



South Somerset District Council



Local Development Scheme

2007 – 2010

September 2007

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduces major changes to the development planning system. Structure Plans, Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Guidance will be replaced by a new system of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS's) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF's). The LDF for South Somerset, together with the RSS for the South West, will form the statutory development plan for the District. The South West Regional Assembly is preparing the RSS but in the meantime the existing Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) has the status of RSS.

1.2 The LDF will comprise a portfolio of individual documents which will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the District and will include;

The Local Development Scheme (LDS)

The Statement of Community involvement (SCI)

Development Plan Documents (DPD's)

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)

Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR's)

The South Somerset Local Development Scheme (LDS)

1.3 This document is the South Somerset Local Development Scheme (LDS), a programme for preparing the policies and proposals that will guide future planning decisions in the District. It sets out:

- The documents that currently form the development plan for planning in South Somerset (see section 3);
- The Local Development Documents (LDD's) that the Council will produce as part of the South Somerset LDF April 2007 – March 2010 (see section 4 below);
- Which LDD's will be part of the statutory development plan (Development Plan Documents) and which will be Supplementary Planning Documents, and the timetable for their preparation and review (see section 4 and Appendices);
- How progress will be monitored and reviewed (see section 5); and
- The resources that will be used in the preparation of Local Development Documents (see section 6)

1.4 The Local Development Scheme serves two main purposes:

- It provides the starting point for the community to find out what the local planning authority's policies are for the area, as it will set out the documents that currently form the development plan for the planning of the area.
- It sets out the programme for the preparation of Local development Documents over a three year period, including timetables that will tell people when various stages in the preparation and review of any particular Local Development Document will occur.

1.5. The programme will reflect the Council's priorities and determine the most effective use of resources.

1.6. Once the South Somerset Local Development Scheme takes effect, the Council will:

- Make copies available during working hours at the Council Offices, Brympton Way, and the Area and Community offices;
 - Publish it on the Council's website, www.southsomerset.gov.uk;
 - Issue a press release;
 - Send copies of it to key stakeholders.
- 1.7 The submitted version of the South Somerset Local Development Scheme will be reviewed and rolled forward on an annual basis to take account of progress on the programme and monitoring of the evidence base and adopted policies.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

- 1.8 The SCI sets out the Local Planning Authority's policy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of all Local Development Documents and development management decisions. It sets out when and how the community will be involved and was the subject of an independent assessment by an Inspector at an Examination.

Development Plan Documents (DPD's)

- 1.9 Development Plan Documents set out policies and proposals and have development plan status; they therefore have full weight in the determination of planning applications. They must be in general conformity with the RSS. They will be subject to community involvement and Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment throughout their preparation and will have independent assessment at an examination by an Inspector, whose report will be binding. The main types of DPD's which local planning authorities should prepare include:

- **The Core Strategy**

This will set out the key elements of the planning framework for the area. It will comprise a vision and strategic objectives for the area, a spatial strategy, core policies that apply to the whole area and a monitoring and implementation framework. The broad strategy may be set out in diagrammatic format in a key diagram. The time horizon will be at least 10 years. This should be one of the first DPD's to be prepared and other DPD's must be in conformity with it.
- **Site specific allocations and policies**

These will set out the allocation of land for particular uses, such as housing and employment, to meet the identified needs of the area.
- **Area Action Plans (where needed)**

These will provide the framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed, with the focus on delivery.
- **The Proposals Map**

This will illustrate on an Ordnance Survey base map all the policies and proposals contained in other DPD's and in "saved" policies (interim arrangements allow for certain existing local plan policies to be carried forward for a period of three years from the date of the Act's enactment or adoption of the local plan), with Inset Maps where necessary).
- **Core Development Management Policies**

A limited suite of policies that set out the criteria against which all planning applications will be assessed, to ensure that development and use of land accords with the vision and objectives set out in the Core Strategy. The Act provides for joint authority production of DPD's and this approach has been taken in respect of the pre-production stage for core development management policies. Central Government guidance indicates that core development management policies may be the subject of their own DPD or incorporated within the Core Strategy DPD.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)

- 1.10 SPD's form part of the LDF but will not form part of the statutory development plan. They will be subject of community involvement and Strategic Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment during preparation but will not be independently assessed by an Inspector at an Examination, unlike DPD's. SPD's will provide further details of policies and proposals in DPD's. These could take the form of design guides, other guidance, development briefs, or issue-based documents.

Annual Monitoring Report

- 1.11 Annual Monitoring Reports will review DPD and SPD progress and compare against the programme and milestones in this LDS. The report will also assess the implementation of policies and Proposals.

