



NEWS from

South Somerset District Council

www.southsomerset.gov.uk

01935 462462

'Making a difference where it counts'

Release: Immediate

Date: 9 July 2013

South Somerset welcomes preliminary findings of the Local Plan Inspector

South Somerset District Council has received the letter setting out the Planning Inspector's Preliminary Findings from the Local Plan Examination in Public that was held in May and June of this year.

The Inspector's letter has not raised any fundamental concerns with the core elements of the plan which included the scale of housing growth – 15950 dwellings across a 22-year period - and its distribution across the towns and villages in South Somerset. Nor has he raised major concerns in relation to the Council's proposed Development Management policies, economic promotion, protection of town centres, affordable housing, sustainable transport, open space and environmental protection policies. He has also endorsed the broad principle of an Urban Extension for Yeovil.

Three areas of concern are raised by the Inspector:

- The Sustainability Appraisal for the Yeovil Growth options
- The Sustainability Appraisal and Direction of Growth for Ilminster
- The amount of land allocated for employment in the rural areas outside Yeovil

The Inspector has provided the Council with three options to consider:

- a. Proceed to a judgement on the Plan in its current form;
- b. Seek a suspension of the Examination to enable further work to be undertaken on the points of concern;
- c. To withdraw the Plan.

The Council is now considering the Inspector's preliminary findings with a view to requesting a six-month suspension of the Inquiry to enable the Council undertake the additional work necessary. A letter setting out the Council's proposed way forward will be sent to the Inspector by this coming Friday 12th July.

Councillor Ric Pallister, Leader of South Somerset District Council, said, "I am pleased that the majority of the Local Plan has been endorsed by the Inspector but accept that the justification for the proposed Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension, to the south of the town, requires additional work before the proposal can be properly evaluated as part of the Plan.

"The Inspector has also queried the amount of employment land in some of our settlements and this will be addressed. The Direction for Growth in Ilminster was always a finely balanced decision and on the back of the required changes to the Sustainability Appraisal undertaken, the Council fully understands the Inspector's recommendation that the proposed site at Shudrick Valley is less sustainable than the alternative at Canal Way."

He further commented "The Planning Inspector's preliminary findings clearly indicate that there is still work to be done before the Local Plan can be found totally sound and fit for



NEWS from

South Somerset District Council

www.southsomerset.gov.uk

01935 462462

'Making a difference where it counts'

purpose. We welcome the certainty that the report now gives to the overall numbers of new dwellings to be built across the district in the plan period and its distribution across the settlements in the District.

“We also welcome the assurance that the broad principle of a sustainable urban extension for Yeovil is sound. We fully accept that there are further areas of detailed work that must be addressed and that task now lies ahead of us. We will of course be re-consulting on any proposed changes to the Plan.”

ENDS

Notes for Editor

The Inspectors Letter and the Councils response can be found on the Local Plan Examination page of the Council's website.

For more information contact:

Ric Pallister, Leader of South Somerset District Council
Tel: 0770 8466722

Andy Foyne, Spatial Planning Manager (Economy)
Tel: 01935 462650

Issued by:

Martin Hacker, South Somerset District Council Communications Team
Tel: 01935 462130