



NEWS from

South Somerset District Council

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01935 462462

'Making a difference where it counts'

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South Somerset Proposed Local Plan Inspectors Preliminary Findings

South Somerset District Council has received the letter from the Planning Inspector highlighting the preliminary findings from the Local Plan Examination that was held in May and June of this year.

The Inspector's letter has not raised any fundamental concerns with the scale of growth set out in the Local Plan, together with the settlement strategy and distribution of growth, all of which are critically important elements of the Plan. The letter from the Inspector has also not 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.

Three areas of concern are raised by the Inspector:

- The Sustainability Appraisal for the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension
- The Sustainability Appraisal and Direction of Growth for Ilminster
- The amount of land for employment in Wincanton, the Local Market Towns and Rural Centres

The Inspector has asked the Council to consider the withdrawal of the Plan, or its suspension for further work and consultation to be undertaken on the points of concern as an alternative to withdrawal.

The Council is considering the Inspectors preliminary findings with a view to preparing a response to the letter setting out the Council's proposed way forward.

Councillor Ric Pallister, Leader of the Council, said,

"it is important for the Council to have an adopted Local Plan as soon as possible to ensure that the Council is able to effectively manage development in the District as well as allowing the development of a Community Infrastructure Levy. Much of the Local Plan has been endorsed by the Inspector but he has queried the methodology behind the proposed location of the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension, whilst accepting the need for a Sustainable Urban Extension to Yeovil. He has also queried the amount of employment land in some settlements. 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 understands the Inspectors recommendation that the proposed site at Shudrick Valley is less sustainable than the alternative at Canal Way put forward by objectors. South Somerset District Council is now considering the way forward and our response to the Inspector."

He went on "The Planning Inspector's preliminary findings clearly indicate that there is still work to be done before the Local Plan can be found sound and fit for purpose. We



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welcome the certainty that the report gives to the overall numbers of new dwellings to be built across the district in the plan period and to the distribution of that growth, in particular between Yeovil and the market towns. We also welcome the assurance that the broad principle of a sustainable urban extension for Yeovil is sound. We fully accept that there are shortcomings that must be addressed and that task now lies ahead of us"

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.

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