Relationships between documents

- 1.12 The key documents that constitute the LDF, and which will include the Local Development Scheme, the Statement of Community Involvement, and the Annual Monitoring Report, are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

2. TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 The Government has made special arrangements for moving from the old development plans system to the new.
- 2.2 Work on the preparation of existing Local Plans that had reached at least the Deposit stage by 2004, when the new Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act was introduced, was allowed to proceed and local planning authorities were encouraged to move rapidly towards the adoption of such plans. The South Somerset Local Plan fell into this category and the top priority of the Council in previous LDS's was to achieve its adoption. The South Somerset Local Plan was adopted in April 2006, although two Legal Challenges were lodged against it at that time. Under the transitional arrangements, the South Somerset Local Plan is now saved for three years from the date of adoption and forms part of the LDF until the expiration of that three-year period. One of these Legal Challenges was withdrawn in August 2007 and the other is due to be heard at the High Court but no date has yet been set.
- 2.3 South Somerset has prepared Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) which elaborates upon a number of the policies and proposals contained in earlier Local Plans, some of which remains relevant, and has prepared and is in the process of preparing similar guidance related to policies and proposals contained in the South Somerset Local Plan (see below). The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act makes no provision to "save" existing SPG as part of the arrangements for the new planning system. However, SPG maintains a status in a non-statutory form that is capable of being a material consideration in determining planning applications.

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Current Planning Policies

- 3.1 The current development plan, which sets out the planning policy framework for South Somerset, comprises:
 - Regional Spatial Strategy, adopted September 2001 (RPG10)
 - Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review, adopted April 2000
 - South Somerset Local Plan, adopted April 2006
- 3.2 In addition, Somerset County Council is the minerals and waste local planning authority and there are two current local plans on those topics:
 - Somerset Minerals Local Plan 2004
 - Somerset Waste Local Plan 2005
- 3.3 Somerset County Council has prepared Minerals and Waste Local Development Schemes setting out details of the programme for the preparation of Local Development Documents on minerals and waste.

Links with other strategies and plans

- 3.4 LDD's should have regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy and other strategies in relation to the land-use matters arising. To this end the priorities identified in this LDS have had regard to the Council's Community Strategy for 2003-2006 (Improving the Quality of Life in South Somerset) and emerging embryonic Community Strategy Review, the Council's Corporate Plan 2005-2012, and the regeneration initiatives in Yeovil (Yeovil Vision and the town's Urban Development Framework), and Chard (Action for Chard Town and the Chard Community Action Plan). A Town Centre Area Action Plan DPD is proposed in this LDS for Yeovil. The Town Centre Area Action Plans for Chard and Crewkerne, proposed in the previous LDS (2005 - 2008), are not carried forward. Chard needs a delivery plan that will facilitate the implementation of development within the existing Development Plan framework, in particular the South Somerset Local Plan's Chard Key Site (Proposal KS/CHAR/1) and the ACI Boden Site rather than a Town Centre Area Action Plan. This delivery plan is to be prepared outside the LDF process with minimal Planning Policy resource input requirement. In light of its priority relative to the Core Strategy and the Yeovil Town Centre Area Action Plan, there is insufficient resource capacity to carry forward the Town Centre Area Action Plan proposed for Crewkerne in the previous LDS (2005 – 2008) into this LDS.
- 3.5 The above plans will be the delivery mechanism for the spatial planning elements of the community initiatives referred to above. Area Action Plans for Chard and Crewkerne and other settlements may be programmed into future LDF's, the timetabling of which would be considered in light of prevailing circumstances, for example the need for a site allocations DPD (see paragraph 4.6 below) or potential SPD's, and resource conditions.
- 3.6 LDD's will also link to other local strategies, including the Council's Housing and Accommodation Strategy, Economic Development Strategy, and Playing Pitch Strategy. Additionally, LDD's will help to implement strategies by other bodies such as the County Council's Local Transport Plan and Town Transport Strategies.

4. PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS

“Saving” Plans

- 4.1 Adopted Local Plans can be “saved” by the Council in whole or in part under the new system for a period of three years from the start of the new system or from adoption if this is after the start of the new system. They remain a part of the development plan during this period until they are replaced or withdrawn. There may be scope to “save” some policies beyond the three-year period.
- 4.2 Existing Supplementary Planning Guidance was put in place under the umbrella of previous Local Plan policies, rather than the now adopted South Somerset Local Plan. However, given resource capacity and that much of that guidance remains in accordance with the current and emerging Development Plan and national policy, it is not intended to replace them with SPD’s in the South Somerset LDF through this LDS. Where still in accordance with the Development Plan, they can remain material considerations in the determination of planning applications until they are replaced by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD’s) or are withdrawn.

