

North Somerset Replacement Local Plan Written Statement

*Adopted
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North Somerset Council Replacement Local Plan

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Introduction

Purpose of the Plan **Legislative and policy background**

- 1.1** Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, North Somerset Council is required to prepare and keep up to date a local plan covering the whole of its area. The form and content of local plans and the procedures for preparing them are prescribed through the Town and Country Planning (Development Plan) (England) Regulations 1999 ('the Development Plan Regulations') (S.I.1999:3280).
- 1.2** The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) oversees the planning system nationally and issues advice on Government policy and procedural matters. Planning Policy Guidance Note 12: Development Plans (PPG12) was most recently re-issued in 1999 and sets out expectations for the content of local plans. PPG12 is supplemented by other PPG's (and now PPS's: Planning Policy Statements) covering a wide range of topics and released over a number of years. Further guidance is provided in Government circulars, White Papers and best practice advice.
- 1.3** At the regional level, PPG's are supplemented by Regional Planning Guidance (RPG). RPG for the South West (RPG10) was issued in 2001. Structure plans provide the link between the regional strategy and local policies. The Joint Replacement Structure Plan (JRSP) covering the former Avon area was prepared jointly by the four unitary authorities (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire) and was adopted in 2002. RPG10 and the JRSP are described further in Chapter 2.
- 1.4** The main purposes of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan are to:
 - develop the policies and general proposals of the Structure Plan for the period to 2011 and relate them to precise areas of land where appropriate;
 - provide a clear and detailed basis for development control consistent with the provisions of section 54A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (see para. 1.6);
 - provide a basis for co-ordinating and directing public and private development and the use of land;
 - bring land use issues before the public and give local communities an opportunity to participate in planning choices;

- give a land use expression to the Council's corporate vision for North Somerset, as expressed by the Community Strategy, that promotes regeneration, a prosperous North Somerset and more sustainable patterns of development.
- 1.5** The Replacement Local Plan forms part of the development plan for the area, together with RPG10, the Structure Plan, the Mineral Working in Avon Local Plan (adopted 1993) and the North Somerset Waste Local Plan (adopted 2002).
- 1.6** Section 54A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires a local planning authority to make planning decisions in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is known as the 'plan-led' approach, reducing the risk of planning decisions being made in an arbitrary manner and providing for greater consistency and transparency in decision-making in the public interest.
- 1.7** In reaching a decision on development proposals, the development plan as a whole must be taken into account, with each policy applied as relevant. In the event that a proposal may satisfy some policies and not others, a balanced view will be required, taking into account all material considerations. Where proposals not specifically covered by policies in the Plan are put forward, they will be assessed against the general approach of the Plan to similar situations, as well as other relevant planning policy documents.
- 1.8** In exceptional circumstances, the Council may be minded to grant planning permission for development that is not in accordance with the Plan, known as a 'departure'. Under such circumstances, the Council is required to advertise locally its intention to depart from the development plan, giving the opportunity for representations to be made before a decision is taken.
- 1.9** The Local Plan cannot contain information on all matters relevant to the planning of the area without it becoming too long and excessively detailed. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), approved by the Council, supports the Plan in providing further detail on aspects of policy and development control. Such guidance must be directly related to a particular policy or policies of the Plan and consistent with it.
- 1.10** PPG12, paras. 3.15-3.18, sets out the role of SPG, and the weight to be accorded to it. SPG is not part of the Plan and is published separately. Although it is only the adopted local plan policies that have a special status under section 54A of the 1990 Act, SPG may be taken into account as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Form and content

Components of the Plan

- 1.11** The North Somerset Replacement Local Plan covers the whole of the administrative area of North Somerset, 38,960 hectares (150 square miles). This includes the island of Steep Holm in the Bristol Channel.

Although the Plan cannot include land outside this area, the Council works closely with neighbouring authorities to ensure that cross-boundary issues are addressed consistently.

