

## **LDF PMB and Officer Group**

### **Core Strategy Workshop 1**

#### **Settlement Hierarchy and Scale of Growth**

##### **1. Review of Market towns**

Issues raised in consultation– see market towns reports numbers 1-5 (1=Review of role of Chard, Wincanton and Milborne Port; 2 = Review of role of Crewkerne, Ilminster, Bruton and Ilchester; 3 = Langport Rural Centre Status report; 4 = Somerton Market town status discussion report; 5 = Review of role of Castle Cary/Ansford)

Recommendations – No change to Market town status of all the proposed market towns (Castle Cary/Ansford, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Wincanton and Somerton). Change Langport and Huish's status from Rural Centre to Market town.

Reasons – No substantive reasons given for change and general support for market town status for the draft designations except Castle Cary/Ansford and Somerton. Here the main points raised against their proposed status were lack of jobs, lack of strategic facilities eg secondary schools (Somerton) and large supermarkets (both) and lack of sufficient sustainable public transport.

It is not felt that these criticisms for Castle Cary/Ansford and Somerton are robust when taken in the round with all the facilities and criteria in which these towns scored to justify market town status in the original Baker report on settlement role and function hence there is no clear evidence given for demotion relating to its status. Main concern for Somerton appears more to be the scale of growth.

There is some support for higher status for Langport including job provision and more strategic facility availability although the town council is content with its draft rural centre status. Review of evidence clearly shows that original Baker report recommendation for market town status can be substantiated. Langport has what Somerton has in terms of facilities and is close in terms of employment provision and crucially Langport has the higher level facilities (superstore and secondary school). Clear from SHLAA and recent discussions with agents that there are sites for development available away from flooding and other constraints (but closer to the town centre than the proposed growth option put forward for Somerton). Additional growth required to 2028 likely to require a lift in market town provision.

Other issues – there is no justification in terms of sustainability and support for Yeovil and our market towns for a new settlement.

Yeovil should be called a strategically significant town and market town and rural centre terminology should be retained despite some concern relating to potential confusion with titles. As long as the terms are defined within the Core Strategy then the terms seem perfectly clear and fit for the identified purpose

##### **2. Review of Rural Centres**

Issues raised in consultation– see rural centres reports numbers 1, 2, and 3

Recommendations- No change to draft rural centres designations (other than the suggested promotion of Langport.)

Reasons – No significant issues raised about designations and general support (more concern re scale of growth than with actual designations.)

### **3. Review of Policy SS2 (Development in Rural Settlements)/Rural Settlement tier of hierarchy/Development Areas and Infilling**

Issues raised in Consultation – see three reports on Responses to Policy SS2, Re – instigation of Settlement Limits and Upgrading of Settlements to Rural Centres.

Recommendations – 1. Retain policy SS2 but separate the exception site policy subsumed within it to become a separate policy again. 2. Recognise that settlements below rural centre are a tier of the settlement hierarchy in their own right to be called Rural settlements (to which SS2 Policy applies) 3. Recognise that policy SS2 will allow for infilling where justified in sustainability terms and cross subsidisation of affordable housing within Rural Settlements (and deliver a higher housing provision that previously considered – see below) 4. Do not re -instigate Development Areas 5. Do not add any rural settlements to Rural Centre status

Reasons – 1.No substantive argument requiring a change to policy SS2 but clearly some confusion in its wording in relation to exception sites that needs to be addressed. 2. and 3 Once it is accepted that cross subsidy can occur and that a higher provision figure should be put to SS2 settlements then the need for a new tier and for infilling policy become unnecessary. 4. Not necessary given a more liberal interpretation of policy SS2; not appropriate as a restraint on wider development management and not practical given the scale of work involved reviewing development areas and difficult to justify in a strategic document such as the Core Strategy. 5. No credible evidence of upgrading. Nearest case being Templecombe but previous Local Plan Inspector was dismissive of argument and whilst prospect of more jobs in the settlement in all other respects there are no enhancement of services and facilities since 2003 to justify upgrade. The vulnerability of Templecombe's job provision in that it is vested largely in 1 employer was also a relevant factor against.

### **4. District Wide Scale of growth -**

Issues raised in consultation – see Summary of Baker Associates report

Recommendation – Agree the recommendation of the Baker report on Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil that the overall District provision should be 16,000 dwellings to 2026 (see below for recommendation on proportion of growth allotted to Yeovil viz a viz the rest of the District)

Reasons – Bakers report provides strong evidence that population, household and economic growth projections point to 16,000 dwelling provision for the District to 2026. There is some recent evidence of tail off of population projections which if economic and demographic trends of recent times persist will indicate a lower provision of 12,200 dwellings. The facts however that the plan period covers to 2026 and allows time for the economy to gain a normal trajectory and that the higher projection will crucially enable

delivery of the South Somerset's full job potential point to adoption of the 16,000 figure

## 5. End date of Plan

Issues raised in consultation - not applicable

Recommendation – an end date of April 2028 be adopted and a consequent upgrade of the 16,000 dw District Wide Housing provision to 17,200 dw be adopted also

Reasons – The Government regulations require a 15 year time horizon for the Plan from the date of adoption. Date of adoption is likely in the second half of 2012. An April 2028 end date will allow for any unforeseen government induced delay and the requirement for an April start date for statistical reasons.