Saved Plans

- 4.3 Now that the South Somerset Local Plan is adopted, it replaces the existing part-area local plans. All policies and proposals in the existing part-area local plans have now been replaced by those in the South Somerset Local Plan. The policies and Proposals of the South Somerset Local Plan, which forms part of the LDF, are saved for three years from its April 2006 adoption date. The South Somerset Local Plan will be replaced gradually by DPD’s, each such DPD setting out which policies or proposals are to be replaced. The District Council will monitor progress on the implementation of its LDF policies and Proposals as part of the Annual Monitoring Reports’ production, and consider the need to formally seek the agreement of the Secretary of State to retain beyond March 2009 those policies and Proposals that remain unplaced but still accord with adopted LDD’s, in October 2008.

New Local Development Documents

- 4.4 Table 1 (pages 8-9 below) sets out the schedule of proposed Local Development Documents to be prepared by South Somerset District Council as part of the Local Development Framework 2007-2010, and includes the resolution of the outstanding Legal Challenge to the South Somerset Local Plan. With the exception of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which has special status, the table consists of Development Plan Documents that will form part of the development plan for South Somerset. The table sets out the titles of the documents, together with their purpose, the chains of conformity and the main milestones to adoption (pre production, production, examination, and adoption).
- 4.5 In addition to resolving the outstanding Legal Challenge to the South Somerset Local Plan, and reviewing the Local Development Scheme as part of the AMR process, the programmed Local Development Documents are:
 - Completion of the Statement of Community involvement (SCI) to adoption
 - Core Strategy including generic Development Management policies (DPD)
 - Yeovil Town Centre Area Action Plan (DPD)
 - Annual Monitoring Report (LDD)

- 4.6 More detailed information on each of these Local Development Documents is set out in the profiles (pages 10-13 below). The above programme reflects the Council's priorities at present but may need to be reviewed if, there becomes a pressing need to programme any new LDD, for example an SPD or a Site Allocations DPD. The need for any such additional LDD would need to have regard to, among other things, the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, Council's subsequent Core Strategy DPD (additional development may be required to meet the strategic requirement) or Yeovil Town Centre Area Action Plan, and progress and review of existing allocations.
- 4.7 Diagram 1 (page 14 below) sets out what the Council envisages the Local Development Framework might look like ultimately, including those LDD's it intends to prepare during the period April 2007 to March 2010 and beyond. It broadly shows how the documents relate to each other. This diagram will change when the LDS is replaced or if annual monitoring shows that exceptional circumstances warrant a revision of the Local Development Scheme and the LDD's to be prepared.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 4.8 An integral part of the process of preparing DPD's and SPD's is to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which will also meet the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. This means that from the very start, and throughout the preparation and production of DPD's and SPD's, the potential social, economic and environmental implications of policies will be appraised to ensure resources are used efficiently.
- 4.9 The main stages of SA are:
- A. Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline information and deciding the scope of the SA;
 - B. Developing and refining options and assessing effects;
 - C. Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report;
 - D. Consulting on the preferred options of the plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report; and
 - E. Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan.

Supporting Documents and Statements

- 4.10 There will be supporting documents and statements for each LDD that will include:
- A statement of conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy;
 - A Sustainability Report;
 - An explanation of the steps taken to ensure that the LDD has been produced in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement, or if the SCI has not been adopted at that time, the minimum requirements set out in the Regulations;
 - A statement explaining the relationship of the LDD to the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan, the South Somerset Local Plan and other parts of the planning framework and to what extent it replaces them; and
 - Any supporting documents that are relevant to the LDD topic.

TABLE 1 - SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS

Statutory

| Document | Brief Description | Chain of Conformity | Area | Current Status | Priority | Early Stakeholder and Community involvement | Consultation on Preferred Issues & Options | Date for submission to secretary of State | Date for Adoption |
|------------------------------------|---|--|----------|--|----------|---|--|---|--|
| South Somerset Local Plan | Formal publication of the Local Plan subject to the successful resolution of two outstanding Legal Challenges. | In general conformity with RSS and adopted structure plan | District | Adopted April 2006, subject to two Legal Challenges lodged with the High Court. One Legal Challenge withdrawn August 2007. Hearing date for other not yet announced. | High | N/A | N/A | N/A | April 2006 (Formal Publication Undeterminable) |
| Statement of Community Involvement | Will set out how the community will be consulted on all LDD's and on major development control matters | With The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) Regulations 2004 | District | To be prepared as special non-DPD – subject to independent examination | High | Nov/Dec 2005 | Apr/June 2006 | Oct 2006 | July 2007 |
| Core Strategy DPD | Will set out the vision and objectives for future development to 2016 Will identify the role of settlements, indicate broad locations of development and address issues of focussed growth, regeneration. Will also set out key policies for housing and employment and | In general conformity with RSS and saved structure plan. All other LDD's to be in conformity with Core Strategy | District | To be prepared as DPD | High | June 2007/Feb 2008 | Sept/Nov 2008 | June 2009 | Oct 2010 |

