

**REPORT 15 South Somerset's scale of growth workshop discussion paper  
6 April 2011 – Consideration of the scale of growth for Bruton**

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## **Introduction**

This paper examines the potential scale of growth that might be delivered through the Draft Core Strategy at Bruton in the light of issues raised by respondents. There are two responses in support of the scale of growth proposed at Bruton. Issues arising from the three objections are set out and considered below.

### **Issues:**

#### **Housing**

- 2,700 dwellings should be distributed throughout the Rural Centres as a proportion to existing population, to ensure balanced growth 404 dwellings should be directed towards Bruton<sup>1</sup>
- Concerned about additional residential development given the lack of community infrastructure (education, leisure, banking, youth facilities) - without addressing this, the community will become less sustainable.
- Further development in Bruton needs to address road, pavement and parking issues firstly.

#### **Employment**

- Is 1 ha of employment land sufficient for Bruton, and can this be delivered through the development management process?

### **Response:**

#### **Housing**

The Draft Core Strategy defines Bruton as a Rural Centre. It identifies that 97 dwellings were committed<sup>2</sup> in the settlement (as at Autumn 2009) with 120 additional dwellings to be built giving a total housing provision of 217 dwellings.

The latest housing supply position in Bruton is set out in the recent Annual Monitoring Report (2009-2010) and shows a total of 110 dwellings are either built, under construction, have planning permission or are allocated.

The Settlement Role and Function Study<sup>3</sup> provides evidence of the need for the scale of growth identified in the draft Core Strategy. Population projections identify that over the plan period there will be a reduction in household size, from 2.36 persons per household to 2.12 persons. Based on the 2001 Census population for Bruton (2950 population), if there were no additional dwellings built in the town, there was no migration and household reduction occurred as projected (i.e. reduced from 2.36 to 2.12) Bruton's population would decline by 300 people to 2026. This could negatively impact on the provision of shops and community facilities. On this basis around 142 houses would be required to maintain Bruton's current population alone.

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<sup>1</sup> 404 additional dwellings would equate to a 29% increase in population (856 persons - based on average 2.12 persons per household). Draft Core Strategy proposed growth equates to 15.5% increase in population (460 persons), based on 2001 census.

<sup>2</sup> Includes completions 06/10, under construction, commitments not started, and allocated without permission.

<sup>3</sup> South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study Final Report April 2009, Baker Associates

The Parish Council sought approximately 200 dwellings for the settlement through the Parish Cluster Workshops, and wanted growth to be attributed to Bruton.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will assess what infrastructure improvements would be required by the proposed level of growth. Despite concerns regarding highways Somerset County Council, as the Highway Authority has not objected the proposal. Highways impact will be considered as part of any planning application that might be received in the future.

It is considered that the scale of residential growth in Bruton coupled with balanced employment growth will contribute towards creating a more sustainable and self-contained settlement.

**Recommendation:**

No change in approach.

**Employment**

The South Somerset Employment Land Review Stage 3, identified that Bruton required 1.17 hectares of employment land to meet the economically active population that would be generated from 217 dwellings. In light of the recommendation to increase the scale of growth to 259 dwellings, it is also suggested that the employment land be increased 1.5 hectares.<sup>4</sup>

Concern has been expressed regarding the delivery of employment land through the Development Management process. It is intended that mixed use developments will be encouraged in Rural Centres therefore both housing and employment growth will be delivered in tandem. It is accepted that it is a risk to rely on this approach, particularly given that profits from housing development are higher and therefore more attractive to developers. One possible approach could be that text is added to the Core Strategy clearly setting out this expectation, alternatively a commitment to the production of an employment allocation Development Plan Document could be considered.

**Recommendation:**

Consider inserting additional text to the Core Strategy clearly setting out an expectation that mixed-use development will come forward in Rural Centres. Or consider a District wide employment allocation Development Plan Document.

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<sup>4</sup> 259 dwellings requires 1.39 hectares of employment land.