local economy through increased levels of unemployment, and adverse impacts on the resident population (affecting their economic and social well-being) forcing them to travel outside of the District to work. This will have negative impacts on service and facility provision, levels of pollution, air quality and climate change, mainly because people will need to travel further (outside the district) to work. The option to ensure that there are sufficient jobs to meet the future economically active population is clearly most sustainable through positive impacts on the residents, economy and indirectly on the housing market of South Somerset. The retention of employment land has also been identified as a key issue in the district, with the option for including a policy that protects employment land from being developed for other uses having key economic benefits.

#### Transport and Accessibility

4.2.4 The options that encourage walking, cycling and public transport have many sustainability benefits such as improving health, minimising pollution and CO<sub>2</sub>

emissions, and reducing social exclusion. An alternative option of not prioritising walkers and cyclists over cars is likely to lead to negative effects such as increased traffic congestion, poorer access to essential services and facilities, and increased pollution and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The more stringent traffic demand management measures which were raised as potential options could have negative effects on the local economy such as additional costs deterring businesses from locating in South Somerset, costs of workplace charging to existing businesses, congestion charging deterring visitors to the towns and therefore affecting town centre vitality and viability.

### Health and Well-being

- 4.2.5 This theme incorporated options on the protection of existing open space, sport and recreation areas, and facilities for new development, which were not formally appraised as they were either not actually options or not likely to lead to significant effects.

### Environmental Quality

- 4.2.6 Various standards of the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM<sup>2</sup> were appraised as potential options, with the highest standards having numerous positive sustainability effects including climate change mitigation and adaptation through incorporating high standards of energy efficiency, decentralised and renewable energy technologies, and water efficiency measures. The higher costs of achieving these standards was identified as having a potential negative effect on housing supply, however these should reduce as the economy adapts and high standards of sustainable construction become 'the norm'. Requiring high design standards would have numerous benefits across most sustainability objectives.

## 4.3 Levels of District-wide Housing Supply

- 4.3.1 The SA findings of the four options for levels of district-wide housing supply are summarised below.

### 13,600 dwellings, including 6,400 at Yeovil

- 4.3.2 The key findings of this option were a significant under provision of housing compared to latest available household projections which would mean the needs of the community would not be met – particularly the need for affordable homes identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This scenario does have the benefit of being an economic-led approach that balances housing numbers with forecast job creation. Less development means that the environmental effects are the lowest of the four options, although negative effects on the landscape and biodiversity will require mitigation. An increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is likely, but lower than the other options due to less development.

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<sup>2</sup> Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method.

### **16,600 dwellings, including 7,400 at Yeovil**

- 4.3.3 The option of 16,600 dwellings would mean an under provision of homes compared to household projections, but evidence suggests that the economy can support this level of housing development. There are likely to be negative environmental effects but mitigation measures such as high quality design, avoiding areas of important historic assets, and sustainable construction, should ensure these are limited.

### **19,700 dwellings, of which 6,400 should be within Yeovil's urban area and 5,000 as an urban extension to Yeovil**

- 4.3.4 The option for 19,700 dwellings (including 11,400 dwellings in and around Yeovil) would bring the significant positive effect of meeting the community's need for new homes, particularly affordable homes. There would also be greater opportunity to help make services and facilities more viable under this option. However, the relative increase in homes compared to job creation in this option may make it harder for those living in South Somerset to access suitable local employment opportunities, and potentially exacerbate outward commuting. There is potential for significant negative environmental impacts (particularly at Yeovil) and increased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that will require strong mitigation – negative effects include landscape and townscape, biodiversity, historic environment, pollution, potential loss of high quality agricultural land, and increased traffic levels.

### **Growth in excess of 19,700 dwellings**

- 4.3.5 The likely significant effects of the option to develop higher than 19,700 dwellings are largely similar to the option discussed above, although there is general uncertainty due to the lack of prescription as to the scale and location of development. A significant positive effect would be meeting the community's need for housing generally, with additional affordable housing provision a particular benefit. However, the negative environmental effects identified above would be exacerbated with higher levels of development.

## **4.4 Distribution of Development**

- 4.4.1 The SA findings of the options for the distribution of development across South Somerset (not including the Yeovil area) are summarised below:

### **Concentrating development in 'B' (or 'Market Town') settlements only**

- 4.4.2 The concentration of new development at 'B' settlements only should ensure new residents have good access to jobs, shops and community facilities, as these settlements, by definition, already contain jobs and services. This approach should reduce the need to travel and maximise opportunities to use non-car travel modes – CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with car travel would therefore be minimised. However, the adverse environmental impacts of new development would disproportionately affect 'B' settlements under this option. There are also likely to be negative effects for the rural areas including limited economic benefits, rural housing need not being met (particularly affordable housing need), and potential negative impact on the viability of

rural services due to limited opportunities for future development and therefore lack of new residents to help support these services.

### **A dispersed approach directing all development to ‘B’ and ‘C’ settlements only**

- 4.4.3 The more dispersed approach of directing development to all ‘B’ and ‘C’ settlements generally scores better in the sustainability appraisal, and a derivation of this option was carried forward in consideration as the preferred policy approach. This option would ensure the social and economic benefits of additional development are felt more widely. The distribution of development to all of the main settlements in the district should ensure that the need to travel is reduced, and public transport opportunities are maximised. There could be some negative environmental impacts arising from new development, particularly where additional development has the potential to adversely affect the character of some of the smaller ‘C’ settlements.

### **Distribute development to only some ‘B’ and ‘C’ settlements**

- 4.4.4 The final option was to distribute development to only some ‘B’ and ‘C’ settlements – as settlements were not categorised as ‘B’ or ‘C’ at the ‘issues and options’ stage, there is some uncertainty in the SA findings for this option. In general, the distribution of development to all of the main settlements in the district should ensure that the need to travel is reduced, and public transport opportunities are maximised. There could be some negative environmental impacts due to additional development, particularly on the character of some of the smaller ‘C’ settlements.