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|---|--|---|--------------------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| | Development Management policies. | | | | | | | | |
| Yeovil Town Centre Area Action Plan DPD | Will implement the vision for the Town Centre as set out in the Core Strategy. Will include site allocations and policies to guide development. | In general conformity with RSS and emerging RSS. Also Core Strategy | Yeovil Town Centre | To be prepared as DPD | High | Feb 2008/July 2008 | Feb/Apr 2009 | Nov 2009 | Feb 2011 |

Local Development Document Profile

Overview

Title of Document:

Subject:

Core Strategy DPD

This strategic document will set out the Council's vision and spatial strategy for South Somerset and the policies for achieving them for the period up to 2026. It will indicate how many dwellings, including affordable dwellings, will be built to meet the requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy and will cover, at strategic level, the need to ensure that development is accompanied by community infrastructure and facility provision. It will include a key diagram to show broad locations to meet specific requirements relating to employment land provision and protection, town centres, key transportation elements and the provision of services.

It will include core development management policies. These will be prepared through close working with the other Somerset district councils but adopted locally.

Geographical coverage:

District-wide

Status:

Development Plan Document

Conformity:

General conformity with existing Regional Planning Guidance (RPG10), having regard to the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, and the Structure Plan until at least September 2007 ("saved" period). General conformity with the South Somerset Community Strategy and the Council's Housing Strategy.

Joint Working with other LPA's:

On Development Management policies (at pre-production stage) on Issues & Options Report to inform Core Strategy Issues & Options Report.

Timetable

Preparation of Evidence Base:

April 2007 to June 2007

Early stakeholder & community engagement, and consultation on issues & options:

June 2007 to February 2008

Consultation on preferred options and proposals:

September 2008 to November 2008

Date for submission to Secretary of State

June 2009

Pre-examination meeting

November 2009

Examination:

January to February 2010

Estimated date for adoption:

October 2010

Arrangements for Production

Organisational Lead

Political Management

Planning Policy Team Leader

District Executive informed by Economy, Planning & Transport Panel
Full Council resolution required for submission and adoption stages.

Internal Resources

External Planning Consultants;
Council's Planning Policy Team and GIS technical support as necessary for key diagram;
Council's Leisure & Culture Group to assist in open space audit (PPG17);
Council's Landscape Architect to provide Landscape Character Assessments for district's Towns and Rural Centres;
Area Development Managers to advise/assist on engagement with community and stakeholders.

External Resources

Consultants to provide

- Housing needs assessment;
- Environmental Consultants to undertake Appropriate Assessments;
- Employment review;
- South Somerset Homes to assist in identification/audit of housing land ownership/availability;
- Somerset County Council undertaking review and updating where necessary of Town Transport Strategies incorporated within LTP2;
- Environment Agency and/or Environmental consultants to undertake SFRA of district;
- Consultants to validate/assist with ongoing SA/SEA work and assist with Examination programming.

Stakeholder Resources

Local Strategic Partnership (South Somerset Together) to provide key link to community planning consultation processes

Representatives of stakeholder groups to attend meetings and focus groups
Development industry expertise

Community and Stakeholder Involvement

As set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, adopted 19th July 2007.

Post-Production Arrangements

Monitoring:

Annual monitoring and review as necessary;

Arrangements:

Monitoring of key targets such as housing and affordable housing delivery using indicators developed in partnership with Registered Social Landlords. Reported in the Annual Monitoring Report.

Local Development Document Profile

Overview

Title of Document:

Subject:

Yeovil Town Centre Area Action Plan DPD

Area Action Plan to deliver regeneration and development proposals as part of the Council's vision for Yeovil Town Centre. It will allocate specific development sites and include proposals for shops and services, transport, community uses and housing. It will also provide policy and design guidance for planning proposals.

Geographical coverage:

Yeovil Town Centre and contiguous land where issue/Proposal directly affects it.

