



# **South Somerset District Council Local Plan:**

## **Sustainability Appraisal Addendum Report**

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(with November 2014 update)**

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# South Somerset District Council Local Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Addendum Report

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# South Somerset District Council Local Plan: SA Addendum Report

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## 1.0 Introduction

### Purpose of this SA Addendum Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this Addendum Report is to detail the findings of the screening of the further Main Modifications (MMs) being proposed by the Council and their significance with regard to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). This Addendum Report builds on the previous SA work and should be read in conjunction with the Yeovil Strategic Growth Options SA Report (Oct 2013)<sup>1</sup>, Local Plan Proposed Modifications SA Report (Nov 2013)<sup>2</sup> and SA Addendum Report (March 2014)<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.2 This Addendum Report will accompany the further MMs on public consultation from 28 August to 10 October 2014.

### Background

- 1.3 South Somerset District Council (SSDC) has been undertaking Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) since 2009 to inform the preparation of the South Somerset Local Plan. The SA and Local Plan progress to date may be summarised as follows:

**Table 1.1: Local Plan and SA activities and published documents to date**

Local Plan Documents & Consultation	SA Documents & Consultation
Core Strategy Issues and Options (March 2008) Public consultation 7 March to 25 April 2008	SA Scoping Report Sent to statutory consultees and wider stakeholders 29 April to 03 June 2009
Area Based Workshops (Members, Town and Parish Councillors and other stakeholders) July 2009, Nov/Dec 2009, Jan 2010 & July 2010	SA Scoping Report (Sept 2009) incorporated changes as a result of consultation
Draft Core Strategy (incorporating Preferred Options) Public consultation 08 October to 03 December 2010	SA Report (Oct 2010) Public consultation 08 October to 03 December 2010
Proposed Submission Local Plan Public consultation 08 June to 10 August 2012	SA Report (June 2012) Public consultation 08 June to 10 August 2012
The Local Plan was Submitted to the Secretary of State on 21 January 2013	SA Addendum (Jan 2013) accompanied the Local Plan on Submission
Submission of Proposed Main	SA Addendum Report (March

<sup>1</sup> Core Document 161b: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2006-2028/submission-local-plan/statutory-documents/>

<sup>2</sup> Core Document 161c: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2006-2028/submission-local-plan/statutory-documents/>

<sup>3</sup> Core Document 161d: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2006-2028/submission-local-plan/statutory-documents/>

Modifications Submitted to the Secretary of State March 2014	2014) Submitted alongside the Proposed Main Modifications to the Secretary of State March 2014
Main Modifications Consultation Document (August 2014) Public consultation 28 August to 10 October 2014	SA Addendum Report (August 2014) Public consultation 28 August to 10 October 2014

- 1.4 The Proposed Submission Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 21 January 2013. As part of the Independent Examination of the Local Plan, a number of Hearing Sessions were held between 07 May and 18 June 2013. Based upon the conclusions reached during these Hearing Sessions and consideration of the evidence base to support the Local Plan, the Inspector issued a Preliminary Findings letter on 03 July 2013.
- 1.5 The Inspector's Preliminary Findings identified six issues of concern - three significant issues of concern relating to soundness, and three points of clarification. The Inspector concluded that further comprehensive work was required in order to enable the Local Plan to be found sound. Based upon these findings the Council requested a six-month suspension to the Independent Examination on 15 July 2013 in order to rectify the issues raised.
- 1.6 The additional work undertaken by the Council to address the Inspector's Preliminary Findings formed the basis for the Proposed Main Modifications (PMMs). This included a fresh and independent SA of reasonable alternatives for strategic growth in Yeovil and Ilminster as well as the screening of the PMMs. The findings of this work were presented in the Yeovil Strategic Growth Options SA Report (Oct 2013), Proposed Main Modifications SA Report (Nov 2013) and the updated Non-Technical Summary (November 2013). These documents were placed on public consultation alongside the PMMs between November 2013 and January 2014.
- 1.7 Representations were received on the SA Reports, indicating that further clarity was required to explain the purpose of, and relationship between, the Yeovil Strategic Growth Options and Local Plan Proposed Modifications SA Reports. It was also necessary to more clearly present and better distinguish between the SA work that has been carried out in relation to Soundness Issues 1 and 2 and the proposed changes to the Local Plan. To address the responses a SA Addendum Report (March 2014) was prepared and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate alongside the PMMs in March 2014<sup>4</sup>.
- 1.8 Examination Hearing Sessions on the PMMs took place from 10 - 13 June 2014. During these sessions the Inspector raised a number of issues where the Local Plan would benefit from additional clarification. The need for further Main Modifications (MMs) was formally confirmed by the Inspector in his letter from

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<sup>4</sup> South Somerset Local Plan Proposed Main Modifications (March 2014):  
[https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/648229/south\\_somerset\\_local\\_plan\\_proposed\\_main\\_modifications\\_submission\\_to\\_pins.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/648229/south_somerset_local_plan_proposed_main_modifications_submission_to_pins.pdf)

16 July 2014<sup>5</sup>. As a result, the Council is proposing further MMs relating to Policies YV2, YV3, SS3 and SS5.

- 1.9 It is important to ensure that the further MMs are screened through the SA process to determine if they significantly affect the findings of the previous SA work. The Council commissioned independent consultants Enfusion Ltd in July 2014 to ensure that the implications of all the proposed changes have been sufficiently considered through the SA process.