### **Additional Options**

- 4.4.5 Additional options were suggested at public consultation on the core strategy ‘issues and options’, some of which were not formally appraised as they did not constitute ‘reasonable alternatives’. For example, building a new settlement was suggested – this was originally not subject to SA as it was contrary to the RSS Proposed Changes. Despite the revocation of the RSS in July 2010, a new settlement is still not considered a reasonable alternative, as the amount of development proposed in the Core Strategy (8,400 dwellings are proposed outside Yeovil) is not sufficient to justify a new settlement when existing housing commitments (of around 6,000 dwellings) are taken into account.<sup>3</sup>

## **4.5 Mitigation Recommendations from the I&O that informed the Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options**

- 4.5.1 The findings of the SA of the ‘issues and options’ led to the development of various recommendations designed to mitigate the adverse effects of these policy options. The following list includes some of the recommendations that were proposed (as set

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<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that the Sustainability Appraisal of the RSS Proposed Changes does recommend that, given the substantial further increase in housing growth in the south west, the option of building one or more large new settlements in the region should be considered in an early review of the RSS – now not required following RSS revocation.

out in the matrices in Appendix 2) and subsequently included in developing the Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options policies:

- Promote sustainable construction and decentralised and renewable energy in order to minimise carbon dioxide emissions;
- Incorporate sustainable drainage systems to reduce the risk of flooding;
- Incorporate green infrastructure to protect and enhance biodiversity and promote health and well being;
- Include high quality design standards to minimise impact on landscape and townscape and help 'design out crime';
- Provide enhancements to health and leisure facilities to promote health and well being;
- Prioritise sustainable transport modes.

## 5 Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal summary

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The key findings of the ‘draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options’ SA are summarised in this section with the detailed appraisal matrices for the draft policies set out in Appendix 3. The key sustainability findings of potential development locations are also summarised in this chapter, and the detailed matrices in Appendices 4 (Yeovil) and 6 (Market Towns). This section also includes testing the Draft Core Strategy Strategic Objectives and the objectives comprising the SA Framework.<sup>4</sup>

### 5.2 Testing the Draft Core Strategy Objectives against the SA Framework

5.2.1 The strategic objectives set out in the Core Strategy are subject to sustainability testing in order to ensure they provide a sustainable basis for developing the policies (that follow on from the strategic objectives). This exercise ensures that any conflicts or tensions between the two sets of objectives (i.e. SA objectives and Core Strategy strategic objectives) are highlighted early on which might, in turn, influence the nature of the Core Strategy policies that are subsequently developed. The results of this exercise are set out in figure 5.1 overleaf.

5.2.2 The nine emerging Core Strategy strategic objectives, derived from the Sustainable Community Strategy, as set out in the ‘draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options’ are:

1.	Safe, resilient, socially just and inclusive and sustainable communities (with a higher proportion of jobs locally available) with strong networks and confident people sharing respect for each other.
2.	A health enhancing environment developed by promoting walking and cycling and non car based transport.
3.	Low Carbon quality services and facilities focused on Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Centres (and in particular their centres) are designed around the needs of the Community, enabling everyone to have fair and equitable access.
4.	An integrated sustainable transport system developed both within and between towns and especially to and from Yeovil whilst promoting enhanced delivery of services direct to rural areas through Information and Computer Technologies.
5.	A comprehensive, high performing economy that is diverse, adaptable and provides the required jobs growth and upward wage levels through a thriving Yeovil, regenerated Chard and Market Towns and a diversified rural economic environment able to attract and retain visitors (through a vibrant tourism industry), consumers and high quality sustainable businesses.
6.	A balanced housing market with a range of general housing and affordable housing to meet the required numbers and sited and built to support sustainable lifestyles with low carbon emissions, delivered through a sustainable District

<sup>4</sup> Although not a requirement of the SEA Directive, this task has been recommended by Government guidance on SA/SEA.

	settlement strategy and hierarchy.
7.	An Eco Town for Yeovil to deliver on the balanced housing market objective, provide an exemplar to move towards more sustainable, lower carbon consumption living and provide a boost to new low carbon technologies and industries.
8.	Movement toward a Carbon Neutral economy by 2030.
9.	Protection and enhancement of our natural environment and biodiversity, retaining the distinctiveness of settlements and reflecting known environmental constraints, including flood risks, in locating development.

5.2.3 It is important to be consistent between the Core Strategy strategic objectives and the SA objectives. In accordance with Task B1 of the SA process, the following matrix tests the compatibility of the Core Strategy strategic objectives with the Sustainability Appraisal objectives, and highlights any potential areas of conflict between the two sets of objectives.

**Figure 5.1: Compatibility of the Core Strategy strategic objectives and the SA**

		SA Objectives													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Core Strategy Strategic Objectives	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	●	●	●	✓	●	●	●
	2	✓	✓	●	✓	●	●	✓	✓	●	●	✓	✓	●	✓
	3	✓	✓	●	✓	✓	●	●	✓	●	●	●	●	●	●
	4	✓	✓	●	●	✓	●	✓	✓	●	●	✓	✓	●	●
	5	●	✓	●	●	✓	●	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	●	✗
	6	●	✓	✓	●	✓	●	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	●	✗
	7	✓	✓	✓	✓	●	●	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	●	●	●
	8	●	●	●	✓	●	●	✓	✓	●	●	✓	✓	●	●
	9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	✓	✓	●	●	✓	✓

**Objectives**

- ✓ compatible
- ✗ incompatible
- no significant link.

5.2.4 The table above shows that the draft Core Strategy strategic objectives are broadly compatible with the Sustainability Appraisal objectives, with each Core Strategy objective supporting several SA objectives. Indeed, around half of the Core Strategy objectives have are compatible with SA objectives. Overall, these results are encouraging as they show that a positive approach to sustainability is at the core of the plan.