- 1.12** The Plan is made up of two parts, the Written Statement (this volume) and the Proposals Map (separate volume). The Written Statement takes precedence in the event of any conflict between the two.
- 1.13** The Written Statement is organised into chapters by topics that apply across North Somerset. It contains the Council's numbered policies, in bold type, together with an explanation. Within the Plan, it is the policies that form the basis for decisions on planning applications. The accompanying text is intended to provide a brief context or justification for the policy and explain how it will be applied and its effectiveness measured. Cross-referencing is not generally included: the Plan is to be read as a whole and while a policy may suggest that a proposed development would comply, there may be other policies that suggest an opposite view.
- 1.14** The Proposals Map consists of West and East sheets, together with 52 insets covering individual towns, villages and hamlets, or areas within them, and the Bristol International Airport and Royal Portbury Dock areas. Some legislation distinguishes 'the proposals map' from 'inset maps'; for reasons of simplicity, a reference in this Plan to the Proposals Map should be understood to include relevant inset maps.
- 1.15** Proposals for each area can be established by reference to the maps and the relevant policies in the Written Statement, identifiable from the key. The Proposals Map shows the land to which site-specific policies apply but, because some policies apply across the whole of North Somerset, not all policies are capable of being illustrated explicitly. Prospective applicants for planning permission are therefore advised to consult both the Proposals Map and related policies and the topic chapter(s) relevant to their proposed development.

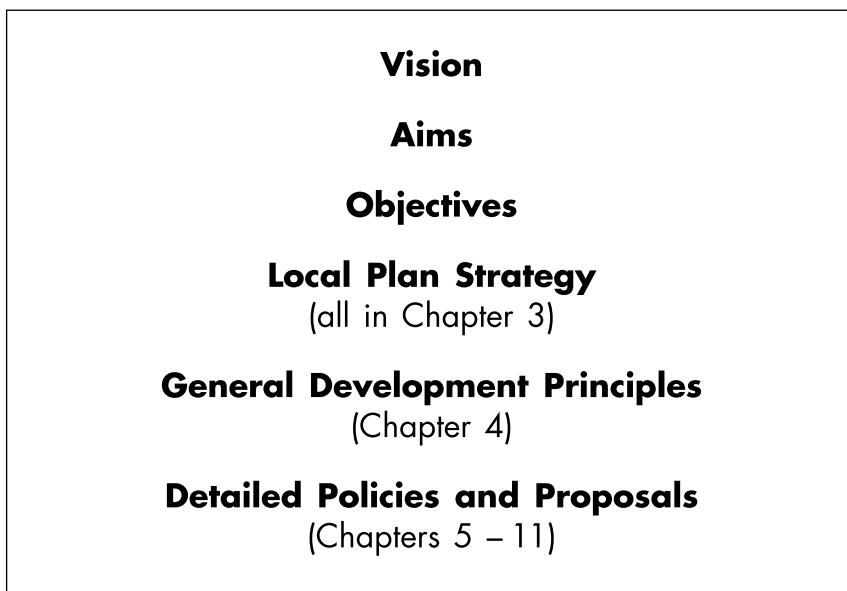


Figure 1 Plan Hierarchy

Arrangement of the Plan

- 1.16** The Written Statement incorporates a summary of the planning context affecting North Somerset, followed by the Vision, Aims and Locational Strategy for the area. These, and the Objectives derived from the Aims, inform the detailed policies. Chapters are arranged in order from the more general and strategic to the more specific and complementary. Figure 1 illustrates the hierarchical arrangement of the Plan. The appendices to the Plan set out lists of the general development sites (Appendix 1.1) and regeneration sites (Appendix 1.2) for quick reference.
- 1.17** All forms of development must conform with the general development principles (Chapter 4) as well as with more specific policies set out in the relevant chapters.

