

**REPORT 17 South Somerset's scale of growth workshop discussion paper
March 29 March 2011 – Consideration of the scale of growth for Martock**

Introduction

This paper examines the potential scale of growth that might be delivered through the Draft Core Strategy at Martock in the light of issues raised by respondents. 2 responses in support of the scale of growth proposed at Martock were received (including Martock Parish Council). Issues arising from 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. 634 dwelling should be directed towards Martock.
- Object to additional 150 dwellings there is no evidence that the requirements of Policy SS1 would be met and that it would not constitute out commuting
- Any additional development of Martock should examine the case for the provision of an additional, larger foodstuff shopping outlet.

Employment

- Object to the Parish Council's comment that 1ha of additional land is in the best interest of Martock.
- Object that providing more employment opportunities in Martock could potentially reduce the level of out commuting
- More should be done to ensure the current supply of employment land is fully utilised

Response:

Housing

The Draft Core Strategy defines Martock as a Rural Centre. It identifies that 96 dwellings were committed¹ in the settlement (as at Autumn 2009) with 150 additional dwellings to be built giving a total housing provision of 246 dwellings. The Annual Monitoring Report 2009-2010 shows that as at April 2010, 102 dwellings are now committed.

The 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) confirms that there is sufficient suitable, available and viable land to accommodate the proposed additional 150 dwellings. The Peripheral Landscape Study for Martock (2008) supports this proposed level of growth by identifying that there is scope within the landscape around Martock to accommodate within the region of 475 new homes.

Respondents have suggested that development be spread more evenly throughout the district and that around 634 dwellings should be accommodated in Martock. There are 102 dwellings currently committed in Martock this level of growth would result in an additional 532 dwellings being accommodated within the settlement, a 158% increase on what is currently proposed.

¹ Includes completions 06/10, under construction, commitments not started, and allocated without permission.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will assess what infrastructure improvements would be required by the proposed level of growth. Highways impact will be considered as part of any planning application that might be received in the future.

Concerns have been raised that the proposed additional growth would not support local services and have already resulted in the loss of some services, which are being converted to housing. Also the provision of an additional 150 dwellings would not reduce out commuting. Any application for a change of use would be considered on its merits and if consent has been given to allow the change of use and loss of local facilities, it would suggest that the facilities were not economically viable. Increase dwelling provision and associated population could potentially widen the economic base to support these facilities.

Growth in the region of 150 dwellings was supported and promoted by the Parish Council through the Parish Cluster Workshops and can be accommodated without causing harm to the landscape.

It is considered that this level of housing growth coupled with the proposed employment growth will contribute towards creating a more sustainable and self-contained settlement.

Recommendation:

No change in approach. Amend the total housing provision for Martock to 275 (rounded) dwellings to reflect the incremental change arising from the extension of the plan period to 2028.

Employment

Redevelopment of sites such as Paulls Court have resulted in a loss of employment land. If housing development is to continue at the same average yearly rate, additional opportunities should be created to encourage greater self-containment. This has been supported by the Parish Council.

Respondents have challenged the premise that providing additional employment could potentially reduce the level of out commuting. Whilst this may be true, if employment opportunities are not provided locally the level of choice is removed from any element of the population who may not wish to travel longer distances to go to work.

It is suggested that employment land Local Plan Allocations and existing Industrial Parks should be fully utilised before further employment land is proposed. Planning policy tries to promote, facilitate and encourage development that is considered appropriate. However unless the Council has control of the land, market forces control development. Within the context of the Core Strategy, planning applications for employment development could supersede allocations that have failed to come forward.

Recommendation:

No change