5.2.5 However there are some tensions, primarily between Core Strategy strategic objectives 5 and 6 relating to economic development and housing supply, and the SA objectives that are focussed on transport and the environment (including climate change). There is a requirement for housing and economic growth to meet the needs

of additional household creation, to ensure that the district continues to remain prosperous, and the social benefits that arise from meeting these development needs. It is vitally important that the effects of this development are sufficiently mitigated in order to minimise the adverse effects of this growth and maximise the beneficial effects. Although these particular SA and Core Strategy strategic objectives are potentially incompatible, the incorporation of appropriate mitigation measures (e.g. avoiding development in highly valued environmental areas, promotion of green infrastructure, encouraging alternatives to car travel) should ensure adverse effects are avoided or minimised. Indeed, Core Strategy strategic objective 6 does explicitly support sustainable lifestyles with low carbon emissions, which should help overcome any potential incompatibility.

5.2.6 It is notable that despite these tensions between Core Strategy strategic objectives 5 and 6 and some of the ‘environmental’ SA objectives, there is also compatibility, principally with regards to supporting a strong, diverse and vibrant economy, providing sufficient housing, and improving education and skills.

5.2.7 Most of the SA objectives are positively impacted upon by several Core Strategy strategic objectives, apart from the SA objective on crime (6) and flooding (13). The lack of significant links for these two objectives may mean that more explicit consideration of crime and flooding within the Core Strategy strategic objectives is required in order to ensure the whole range of sustainable objectives are fully encouraged in the plan. Additionally, SA objective 14 on biodiversity is both positively and negatively impacted upon by two Core Strategy strategic objectives.

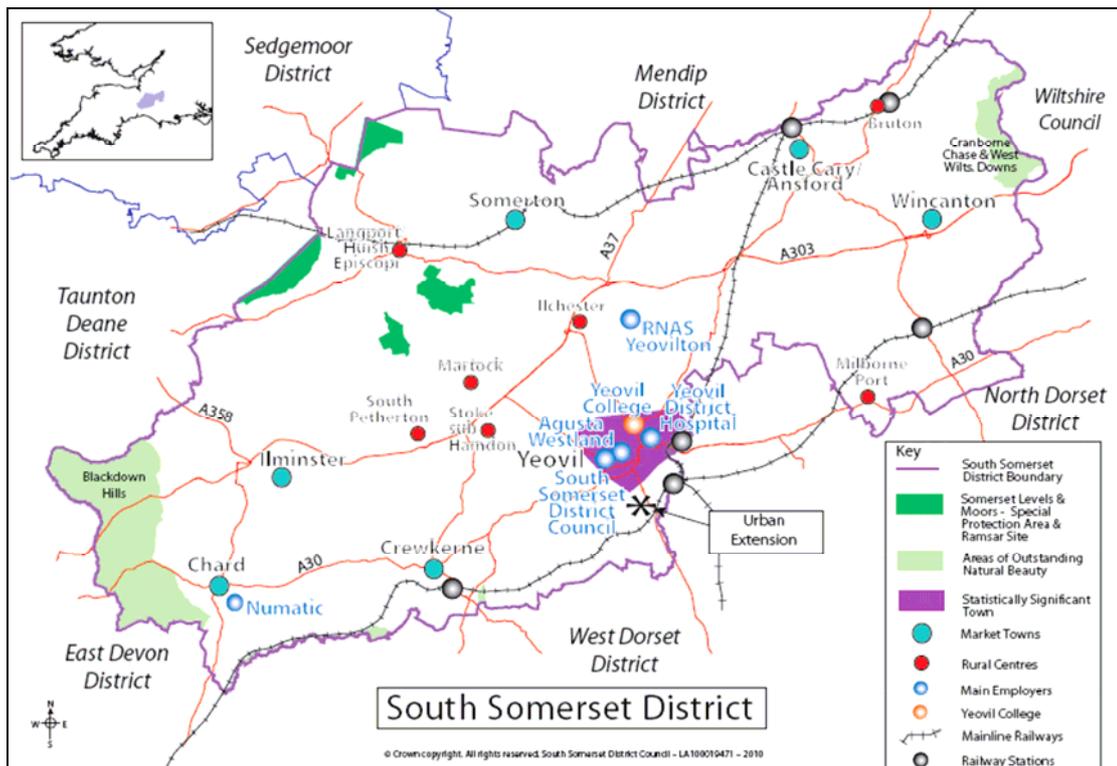
5.2.8 As a result of initial findings on the compatibility of the Core Strategy strategic objectives and the Sustainability Appraisal objectives, the following changes might be considered to the Core Strategy strategic objectives in order to improve their sustainability:

- Greater clarity is required as to which aspect of ‘sustainability’ is being encouraged by the Core Strategy strategic objectives e.g. to ensure crime and flooding are explicitly mentioned as set out in para 5.2.7 above.
- Clear mention of the need to address climate change through both mitigation and adaptation measures is required.

## 5.3 Strategic Options

5.3.1 The draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options proposes ‘strategic options’ for a settlement hierarchy and how development should be distributed across South Somerset. The Core Strategy key diagram is shown overleaf (figure 5.2).

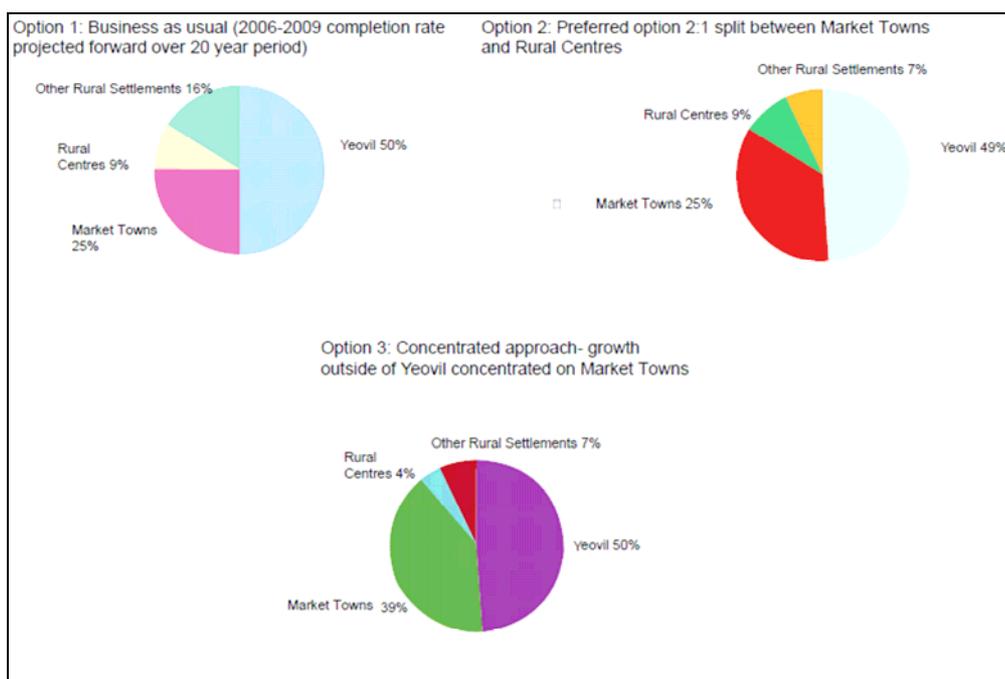
### **Figure 5.2: The three Strategic Options**