Scope of the Plan

- 1.18** The Replacement Local Plan sets out the Council's detailed policies for the development and use of land in its area over the period 1996 – 2011, which is consistent with the period covered by the Structure Plan (see para. 1.3). The base date for land availability is 1 April 2006.
- 1.19** Local plans are required to include policies for the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of the land; the improvement of the physical environment; and the management of traffic. The Plan can only include policies and proposals that are related to the development and use of land, although the explanatory text may mention other related issues taken into account in its preparation. This means, for example, that aspirations for improved education, social services or leisure provision, or the management of land and buildings in community use, are only relevant where they have a land use expression, usually where 'development', in the form of new construction or a change of use, is involved. Aspects that do not involve development are addressed in the respective service plans for such activities. Where other Council strategies refer to land use planning aspects, they should be consistent with the Plan's policies.
- 1.20** Although it otherwise covers the full range of land uses, this Local Plan does not contain policies or proposals relating to the extraction or processing of minerals, the restoration of worked mineral sites or waste disposal. These are contained in the Mineral Working in Avon Local Plan and the North Somerset Waste Local Plan (see para. 1.5).
- 1.21** The Plan is prepared in the context of national, regional and strategic planning policies which stand in their own right (see paras. 1.2 – 1.3). It is not appropriate for the Plan to repeat the content of these policies, although some limited referencing is made to highlight important points. Because these policies complement the Local Plan, it is not necessary for this Plan to anticipate every eventuality. Instead, it concentrates on key policy areas of specific local concern. It seeks a balance between the greater flexibility provided by 'criteria-based' policies and the greater certainty of identifying specific proposals for particular sites.

- 1.22** The Replacement Local Plan does not start with a 'clean sheet'. Designations such as Conservation Areas, the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Sites of Special Scientific Interest are made under other legislation and cannot be altered by the Local Plan. The general extent of the Green Belt is fixed by the Structure Plan. In addition, there are a number of development commitments from the previous Plan period that need to be taken into account. While it is possible for a local authority to revoke planning permissions, in practice this happens only very rarely because of the financial implications of paying compensation for rights removed.
- 1.23** However, there are also significant areas of land allocated in the adopted Local Plan that have not received planning permission. The Replacement Plan has reviewed the continued suitability of these allocations in the light of recent national guidance and the need to adopt a sequential approach to site selection.
- 1.24** Many policies and proposals from the North Somerset Local Plan (2000) remain consistent with the Replacement Plan's strategy and have been carried forward.

Assessing effectiveness Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.25** Local authorities are expected to carry out a full appraisal of their development plan, to include economic, social and environmental issues. Such appraisals help highlight the impact of policies across the board and the extent to which the Plan is moving towards the goal of more sustainable development. The achievement of this goal requires a long-term commitment and it is important that North Somerset's economic, social and environmental needs are provided for in a balanced way, rather than at each other's expense. Sustainability appraisals should be iterative, reflecting each stage of the plan preparation process. A separate Sustainability Appraisal accompanied the First Deposit Draft of the Plan and identified issues for consideration at the Second Deposit stage.

Monitoring and review

- 1.26** The policies and proposals in the Replacement Local Plan reflect circumstances prevailing at the time of its preparation. As the Plan has a number of years to run, it is anticipated that circumstances will change over this period. The Plan needs to be responsive to such changes, ensuring that it continues to contribute to achieving the aims and objectives set by the Council for the benefit of the local community. The Council needs to be able to demonstrate whether or not the Plan is being used and whether it is making a difference. This approach is consistent with that advocated by Government, namely 'plan, monitor and manage'.

1.27 Section 30 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 identifies three specific aspects which local authorities are required to keep under review, namely:

- the principal physical and economic characteristics of the area and, so far as they may be expected to affect the area, of any neighbouring areas;
- the size, composition and distribution of the population of the area;
- the communications, transport system and traffic of the area and, so far as they may be expected to affect the area, of any neighbouring areas.

1.28 The Council will also keep under regular review:

- changes in national and regional planning policy;
- changes in the development plans of neighbouring authorities;
- trends in the development industry and wider economy;
- changes in the policies and objectives of the Council itself and other agencies with an interest in the area.

1.29 Monitoring will include reviews of development control decisions to identify which policies are being used, either with or without success. It will be particularly important to monitor policies and proposals tested through the appeal process.