### **Structure of this SA Addendum Report**

- 1.10 Following this introductory Section, Section 2 provides a summary of the proposed changes to the Local Plan and the findings of the SA screening of the further MMs. Section 3 summarises the findings of the further SA work and sets out the next steps.

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<sup>5</sup> Inspector's Preliminary Findings following the Resumed Hearing Sessions letter (July 2014): [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/674198/inspector\\_s\\_preliminary\\_findings\\_post\\_resumed\\_examination\\_hearing.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/674198/inspector_s_preliminary_findings_post_resumed_examination_hearing.pdf)

## 2.0 SA of Proposed Main Modifications to the Local Plan

### Introduction

- 2.1 The key changes proposed by the Council through the further MMs are as follows:
- **Policy YV2:** The inclusion of detail on landscape mitigation measures at the North East Yeovil SUE;
  - **Policy YV3:** Deletion of the East Coker and North Coker buffer zone;
  - **Policy SS3:** Deletion of a specific employment land figure for rural settlements, with the inclusion of an explanation of the Council's approach to such proposals in these settlements; and
  - **Policy SS5:** Amendment to improve clarity regarding housing delivery in Crewkerne and Wincanton and reference in an appropriate section of the LP to an early review of housing and employment provision at Wincanton.
- 2.2 Each of these further MMs is considered in turn below.

### Policy YV2

- 2.3 The Council is proposing additional text to Policy YV2 to ensure that appropriate landscape mitigation is forthcoming through the development management process for the North East Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). It is considered that the proposed changes will help to strengthen the Policy and help to reduce the potential negative effects on landscape as a result of the North East Yeovil SUE. The proposed modification therefore, does not significantly affect the findings of the revised appraisal of Policy YV2, presented in Appendix IV of the SA Addendum Report (March 2014).

### Policy YV3

- 2.4 The Inspector raised concerns regarding the continued justification for the buffer zone in light of the reduced scale and extent of the South Yeovil SUE. In response to this the Council is proposing to delete the East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone from the Local Plan.
- 2.5 The original purpose of the buffer zone was to preserve the character of North Coker and East Coker and prevent coalescence with Yeovil as a result of the previously proposed the single and larger scale southern SUE. Given the reduction in the scale of proposed development, the distance of the South Yeovil SUE from the villages now means that there is no longer a need for the buffer zone. The appraisal of Policy YV3 presented in Appendix 7 of the SA Report published in June 2012 is therefore superseded. It is considered that the deletion of the buffer zone does not significantly affect the overall findings of the SA, given the distance (approx over 800 metres) between the currently proposed South Yeovil SUE and the villages of East and North Coker.

### **Policy SS3**

- 2.6 The proposed changes to this Policy seek to clarify the Council's approach to delivering new employment land across the District. The Council is proposing the removal of a specific employment hectarage figure for the rural settlements along with additional text to provide further clarification as to how employment land will be delivered in Rural Centres and Rural Settlements.
- 2.7 It is considered that the modifications do not significantly affect the findings of the appraisal of Policy SS3 in Appendix 7 of the Local Plan SA Report (June 2012). The sustainability effects of employment land will be further considered when more precise locations for development are proposed for each settlement through the Site Allocations DPD.

### **Policy SS5**

- 2.8 The proposed changes seek to provide greater clarity on how applications for residential development and overall housing growth will be managed in the Market Towns of Crewkerne and Wincanton. It is considered that the modifications do not significantly affect the findings of the appraisal of Policy SS5 in Appendix 7 of the Local Plan SA Report (June 2012). The sustainability effects of residential development will be further considered when more precise locations for development are proposed for Crewkerne and Wincanton through the Site Allocations DPD.



### **3.0 Summary and Next Steps**

- 3.1 The Council has proposed a number of further Main Modifications to the Local Plan as a result of discussions during the Hearing Sessions in June 2014 and the Inspector's Preliminary Findings (July 2014). These changes have been considered to determine if they significantly affect the findings of the previous SA work.
- 3.2 The screening of the further MMs concluded that proposed changes do not significantly affect the findings of the SA. The nature and significance of the effects identified through the SA during the life of the Plan therefore remain the same. The sustainability effects of residential and employment development will be further considered when more precise locations for development are proposed for settlements through the Site Allocations DPD.
- 3.3 This Addendum Report will accompany the further Main Modifications on public consultation from 28 August to 10 October 2014. Any further changes to the Local Plan that arise as a result of the consultation or any further hearing sessions should be subject to further screening to consider their significance with regard to the SA.

#### **Update – November 2014**

- 3.4 No consultation responses were received on the SA Addendum Report. However, in response to comments received on the Main Modifications themselves, minor amendments are being proposed to Policies YV2 and SS5. These relate to simplifying the landscape mitigation text for the NE Yeovil SUE (YV2), and amending the early review at Wincanton to be complete within three years, rather than five (SS5). It is considered that the modifications do not significantly affect the findings of the appraisal of Policy YV2 presented in Appendix IV of the SA Addendum Report (March 2014) or the appraisal of Policy SS5 in Appendix 7 of the Local Plan SA Report (June 2012). The sustainability effects of residential development will be further considered when more precise locations for development are proposed for Crewkerne and Wincanton through the Site Allocations DPD.