5.3.2 Given that the overall levels of development were already considered at the ‘issues and options’ stage, including varying amounts for Yeovil, the preferred options focussed on how this should be distributed across the district. Three options (shown in Figure 5.3) were proposed for the distribution of the 8,400 new dwellings required in South Somerset outside Yeovil:

- Option 1: Business as usual / dispersed approach (2006-09 completion rate projected forward over the 20 year Core Strategy period 2006-26);
- Option 2: A focus Market Towns and Rural Centres; and
- Option 3: Concentrated approach with growth outside of Yeovil concentrated on Market Towns.

**Figure 5.3: The three Strategic Options**



Summary of SA Findings for Strategy Options

5.3.3 The following table (figure 5.4) compares the sustainability scores for each of the three options, and illustrates that all three options have a mixture of positive, neutral, negative and mixed effects.

Figure 5.4: Strategic Options findings

SA objective	Option 1 'Business as usual' / dispersed	Option 2 Market Towns and Rural Centres	Option 3 Concentrate development in Market Towns
1. Improve access to essential services and facilities	-	+	+
2. Reduce poverty and social exclusion	-	+	+
3. Provide sufficient housing to meet identified needs of the community	+	++	+ / --
4. Improve health and well being	0	+	+ / -
5. Improve education and skills of the population	-	++	+ / -
6. Reduce crime and fear of crime	?	?	?
7. Support a strong, diverse and vibrant local economy	+ / -	++	+ -
8. Reduce the effect of traffic on the environment	--	-	--
9. Protect and enhance the landscape and townscape	-	? / 0	+ / -
10. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment	? / -	? / -	? / -
11. Reduce contribution to climate change and vulnerability to its effects	--	-	0
12. Minimise pollution (including air, water, land, light, noise) and waste production	-	0	-
13. Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	?	?	?
14. Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	? / -	? / -	? / -

### Option 1: 'Business as usual' / dispersed

- 5.3.4 This option presents the 'business as usual' approach by projecting the dwelling completion rate that has occurred in recent years (2006-09) over the entire plan period (2006-26), until the preferred option for 8,400 dwellings (to be built in settlements outside Yeovil) is met. The outcome of these projections is that although there would be a focus on the Market Towns with around half (4,190) of new dwellings, this option would result in just 1,465 dwellings located in Rural Centres, with 2,700 in the other Rural Settlements and countryside, leading to a dispersed strategy for new development.
- 5.3.5 The outcomes of a dispersed approach to development leads to mostly negative effects, including lack of access to services, increasing the need to travel, increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and negative impact on the landscape and townscape of Rural Settlements in particular. A potential positive of this option is the greater scope to meet affordable housing need in rural areas, but conversely this may mean need in Market Towns and Rural Centres is not met.
- 5.3.6 The continuation of a 'business as usual' approach would have particular negative consequences for settlements that have seen relatively high amounts of development in recent years. For example, there is potential for significant adverse environmental effects (particular adverse effect on landscape and townscape) at South Petherton, Martock and Milborne Port.

### Option 2: Focus on Market Towns and Rural Centres

- 5.3.7 Under this scenario there is a greater focus on the Market Towns with around twice as much development in Market Towns (5,800 new dwellings) as elsewhere in the district (2,600 dwellings). Rural Centres would provide 1,400 dwellings and be the focus for development outside Market Towns, with development in rural areas limited to that which is already allocated, completed and committed (1,200 dwellings).
- 5.3.8 This more balanced approach to the distribution of development has many sustainability advantages over Option 1 by ensuring better access to jobs, shops, and facilities and services which are located in the Market Towns and Rural Centres. This should help reduce the need to travel in the district. The focus on Market Towns and Rural Centres will allow housing need in the larger settlements to be met, whilst limiting new housing in rural settlements where there is generally poor access to jobs, services etc which would increase the need to travel. The impact on the landscape and townscape of Rural Settlements should be less given lower levels of development than Option 1.

### Option 3: Concentrate all development in Market Towns

- 5.3.9 This option presents a concentrated approach to new development (outside Yeovil) with all dwellings that are not already committed or allocated being built in the Market Towns. This would result in nearly 6,500 new dwellings at the Market Towns, just 650 dwellings in Rural Centres, and 1,200 dwellings in Rural Settlements.

5.3.10 Greater concentration of development at the Market Towns would enable good access to services, facilities, jobs and shops for new residents, and minimise CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. However the economic benefits of new development would be limited to Market Towns and not spread as widely as Options 1 and 2 – to the detriment of businesses in more rural areas, and also making services less viable in the rural settlements. This potential lack of access to work and services could mean travel is increased in rural areas. The concentrated approach to development would result in limited housing provision in rural areas, which would mean affordable housing need in particular is not met.