Status:

Development Plan Document

Conformity:

With existing and emerging RSS and the emerging Core Strategy.
Delivery mechanism for Yeovil Vision and Urban Development Framework

Joint Working with other LPA's:

None

Timetable

Preparation of Evidence Base:

October 2007 to February 2008

Early stakeholder & community engagement, and consultation on issues & options:

February 2008 to July 2008

Consultation on preferred options and proposals:

February 2009 to April 2009

Date for submission to Secretary of State

November 2009

Pre-examination meeting

April 2010

Examination:

June to July 2010

Estimated date for adoption:

February 2011

Arrangements for Production

Organisational Lead

Planning Policy Team Leader

Political Management

Involvement of Yeovil Vision Delivery Team;
District Executive informed by Area South Committee.
Full Council resolution required for submission and adoption stages.

Internal Resources

Planning Policy Team;
Area South Development Team;
Conservation & Environment Team;
Economic Development;
Strategic Housing;
Sports, Arts & Leisure Service.

External Resources

Somerset County Transport Authority;
Dorset County Transport Authority
Yeovil Delivery Team;
Consultants providing various studies identified in Core Strategy above.

Stakeholder Resources

Yeovil Vision Delivery Team

Community and Stakeholder Involvement

As set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, (adopted 19th July 2007), including early stakeholder and community engagement building on work undertaken through Yeovil Vision and Yeovil UDF;
Consultants involved with work of Yeovil Vision Group.

Post-Production Arrangements

Monitoring:

Annual monitoring and review as necessary.

Local Development Document Profile

Overview

Title of Document:

Subject:

Geographical coverage:

Status:

Conformity:

Statement of Community Involvement

The document sets out when and how the Council will involve the community and stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all LDD's and significant development management decisions.

District-wide, and will involve organisations outside the District.

Special (Non-Development Plan) LDD

Meets/exceeds the minimum requirements in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

Timetable

Estimated date for adoption:

July 2007 (earliest available Full Council meeting preceded by District Executive after receipt of Inspector's Report in March 2007)

Review:

Annual monitoring and review as necessary;

Arrangements for Production

Organisational Lead

Planning Policy Team Leader

Political Management

District Executive informed by Portfolio Holder Briefing. Full Council informed by District Executive for adoption stage.

Internal Resources

Council's Planning Policy Team;
Development Control Team;
Area Development Managers.

