

South Somerset's settlement hierarchy workshop discussion paper March 2011 – REPORT 5 Review of Castle Cary / Ansford status as a Market Town

The Settlement Role and Function study recommended that Castle Cary / Ansford should be considered a Market Town, based upon the criteria set out in Development Policy B of the RSS Proposed Changes.

Through early discussions with representatives from Castle Cary Town Council & Ansford Parish Council at SSDC run cluster workshops concerns were raised regarding the settlement status of the town.

Ward Members formally requested in July 2010 that Castle Cary should be allocated additional employment land. They argued that the existing employment allocation at Torbay Road had been developed at a lower density than had previously been expected and to make up for this lack of additional jobs for the town a further allocation was felt necessary. Policy Officers proposed an additional 3ha of employment land would be commensurate with the scale of the town.

The Draft Core Strategy confirmed Castle Cary/Ansford Market Town status because of its good retail, employment and service provision.

Summary of issues

There were few comments specifically relating to the status of Castle Cary / Ansford in the settlement hierarchy – the following bullet points highlight the key issues raised during the Core Strategy consultation period:

- Castle Cary / Ansford should be categorised as a 'C' settlement rather than a 'B' settlement as the town has less in common with larger towns such as Wincanton a 'B' but have far more in common with settlements such as Bruton a 'C'.
- Castle Cary is classified as a Market town by Royal Charter and has a Market Place and Market House.
- Castle Cary/Ansford is identified in the South Somerset Role and Function Study (April 2009) as performing an employment function and a retail and community role for the town and surrounding area. In this connection, Castle Cary/Ansford is identified as a Market Town in the Core Strategy, such a designation enabling the settlement to grow and expand its identified role.

Response to issues

The Baker Associates Settlement Role and Function Study (April 2009) illustrates that Castle Cary/ Ansford meets all of the criteria set out in development policy B of the Draft RSS. It displays a strong employment role relative to other settlements and acts as a service centre for those settlements surrounding it (benefiting from a range of strategic and non-strategic education, health, retail, financial, leisure and community facilities and services) and has sustainable travel opportunities.

No new evidence has been submitted that challenges this existing position.

Recommendation

It is the Officers recommend that for Castle Cary / Ansford to continue to maintain its strong retail offer and its employment role the town should be classified as a Market Town as set out in Policy 'B' of the RSS Proposed Changes. The towns employment role is also strengthened by Councillor aspirations to expand the towns employment function, so as too maintain the settlements function. This would provide the town with the best opportunity to maintain its strategic role in the East of the District.