### Summary

5.3.11 Overall, Option 2 performs best in sustainability terms as it delivers the most sustainability benefits, and the fewest negative effects. The economic and social benefits would be spread more evenly under this option to those settlements where population, jobs, community services and facilities are concentrated, and there is most potential to use alternatives to the car. There are some negative environmental effects for this option, such as increased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with new development and increased population, and negative traffic effects. The SA proposes mitigation measures to minimise these adverse effects, including sustainable construction to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and incorporate water efficiency measures, improved sustainable transport links, and to locate and design new development so that it can adapt to climate change. There is also uncertainty for some objectives that may become clearer when more precise locations for development are considered e.g. flood risk, landscape/townscape and biodiversity impact.

5.3.12 A concentrated approach to development (Option 3) scores quite well in sustainability terms, although there are mixed effects depending on the needs and constraints of particular settlements. The continued application of existing policies under the ‘business as usual’ option would result in a dispersed approach to new development, and mostly negative effects (Option 1) as previously explained.

## 5.4 Location/Site Options

5.4.1 The preferred options document proposes ‘location/site options’ for potential urban extensions around the main settlements.

5.4.2 In order to deliver the significant number of new homes set out in the ‘draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options,’ the Core Strategy has identified that many of the main settlements will require urban extensions. The incorporation of ‘spatial strategy option 2,’ the option which performed best in the SA and has been incorporated as the Core Strategy preferred option, would mean that all of the Market Towns except Crewkerne (beyond the existing Key Site allocation) would require an extension to the existing urban area to incorporate the necessary levels of development up to 2026. The following settlements have therefore undergone SA for location/site options:

- Yeovil
- Market Towns:

- Chard
- Ilminster
- Wincanton
- Somerton
- Ansford / Castle Cary

5.4.3 In accordance with Government guidance<sup>5</sup>, locations for future development have been filtered using a 'strategic sift' of existing planning policies, and evidence of deliverability in order to ensure 'reasonable alternatives' are considered. Maps of each of the Market Towns with the potential options for urban extensions, alongside key environmental constraints, community services and facilities are included as Appendix 5. The full results of the SA of potential growth locations around the Market Towns are in Appendix 6; with the key sustainability findings are highlighted in the following paragraphs. Potential growth options for Chard were subject to SA as part of a wider study – the 'Chard Regeneration Framework' – carried out by the consultants LDA Design.

5.4.4 It is important to note that SA on potential locations for development was carried out in advance of detailed information on infrastructure provision (except Chard), which will be considered in the forthcoming Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

### **Yeovil**

5.4.5 The detailed findings of the SA of Yeovil's Strategic Growth Options are set out in Appendix 4, separated as 4A, 4B and 4C to reflect the refinement of the options as they were developed between December 2009 and August 2010. This was originally based upon the RSS Proposed Changes requirement for a 5,000 dwelling urban extension to Yeovil. However following revocation of the RSS, the Core Strategy is now proposing an urban extension of around 3,700 dwellings at Yeovil in order to meet the economic and housing needs of the town – it is considered the broad findings of the SA remain valid and, if anything, effects will be less significant than originally envisaged. In order to determine the most appropriate location for the urban extension, potential locations have been subject to SA. Initially, the 360-degree area of search around Yeovil was divided into six options for further analysis, reflecting where the six main 'A' roads enter Yeovil, as shown on the map overleaf (figure 5.5). The six potential options underwent SA to provide a provisional score for further discussion.

5.4.6 Following engagement with town and parish councils, and using findings from the initial SA, the options were developed and refined from 11 areas reflecting the 360-degree area of search, to 6 separate geographic areas. Three options (see figure 5.6 overleaf) were eventually identified as appropriate for inclusion within the Core Strategy – options to the north were not incorporated mainly due to adverse highways and landscape impact:

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<sup>5</sup> Local Development Frameworks: Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal, Planning Advisory Service, December 2007; Sustainability Appraisal advice note, Planning Advisory Service, June 2010.

- Brympton / Coker to the South West of Yeovil;
- Barwick / Keyford / East Coker to the South (preferred option for public consultation); and
- Dorset / Over Compton to the East of the town.