External Resources

N/A

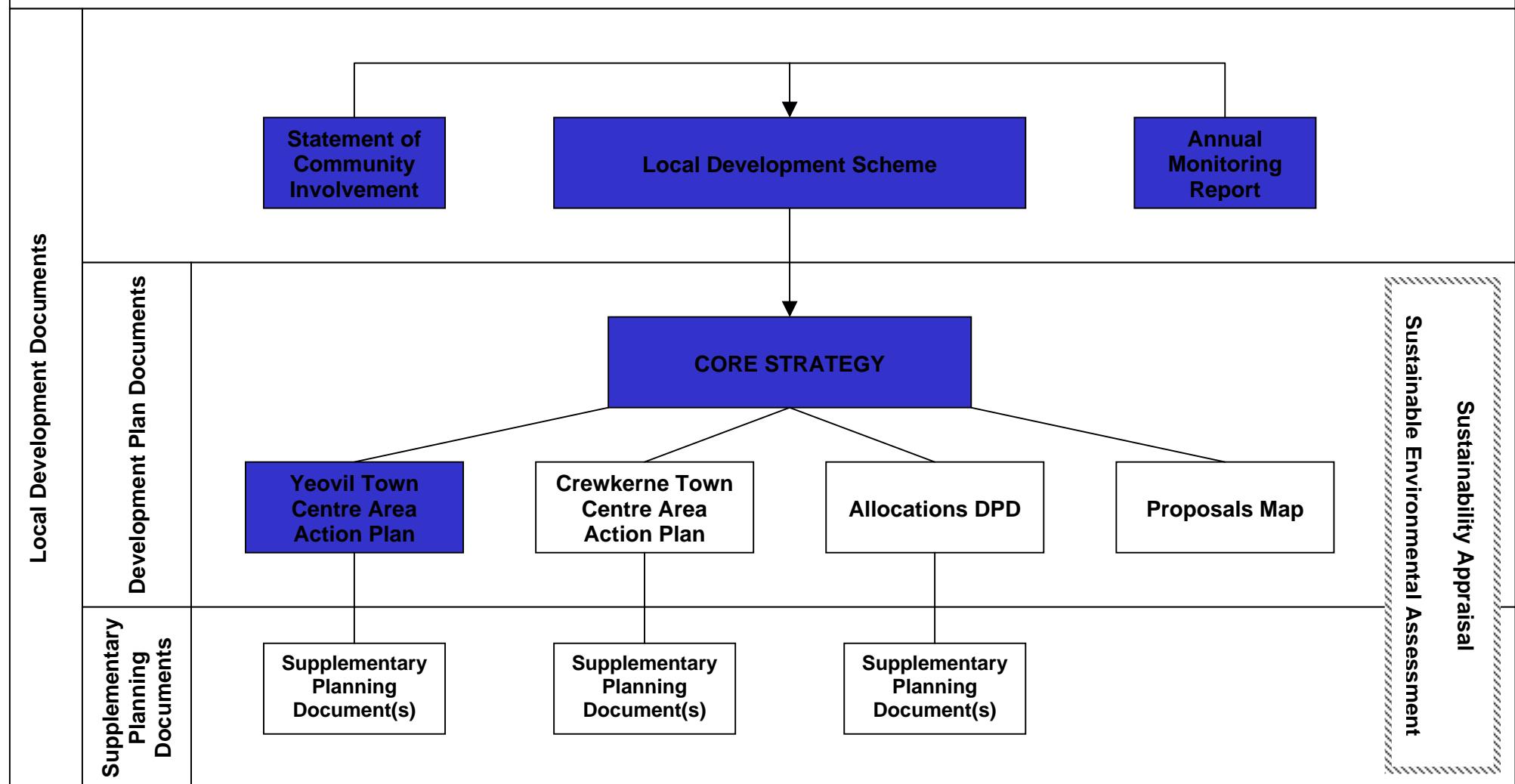
Stakeholder Resources

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to provide key link to community planning consultation processes.

Community and Stakeholder Involvement

Already undertaken.

Figure 1 – SOUTH SOMERSET LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



Key: = LDD's being prepared as part of LDS April 2007 – March 2010

5. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Annual Monitoring Report

- 5.1 The Council is required to make an annual report, covering the period from 1st April to 31st March, to the Secretary of State (through GOSW) on:
 - The implementation of the LDS, and
 - The extent to which the policies set out in the LDD's are being achieved.
- 5.2 The Annual Monitoring Report will:
 - Set out whether the Council is meeting, or on track to meet the timescales and milestones set out in the LDS and, if not, the reasons for this;
 - Provide information on the extent to which policies set out in the LDD's are being achieved, and therefore how effective they are in meeting the policies set out in the Core Strategy (when prepared) and Local Plan;
 - Consider whether any LDD's need to be reviewed urgently due to new policy, guidance, information or evidence at the national, regional and local level;
 - Consider whether additional LDD's need to be prepared;
 - Include the preparation of a trajectory of forecast future housing supply against strategic housing requirements.
- 5.3 The latest AMR was submitted in December 2006, which identified the need to make changes to the LDS (December 2006). These have been incorporated in this revised LDS.

Programme Management for Preparation

- 5.4 Table 2 provides an overview of the timetable and project management for preparing the new Local Development Documents.

Table 2 - Programme of LDD Preparation, April 2007 - March 2010 (2011)

Legend - Stages in LDD Preparation

| Development Plan Documents (DPD's) | | Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1 | Completion of pre-production/survey phase | A | Scoping - issues and potential stakeholders |
| 2 | Issues and options development, including early stakeholder & community engagement | B | Develop SCI, including early stakeholder and community engagement |
| 3 | Develop Preferred Options Report and Final Sustainability Report | C | Draft SCI |
| 4 | Pre-submission consultation on Preferred Options and Sustainability Reports | D | Pre-submission consultation on Draft SCI |
| 5 | Consider representations | E | Consider representations |
| 6 | Prepare Final Development Plan Document | F | Prepare Final SCI |
| 7 | Submission of DPD and Final Sustainability Report to Secretary of State | G | Submission of SCI to Secretary of State |
| 8 | Public Consultation on submission DPD | H | Public Consultation on submission SCI |
| 8a | Public Consultation on objection sites | I | Pre-examination consideration of representations and prepare for Examination |
| 9 | Pre-examination consideration of representations and prepare for Examination | Ia | Pre-examination meeting |
| 9a | Pre-examination meeting | J | Examination |
| 10 | Examination | K | Await Inspector's Report |
| 11 | Await Inspector's Report | L | Receipt of Inspector's binding Report |
| 12 | Receipt of Inspector's binding Report | M | Incorporate changes and prepare for adoption |
| 13 | Incorporate changes and prepare for adoption | N | Estimated date of adoption |
| 14 | Estimated date of adoption | | |

| Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| i | Evidence gathering, analysis and preparation of AMR (incorporating review of LDS) |
| ii | Submission of AMR to Secretary of State |
| iii | Potential revision of LDS concurrent with i above. |
| iv | Potential Submission of Revised LDS to Secretary of State |