## 6. Appropriate growth for Yeovil, Market towns, Rural Centres and “Policy SS2” Rural Settlements”

Issues raised in consultation – see Yeovil, Market Town and Rural Centre growth reports numbers 6 Scale of Growth – Yeovil, 7 Scale of Growth –Chard, 8 Scale of Growth –Crewkerne, 9 Scale of Growth –Ilminster, 10 Scale of Growth –Wincanton, 11 Scale of Growth –Castle Cary/Ansford, 12 Scale of Growth – Somerton, 13 Scale of Growth – Langport, 15 Scale of Growth - Bruton, 16. Scale of Growth –Ilchester, 17. Scale of Growth –Martock 18 Scale of Growth –South Petherton 19Scale of Growth – Stoke Sub Hamdon

Recommendations 1. Yeovil to grow by 8,600 dw housing provision 2.No changes to scale of growth in most market towns and rural centres apart from 3 An extra 240 dwellings at Chard 4. Langport to have increased provision to reflect higher status proposal to 400 dw 5. Somerton and Castle Cary to have scale of growth pared back from 500 to 400 dwellings 6. Wincanton to receive less growth (less 350dwellings) and to have more permissive approach to employment provision 7. South Petherton to take more growth (100 dwellings) given a review of justification of need to restrain its development. 8. Provide for 2000 dw in the Policy “SS2 settlements” subject to policy addition seeking regular monitoring and restriction on cumulative total to stop excessive provision undermining the settlement strategy and hierarchy

The outcome of these changes is shown in appendix 1 which presents the draft Core Strategy housing provision by settlement and the proposed housing provision after the changes suggested above with brief comment.

Reasons 1. to provide for 50% job provision in Yeovil to maintain its economic health and prominence and to ensure that commuting movements into the town are not aggravated - location of growth to be dealt with in later workshop – delivery of this growth can be achieved beyond the 7, 300dw capacity indicated by Bakers report on Housing Requirement due to extra 2 years of growth (an extra 520 dwellings) and likelihood of a wider base to the urban extension so enabling better market perception and higher development (potentially an extra 1,440 dw over 12 years 2012 2028 as evidenced in the Baker report on Housing Provision). 2. Existing proposed scale of growth for the market town and rural centres meets the overall requirement for the Market towns and Rural Settlements after account made for increase in provision at Yeovil and Rural Settlements (to which Policy SS2 applies) 3. to acknowledge 2 more years growth of the Chard growth allocation running at 120 per annum 4. Langport's change of status requires enhanced

provision. Smaller size of settlement means that growth is more than rural centre but less than the larger market towns 5. Consideration of the scale of smaller settlements and changes to public bus provision point to a smaller provision in the three smallest market town settlements. The proximity of Langport to Somerton and Castle Cary/Ansford to Wincanton mean that when respective growth provisions are combined there is appropriate scale of growth for these settlements 6. to reflect scale of settlement allow assimilation of growth in the recent past and present and to have more permissive approach to employment provision reflecting considerable loss of employment provision in the past 7. notable body of objections seeking growth to sustain the settlement and evidence presented that road issue associated with access to A303 can be overcome. Difficult to sustain an argument for no development due to internal road constraints (and not consistent with element of growth allowed at Martock which is similarly constrained by internal road issues. Important to remove reference to internal road constrained limiting Stoke Sub Hamdon growth for similar consistency arguments – Stoke's more limited scale of growth reflects its scale and nature) 8. Clear evidence in SHLAA that there are lots of sites that could come forward in rural settlements – it is felt that SHLAA identification can negate the government regulations precluding windfall estimations in Plans which was the reason why increased provision beyond commitment was not included in draft– element of arbitrary assessment of the level of growth policy SS2 will encourage is inevitable hence requirement to monitor – need a restriction on total to ensure that excessive provision doesn't occur and undermine the settlement strategy and hierarchy. The evidence in the latest Annual Monitoring Report points to a very significant arrest in the provision of additional houses in the rural settlements so making a provision figure of 2,000 a more realistic one than would have been considered a year ago.

The determination of housing provision above has been made in the context of the cumulative total of overall provision as set out in appendix 1 (i.e. draft Policy SS4). The recommendations have been made ensuring that the cumulative total is not unduly out of scale with the proposed 17,200 dw District requirement to 2028 nor changing the essential relationship between Yeovil, Market towns, Rural centres and Rural Settlements that underpin the settlement hierarchy. The final provision figure is some 3% in excess of the requirement and is considered in the context of development uncertainties and overall scale of provision to be in broad agreement with the requirement. It is not necessary or appropriate to be unduly precise

NB 1. Whilst the figures in App 1 are precise to assist in mathematical accuracy the final figures should be rounded so as not to give an undue impression that growth provision is something more than general range indicators

2. Employment growth provision will be dealt with in a subsequent report

3. All scale of growth decisions to be provisional subject to Infrastructure Delivery Plan assessment of their practicality and cost.

## Policy SS4 Delivering New Housing Growth

## Appendix 1

Settlement	Current Draft	Suggested levels	Comment
Yeovil	8,200	8,600	Positive choice of growth Scale reflecting the town's economic growth potential trajectory shows this is possible
Chard	2191	2431	ditto
Crewkerne	1028	1028	ditto
Ilminster	531	531	ditto
Wincanton	1053	703	reduce to avoid excess provision And allow assimilation
Somerton	500	400	reduce to avoid excess provision And reflect town scale
CC and Ansford	500	400	reduce to avoid excess provision And reflect town scale
Langport	300	400	Increase to 400 to reflect market Town status
Bruton	217	217	retain scale in draft
Ilchester	151	151	ditto
Martock	246	246	ditto
Milborne Port	299	299	ditto
S Petherton	145	245	increase to enable some Appropriate scale growth
Stoke Sub Hamdon	55	55	retain scale in draft
Rural Settlements	1199	2,000	increase to provide scope for Policy SS2 to have an impact
Total	16,615	17,706	
Provision Needed (Draft Core Strategy and suggested revision totals)	16,600	17,200	