Figure 5.5: Initial options for the urban extension to Yeovil

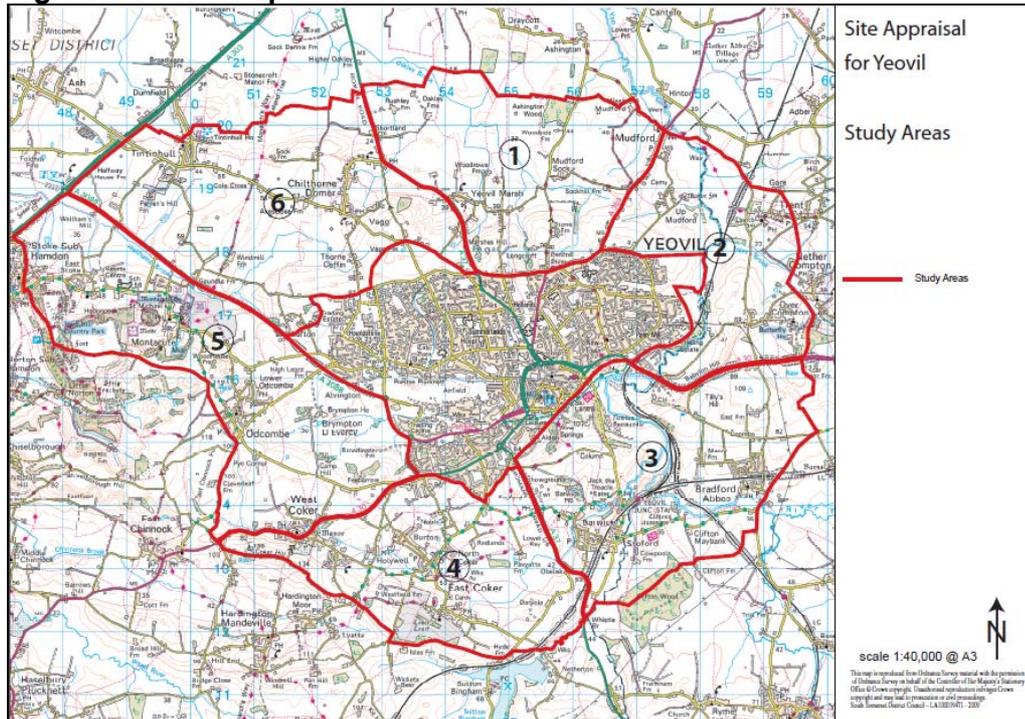
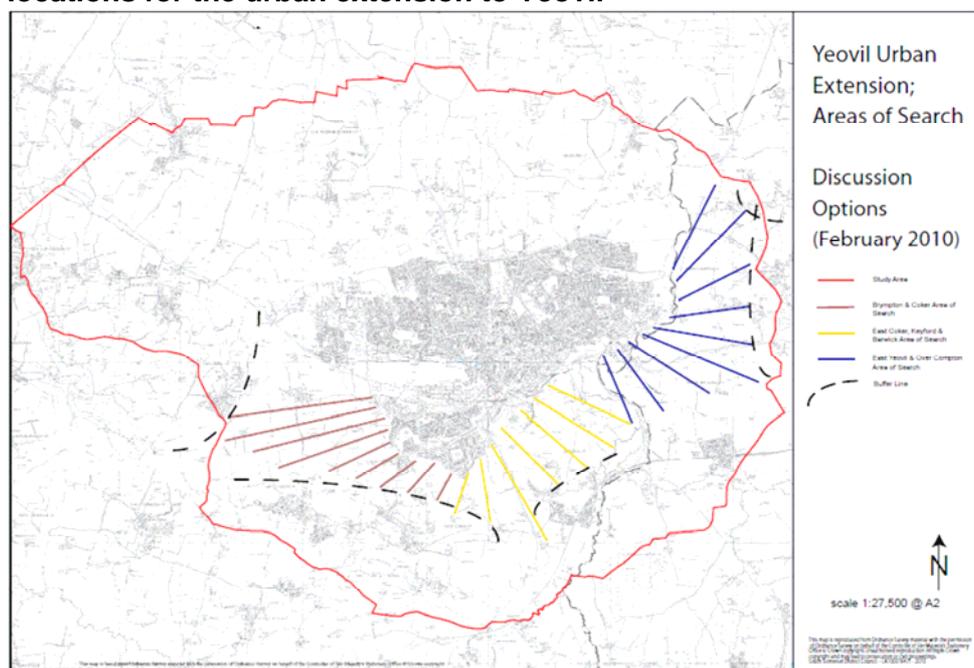


Figure 5.6: Draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options: potential locations for the urban extension to Yeovil



- 5.4.7 The area to the south of Yeovil (Barwick / Keyford / East Coker) performed best in sustainability terms because this option has the most positive sustainability benefits against the fewest negative effects. The principle sustainability advantages of the southern option are its relative proximity to the town centre meaning good access to services and facilities; less congestion and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to this proximity to the town centre meaning greater potential to walk and cycle; proximity to deprived areas of Yeovil which offers greater opportunities to reduce poverty and social exclusion through the potential regeneration benefits of new development; and positive benefits on health and well being through its proximity to Goldenstones Leisure Centre and Yeovil Country Park.
- 5.4.8 The SA also identified that development of a relatively large urban extension will have several negative effects, particularly on the environmental objectives. The negative effects likely to arise from the southern option specifically include impacts on: biodiversity due to the presence of local wildlife sites, historic parks and gardens, high quality agricultural land, the landscape, and flooding. Mitigation measures are recommended in order to ensure adverse effects are minimised, such as: flood alleviation/Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), avoidance of areas with a high historic and landscape value, high design standards that minimise noise, air, light and water pollution, and protect/retain wildlife routes through provision of green infrastructure and open space.

### **Chard**

- 5.4.9 Four options were considered for the growth of Chard, as set out below:
- Option 1: a focus on town centre regeneration;
  - Option 2: eastern growth area part 1 (around 1350 dwellings);
  - Option 3: eastern growth area full build out (around 2700 dwellings);
  - Option 4: growth to Chard's 'natural limits' (around 3485 dwellings).
- 5.4.10 Option 3 'eastern growth area full build out' scores best in sustainability terms as it provides a scale of growth that will enable Chard to achieve and maximise its offer of employment, housing, retail and associated amenities, whilst not re-introducing undue congestion within the internal road network of the town. However, there are likely to be negative effects under this option, including significant encroachment onto greenfield and agricultural land to the east of the town, and impact on wildlife habitats and sites of geological conservation. Mitigation measures will need to be incorporated to reduce these impacts, such as protection of wildlife corridors and green infrastructure provision.

### **Ilminster**

- 5.4.11 Three growth options were appraised for Ilminster:
- Option 1: south east;
  - Option 2: south west;
  - Option 3: north.

5.4.12 Option 2 produces the most positive effects overall as it is well related to schools, shops and health facilities and would be most likely to result in reduced local car usage as it is closer to the employment land allocations and town centre. Option 1 (south east) may require the development of another site and would result in a more dispersed loss of greenfield land. Option 3 (north) is less favourable in landscape, townscape and biodiversity terms. In conclusion, Option 2 is recommended on the basis of the SA findings.

### **Wincanton**

5.4.13 Four potential options were considered in the potential growth of Wincanton:

- Option 1: west/north west;
- Option 2: south west (employment only<sup>6</sup>);
- Option 3: south east;
- Option 4: east.

5.4.14 Option 1 produces the most positive effects overall as it is well related to schools, shops and sport facilities and would be most likely to result in minimised journeys by car. Option 2 would result in a more dispersed loss of greenfield land by providing employment use only, and creating the appropriate infrastructure to allow safe access across the A303 is likely to be costly. Developing south of the A303 (Options 2 and 3) could, in the long term, result in a settlement divided by the national strategic road network and given that there is a more suitable options to the north of the A303 which could accommodate development, it is considered that it is not necessary to breach this boundary. Option 4 is less favourable in landscape and townscape terms and more divorced from existing facilities than Option 1. Overall, Option 1 scores best in sustainability terms.