Evidence Base

- 5.5 There are a number of documents and studies, including some in the course of being prepared, that the Council will use as an evidence base to inform the preparation of its Local Development Documents including:
- Housing Needs Survey ("Fordham's Survey"), 2000 (updated 2002);
 - Urban Housing Potential Study (December 2006);
 - Strategic Housing Market Assessment ("Ark Report"), January 2006 & associated on-going monitoring and updating;
 - Annual land availability monitoring – residential, employment land, and town centres and shopping.
 - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (to be completed late 2007);
 - Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (to be completed late 2007);
 - Economic Strategy (to be completed Autumn 2007);
 - Workspace Demand Study (to be completed July 2007);
 - South Somerset Retail Study, January 2006;
 - Functional Analysis of Settlements Final Report, April 2005, by Roger Tym & Partners for South West Regional Assembly;
 - South Somerset form and functional analysis of settlements (to be completed late 2007);
 - South Somerset Young People Strategy 2006 – 2012;
 - Audit of Sport & Recreation Built Facilities (to be completed Autumn 2007);
 - Audit of Open Space Provision (to be completed early 2008);
 - Landscape character assessments of Towns & Rural Centres (to be completed early 2008);
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (to be completed early 2008);
 - District-wide Car Parking Strategy (February 2007);

Protocol For Reviewing The Local Development Scheme

- 5.6 The Annual Monitoring Report may show that there is a need to revise the LDS. It is also possible that unforeseen exceptional issues may arise that require the inclusion of a further LDD, for example, a Supplementary Planning Document such as a development brief for a significant windfall site.
- 5.7 In these circumstances, the Council will contact GOSW and other stakeholders to explain the need to revise the LDS. If the revision is requested because of the urgent need to prepare an additional LDD the Council could start the early stages of evidence gathering and community engagement in accordance with the SCI (or prior to its adoption, minimum standards set out in the Regulations). The Council would then be ready to move on to consulting on issues and options once the revised LDS is formally agreed.

Resources

- 5.8 The Planning Policy Team comprises a Team Leader with managerial/leadership responsibilities, 3 full time equivalent (FTE) planning officer posts and 1 full time

equivalent (FTE) planning assistant post. These posts are complemented by monitoring/appraisal, technical, transport, climate change, clerical, and graphics support officers. However, the Team has other responsibilities in addition to the preparation of the Local Development Framework, including:

- Completion of the South Somerset Local Plan;
- Implementation of the South Somerset Local Plan, particularly the Key Site development proposals;
- Contributing to the preparation and review of the Somerset Local Transport Plan
- Contributing to corporate projects within the Council, such as affordable housing, Yeovil Sports Zone, implementation of e-government initiatives, and
- Contributing to the overall planning service of the Council, including responding to planning application consultations, providing a monitoring service and responding to national and local initiatives.

5.9 To ensure the delivery of the documents outlined in this LDS, the Council will be using some of this year's Planning Delivery Grant, savings from a vacant Planning officer post last financial year, to fund consultants, which are expected to continue to be made in part throughout this financial year. In addition the Planning Policy Team will call upon the expertise of the Local Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator to assist with close liaison with the LSP and South Somerset Community Strategy.

5.10 The amount of time that each officer will give to the preparation of the Local Development Framework is as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Planning Policy Team Leader | 40% |
| Career Grade Policy Planner | 80% |
| Career Grade Policy Planner | 50% |
| Career Grade Policy Planner | 50% |
| Planning Policy Assistant | 50% |
| Graphics Assistant | 50% |
| Information Assistant | 50% |

5.11 In addition, for the preparation of specific LDD's, the Council will call upon the expertise of appropriate members of staff. These will include the Head of Economy, Planning & Transport Service, the Head of Development Control Service, The Conservation & Environment Team, the Area Development Managers and the Strategic Housing Manager.

5.12 Consultants will be engaged where there is a lack of expertise or capacity in house, with resources set aside from the Planning Delivery Grant. The Council will engage consultants on the following tasks:

- The Core Strategy Issues & Options development and early stakeholder & community engagement;
- Audit of Open Space Provision;
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment; and
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

- 5.12 The lengths of some of the stages of the LDD's' production, particularly during the anticipated most intensive period between June 2009 and July 2010, reflect the Council's resource capacity.
- 5.13 Future resource requirements will be identified through annual monitoring and the identification of any further work needed to be undertaken either in-house or externally through consultants and the budget process.
- 5.14 The Council will also work with other Somerset Local Planning Authorities. In particular, the Development Management policies will continue to be prepared jointly but adopted by each authority.

