

**REPORT 19 South Somerset's scale of growth workshop discussion paper
March 29 2011 – Consideration of the scale of growth for Stoke sub Hamdon**

Introduction

This paper examines the potential scale of growth that might be delivered through the Draft Core Strategy at Stoke sub Hamdon in the light of issues raised by respondents. A number of comments relating to the scale of growth were received and issues arising from these comments are set out and considered below.

Issues:

Housing

- Over development is a cause for concern in Stoke sub Hamdon Village Plan.
- Recent loss of facilities, including Post Office (now re-open) and regular bus service.
- Need to protect agricultural land around village.
- Village has absorbed 70 new dwellings in last 10 years so another 50 in 16 years should not be a problem.
- 55 new homes over 20 years is not realistic for the projected population growth. Housing requirement for Stoke sub Hamdon should be increased.
- Need for affordable housing for both first time buyers and the elderly who wish to downsize, but remain in the village

Employment

- Additional employment opportunities must be developed together with new housing.

Response:

Housing

The Draft Core Strategy defines Stoke sub Hamdon as a Rural Centre. It identifies that 5 dwellings were committed¹ in the settlement (as at Autumn 2009) with 50 additional dwellings to be built giving a total housing provision of 55 dwellings. The Annual Monitoring Report 2009-2010 shows that as at April 2010, 6 dwellings are now committed.

The 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) confirms that there is only suitable, available and viable land to accommodate 2 dwellings. However, there are a number of publically owned sites identified as part of a Countywide search for affordable housing land which are also considered suitable for housing development.

The Peripheral Landscape Study for Stoke sub Hamdon (2010) identifies that there is scope within the landscape around Stoke sub Hamdon to accommodate a minimum of 10.00ha of residential development and up to 2.9ha for employment use.

Stoke sub Hamdon is constrained by the existing road through the village and by the need to protect the historic core of the settlement. A further 49 dwellings are therefore proposed, with 6 already committed, to meet specific housing needs and to enable the village to maintain its' identified community role. It is considered that this modest level of housing growth coupled with the proposed employment growth will contribute towards creating a more sustainable and self-contained settlement.

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

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will assess what infrastructure improvements would be required by the proposed level of growth. It is possible that identified improvements could allow a higher level of development than that currently proposed and it is clear from the Peripheral Landscape Study that there is potentially sufficient land for housing to satisfy the future projected population. Retaining Stoke sub Hamdon as a Rural Centre would enable the settlement to take advantage of available land to satisfy future potential housing needs and to help support and maintain existing community facilities.

Recommendation:

No change in approach.

Employment

Policy SS5 identifies a combined jobs figure for the Rural Centres based on official labour market statistics from Nomis (part of the Office for National Statistics (ONS)). To identify land requirements for B-uses for these settlements, a minimum viability site size has been identified in consultation with Economic Development Officers, which will give scope for development to kick start employment growth. In the Rural Centres the minimum site size is considered to be 2 hectares.

It is therefore proposed that 2ha of new employment land should be delivered in Stoke sub Hamdon to improve self-containment and to cater for the additional proposed housing growth of 55 dwellings. It is intended that mixed use developments will be encouraged in Rural Centres so both housing and employment growth will be delivered. 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, or alternatively, a commitment to the production of an employment allocation Development Plan Document could be considered.

Recommendation:

Increase provision of employment land. Consider inserting additional text in 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.