### **Somerton**

5.4.15 Three potential broad locations for extending Somerton were subject to sustainability appraisal:

- Option 1: south;
- Option 2: west;
- Option 3: north west.

5.4.16 Although Option 1 is closest to the shops and services in the town centre, the negative effects on environmental objectives, particularly the historic environment, and poor quality road access (potential road safety issue) mean Option 1 is not recommended. Options 2 and 3 are similar distances from the town centre, but Option 2 is favoured due to less environmental impact, potential to use/enhance the existing bus service on Langport Road, and clear evidence of housing deliverability in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

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<sup>6</sup> Area for employment only suggested in early engagement with the Town Council.

## Ansford / Castle Cary

- 5.4.17 The Sustainability Appraisal considers three options for the growth of Ansford / Castle Cary. Landscape constraints are considered to discount growth options in the south of the town, and therefore the three growth options are all to the north:
- Option 1: north west;
  - Option 2: north;
  - Option 3: north east.
- 5.4.18 Option 1 produces the most positive effects overall as it is well related to existing employment opportunities, the town centre and is medium distance from both primary and secondary schools, whilst having least landscape impact. Option 2 has several positive effects in its relationship with the secondary school and opportunities to link with the train station, however this option is further from key services and the town centre. Option 3 has many positive effects in terms of its proximity to Ansford School, the town centre, and is medium distance from the primary school and health provision. All options have negative effects from the loss of greenfield land, noise and land pollution and impact on feeding grounds for bat populations which would require mitigation measures. In conclusion, Option 1 scores best in sustainability terms.

## 5.5 Thematic Options

- 5.5.1 The preferred options document proposes ‘topic policy options’ for the five themes of housing; economic prosperity; transport and accessibility; health and well being; and environmental quality.
- 5.5.2 The ‘draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options’ includes more formal policy wordings as opposed to the ‘issues and options’ stage, which put forward various options as to how the key issues could be tackled. These draft policies have developed using the sustainability findings from the ‘issues and options’ stage. Where appropriate, recommendations to policy wordings have been made to improve the sustainability of the policies. Appendix 3 contains the detailed appraisal tables of these policies, with the key sustainability findings for each topic highlighted below.

### Housing

- 5.5.3 The appraisal of the density policy recommends that sensitive design will be required to ensure that the townscape is protected and enhanced – high density development will generally not be appropriate in rural settlements. It is recommended that areas where new housing development is developed at relatively high densities are supported by appropriate infrastructure improvements e.g. sustainable travel modes, in order to ensure congestion is not increased.
- 5.5.4 Significant positive benefits would arise from setting an affordable housing target of 35% in developments of six dwellings or more, although it is recognised that viability is key, particularly in these economic times. It is recognised that the flexibility within the policy may mean this level of affordable housing is not achieved in all cases.

5.5.5 The preferred policy option on housing mix ensures that a mix of all housing types and sizes is achieved across the district reflecting the most recent evidence, and applies specific percentages to strategic sites which ensures that where the most significant growth is being delivered where it will most appropriately meet the needs of the market.

5.5.6 The preferred option policy for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people has several positive social benefits through meeting community needs, and has been changed following the 'issues and options' SA to include consideration of health and safety of residents and incorporation of travelling show people to ensure the needs of the whole travelling community are met.

### **Economic Prosperity**

5.5.7 In general, the move to a low carbon economy is encouraged in order to reduce the contribution to climate change. The policy on live/work units will have sustainability benefits across the range of social, economic and environmental objectives, such as supporting local shops and services, improving health and well being, and reducing the need to travel.

5.5.8 Tourism policies should bring economic benefits, although the SA recommends ensuring proposals do not harm the District's environmental, cultural or heritage assets, particularly in rural areas. Similar sustainability issues are raised with the farm diversification policy which highlights the economic benefits whilst recommending mitigation measures to reduce landscape impact.

5.5.9 The retail policies support strong and vibrant local economies, encourage self-containment, reduce the need to travel and improve access to essential services and facilities thereby reducing social exclusion. The SA highlights the importance of retail being an appropriate scale to each particular settlement in order to promote self-containment.

### **Transport and Accessibility**

5.5.10 Several positive effects would arise from the draft transport policies, arising from the intention to promote sustainable travel modes which is a key mitigation measure that will be required if development generally is to deliver the most positive sustainability effects. These include improved health and well being, reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, improved air quality, and reduced poverty and social exclusion through providing alternatives to the car.

5.5.11 There is some potential for negative economic effects arising from the perception that enhanced business competitiveness is dependent on free and unrestrained access by car. However, this can be mitigated by reduced costs to the business of not having to provide extensive and costly (both in terms of land take, and construction and maintenance) parking facilities; additionally promoting sustainable travel can enhance a company's 'green credentials'.

## **Health and Well Being**

- 5.5.12 Some of the sustainability benefits of these policies include the provision of open space, especially in conjunction with tree planting, contributing to flood mitigation proposals, reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels, help adapt to climate change, and conserve and enhance the landscape and biodiversity interest. There are also social benefits such as the provision of play and community facilities which can encourage social cohesion within that community and help to reduce social exclusion. This topic also includes the 'sports zone' policy which will have positive effects on health and well being, but potential negative effects due to additional traffic generation will require mitigation measures such as the promotion of sustainable travel modes.

## **Environmental Quality**

- 5.5.13 The policies in this chapter have numerous positive effects across the SA objectives, but particularly for the environmental themed objectives and improving health and well being. Development of renewable energy technologies does have the potential for adverse effects on landscape, townscape and historic environment, so the SA recommended including a criterion in the policy to address this issue.
- 5.5.14 The earlier introduction of the higher levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes and a higher renewable energy requirement is recommended to achieve a greater positive effect on reducing the contribution to climate change and vulnerability to its effects. However, it is recognised that feasibility and viability issues will mean this is unlikely to be achievable across the district.