Risk Assessment

- 5.15 In preparing the Local Development Scheme, the Council has identified the main areas of risk as follows:

- **The Introduction of the New Development Plans System**

Any change to a system, particularly when the old system continues for a period under transitional arrangements, introduces scope for unanticipated problems to arise, the likelihood of which will diminish over time as experience is gained. Nevertheless, as South Somerset District Council has only recently adopted its Local Plan under the old system and embarked upon the replacement LDF process in earnest, it has less experience of the complexities and potential pitfalls of the new system. To minimise these risks, the Council continues to engage fully with the Government Office, Planning Advisory Service, RTPI and Somerset LDF Working Group to gain advice/guidance and learn from and impart emerging good practice via websites, meetings and conference/training events.

- **Staff Retention & Recruitment**

Potential further staff turnover and difficulties in replacing staff, based on on-going experiences of a weak experienced labour market could potentially impact of the programme. The risk of staff turnover is likely to be reduced by the continuation of measures identified as part of team management and the increasing movement towards cross-service working already commenced. The provision of satisfying work, a supportive environment and opportunities for personal development further reduce this risk.

The recent difficulties in the development control service, which have impacted on plan preparation due to increased resource diversion to support/advise Development Control officers in respect of planning policies are being addressed by an improvement plan. The development control service has been restructured to address performance and to recruit staff to full complement. Improvements since early 2006 continue to be made.

Joint working with other Local Planning Authorities and the County Council also provides the capacity to spread the workload if necessary as well as maintaining good working relationships.

- **Council Procedures**

The greater the number of internal steps that have to be taken to achieve a decision, the greater the risk of slippage through these steps. The Council has sought to achieve the right balance to ensure that necessary member and officer involvement is achieved without placing an unnecessary burden on the production of the Local Development Documents.

Corporate restructuring, introduced in April 2006 is due to result in an accommodation move in April 2007 for the Planning Policy Team. If this goes ahead, it will be managed so as to minimise disruption to plan making.

Job evaluation was undertaken in late 2006 and affected all staff. This process has yielded significant anomalies within the services that cover Planning Policy, Development Control, Economic Development and Conservation & Environment. These anomalies are being addressed by undertaking further "Moderation" of the large majority of all posts. This process will require some diversion of staff time, particularly of line managers including the Planning Policy Team Leader, in order to check and agree draft Moderation submissions. This has been taken into account in the revised programme.

- **Capacity of the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and other agencies to cope with demand nationwide**

This is beyond the Council's control, but such bodies/agencies will be given early warning of the Council's programme and will be kept informed of revisions to it.

- **Soundness of DPD's**

Risk will be minimised by robust front-loading and preparation of Issues & Options and Preferred Options documents, continued close engagement with GOSW and other agencies at all stages and prior to the submission of DPD's, and by building the checklist of principles for developing a sound plan into its quality management process. It is acknowledged that there is a degree of risk in submitting the Yeovil Town Centre Area Action Plan prior to receiving confirmation of the Core Strategy's "soundness". However, in light of the above risk management measures, it is considered that the strong benefits of progressing the Yeovil Town Centre Area Action Plan rather than delay its submission by almost a year outweigh the anticipated level of risk. Additionally, the above risk management measures should minimize the necessary scope and extent of the Examinations and consequently the Planning Inspectorate's writing up time.

- **Legal Challenge**

The council will seek to minimise this risk by ensuring that DPD's are sound, founded on a robust evidence base and a good standard of stakeholder and community engagement.

- **Programme Slippage**

The Council has had regard to experience since the first LDS and the realisation that the programme was too optimistic and has sought to minimise the risk of slippage in the revised programme by ensuring that this LDS is more realistic and that project management methods will be employed for the production of individual LDD's.

- **Delay in completion of the South Somerset Local Plan (SSLP)**

At the time of adoption of the SSLP, two Legal Challenges were lodged, the potential success of which could have significant implications for the content and consequent amendment of the Local Plan. In August 2007, one of these Legal Challenges was formally withdrawn. The other remains with the High Court for consideration and a date when it will be heard has not yet been announced. Any requirement to amend the Local Plan would necessitate the diversion of Planning Policy resource. The extent and duration of that resource diversion could cause slippage within the LDS programme. The potential success of the remaining legal challenge would be unlikely to affect most of the plan, and so this lower level of risk has been taken into account in the revised programme.

- **Regional Spatial Strategy Preparation**

Contribution to RSS preparation in 2005/6 required much greater staff time and effort than anticipated. The revised programme reflects the potential need for further involvement by the Head of Service, who will be taking over lead-responsibility for

SOUTH SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2007 - 2010

RSS matters for the District Council, supported by the Planning Policy Team in response to the EiP Inspector's Binding Report expected in Autumn 2007.