## 6 Monitoring

6.1.1 The final task in Stage B involves identifying the measures that will be used to monitor the significant effects of the Core Strategy. The monitoring process is integral to both plan making and sustainability appraisal. Monitoring is crucially important in understanding the characteristics of the local area, to assess the impact of policies and whether the strategy is delivering sustainable development. Regular monitoring ensures that unforeseen adverse effects can be identified and appropriate remedial action can be undertaken.

6.1.2 The following table (figure 6.1) outlines the potential monitoring indicators that will be used to measure each of the SA Objectives. The outcome of the finalised ‘significant effects indicators’ will be reported in the Annual Monitoring Report.

**Figure 6.1: Significant effects indicators**

SA Objective	Indicators (source)
1. Improve access to essential services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of Super Output Areas (SOAs) in South Somerset where ‘Road distance to GPs, Hospitals, Primary Schools and Post Offices’ is in worst 20% nationally (Indices of Multiple Deprivation);</li> <li>➤ Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling (% of parishes covered by Demand Responsive Transport) (LAA NI 175).</li> </ul>
2. Reduce poverty and social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of SOAs in South Somerset which are within the 20% most deprived nationally – overall weighted score (IMD);</li> <li>➤ Number of SOAs in South Somerset that rank within the most deprived 20% nationally for income (IMD);</li> <li>➤ Tackling fuel poverty - people receiving income based benefits living in homes with low energy efficiency rating (LA NI 187);</li> <li>➤ % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (LAA NI 1);</li> <li>➤ Number of benefit recipients (Nomis).</li> </ul>
3. Provide sufficient housing to meet identified needs of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Net additional homes provided (LAA NI 154);</li> <li>➤ Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (LAA NI 155);</li> <li>➤ House price to income ratio (Land Registry);</li> <li>➤ Number of homeless in the district (SSDC);</li> <li>➤ Provision of gypsy and traveller sites in relation to identified need (SSDC).</li> </ul>
4. Improve health and well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of SOAs in South Somerset where ‘Road distance to GPs, Hospitals, Primary Schools and Post Offices’ is in worst 20% nationally (Indices of Multiple Deprivation);</li> <li>➤ Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6 (LAA NI 56);</li> <li>➤ Adult participation in sport (LAA NI 8);</li> <li>➤ Healthy life expectancy at age 65 (LAA NI 137);</li> <li>➤ Number of SOAs within the 20% most deprived nationally for health and disability (IMD).</li> </ul>
5. Improve education and skills of the population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 (GCSE) or higher (LAA NI 163);</li> <li>➤ Working age population qualified to at least Level 4 (Degree) or higher (LAA NI 165).</li> </ul>
6. Reduce crime and fear of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police (LAA NI 21);</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Serious acquisitive crime rate (LAA NI 16);</li> <li>➤ Number of SOAs within the 20% most deprived nationally for crime and disorder (IMD);</li> <li>➤ % of residents who feel safe/very safe whilst outside (daytime and night time) (BMG Quality of Life survey).</li> </ul>
7. Support a strong, diverse and vibrant local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Average earnings of employees (LAA NI 166);</li> <li>➤ Overall employment rate (LAA NI 151);</li> <li>➤ Proportion of employees in different sectors (Census);</li> <li>➤ VAT registration rate (LAA NI 171);</li> <li>➤ VAT registered businesses in the area showing growth (LAA NI 172);</li> <li>➤ Travel to work – modal split (Census);</li> <li>➤ Proportion of retail, office and leisure development completed in town centre (SSDC: Core Output Indicator).</li> </ul>
8. Reduce the effect of traffic on the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Travel to work – modal split (Census);</li> <li>➤ Killed or seriously injured on South Somerset's roads (LAA NI 47).</li> </ul>
9. Protect and enhance the landscape and townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ % of new homes built on previously developed land (SSDC);</li> <li>➤ Average density of new housing development (SSDC);</li> <li>➤ % of new developments meeting 'Building for Life' criteria (SSDC: Core Output Indicator).</li> </ul>
10. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of listed buildings lost / 'at risk' (English Heritage, SSDC);</li> <li>➤ Number of Conservation Area appraisals / Management Plans prepared (SSDC);</li> <li>➤ Total area covered by conservation areas, historic parks and gardens (SSDC);</li> <li>➤ Total number of archaeological sites (SCC).</li> </ul>
11. Reduce contribution to climate change and vulnerability to its effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (LAA NI 186);</li> <li>➤ Renewable energy capacity installed (SSDC: Core Output Indicator);</li> <li>➤ Adapting to climate change (LAA NI 188).</li> </ul>
12. Minimise pollution (including air, water, land, light, noise) and waste production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number and extent of Air Quality Management Areas (SSDC);</li> <li>➤ Number of days of air pollution exceeding 40µg/m<sup>3</sup> in Yeovil AQMA (SSDC: SCS);</li> <li>➤ River quality (% of very good, good or fair) (EA);</li> <li>➤ Residual household waste per year (LAA NI 191);</li> <li>➤ Loss of high grade agricultural land (SSDC);</li> <li>➤ Household waste recycled and composted (Somerset Waste Partnership, NI 192).</li> </ul>
13. Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flooding or water quality grounds (EA; Core Output Indicator).</li> </ul>
14. Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ % of SSSIs in favourable or recovering condition (Natural England);</li> <li>➤ Health of Natural Environment 'basket of measures' (LAA LPI (6));</li> <li>➤ Number/area of Local Wildlife Sites in South Somerset (Somerset Environmental Records Centre).</li> </ul>

## 7 Consultation Arrangements

7.1.1 We are publishing the outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal for consultation alongside the 'draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options'. The consultation period runs from Friday 8 October to Friday 3 December. We would like to hear your views so please send us your comments:

Email: [planning.policy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@southsomerset.gov.uk)

Fax: 01935 462299

Post: Spatial Policy Team  
The Council Offices  
Brympton Way  
Yeovil  
BA20 2HT

7.1.2 Your views can be submitted using the comments form that accompanies the 'draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options'. All comments will be considered in preparing the formal Sustainability Appraisal Report that will be published at the next stage alongside 'publication' (Regulation 27) of the Core Strategy (this stage is currently proposed to take place in September 2011).