1.30 Some aspects of the Plan, such as housing and employment land provision and uptake, have long been the subject of detailed monitoring to ensure adequacy of supply. The results of such monitoring are published in annual residential and employment land supply reports. Monitoring arrangements for the Replacement Local Plan will make use of existing processes and datasets wherever possible and will require a corporate approach.

1.31 As far as possible, policies have been expressed in a form that facilitates monitoring; the Monitoring Statement at the end of each policy section also relates monitoring to aims and objectives. Para. 3.16 elaborates on this approach.

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Planning context

Sustainable development

- 2.1** Foremost amongst the planning principles set out in current national guidance is the need for development plans to embrace a sustainable approach to development. Apart from the national requirement for this to be part of the Plan, the Council needs to adopt sustainable development principles to deliver best value and continuous improvement for its residents and visitors. This will be achieved through policies and proposals that protect and enhance the environment, whilst promoting the economic and social well-being of the area.
- 2.2** There are many different ways of defining sustainability, but one that puts it simply is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Commission, 1987). The UK strategy for sustainable development, Securing the Future (2005) is based on five principles:
- Living within environmental limits;
 - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
 - Achieving a sustainable economy;
 - Promoting good governance;
 - Using sound science responsibly.
- 2.3** PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development sets out the Government's overall policy objectives for the planning system. PPG12: Development Plans (1999) gives more detailed advice on integrating sustainable development, transport and land use policies in development plans.
- 2.4** Within North Somerset, the Local Agenda 21 Strategy, Towards a Greener North Somerset (2000), provides a basis for promoting more sustainable practices. It comprises three themes:
- the development of Local Agenda 21 in North Somerset and how this is moved forward;
 - the environmental performance of the Council and how it will seek improvements for the future; and
 - the delivery of the strategy through partnership with the community.

Regional Planning Guidance

- 2.5** Regional planning guidance provides the context for structure plans, which in turn provide the same for local plans. The Secretary of State issued revised Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) in September 2001. It:
- provides a regional spatial strategy within which local authority development plans and local transport plans in the South West should be prepared;
 - sets out a broad development strategy for the period to 2016 and beyond; and
 - provides the spatial framework for other strategies and programmes.
 - Since 28th September 2004, RPG10 forms part of the development plan, as the initial Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West.
- 2.6** The Vision of RPG10 is "developing the region, in a sustainable way, as a national and European region of quality and diversity, where the quality of life for residents, the business community and visitors will be maintained and enhanced."
- 2.7** North Somerset is located within the northern of four sub-regions; it contains one of the 12 Principal Urban Areas (PUA's) – Weston-super-Mare – and adjoins another – Bristol. The spatial strategy for the sub-region seeks a more sustainable pattern of development than in the past by strengthening the roles of the PUA's, fostering urban renaissance, curbing unsustainable outward expansion and aiming for greater self-containment in towns within commuting distance of the PUA's.
- 2.8** RPG10 recognises that PUA's like Weston-super-Mare are more constrained in terms of policies for their future development than the likes of Bristol and Plymouth. A need for regeneration in Weston-super-Mare is recognised, together with resolution of traffic problems within the Town Centre and older residential areas, and enhancement of tourist facilities.
- 2.9** Policy SS 10 of RPG10 sees this being achieved by:
- promoting the town as a destination for employment investment that will increase accessible employment and regeneration opportunities and reduce the need to travel;
 - enhancing the town's environment and its surroundings;
 - supporting investment to enhance tourist and business facilities to aid economic regeneration;
 - focusing transport-related investment on improved public transport, including improvements to the rail network and services with the Bristol area to reduce the need for car use;
 - limiting further housing growth until employment development is more closely in balance with housing.
- 2.10** In terms of other significant settlements outside the PUA's, the thrust of RPG Policy SS 6 is that future development should generally avoid significant growth in the larger towns within easy commuting distance

of PUA's, especially housing development proceeding out of step with employment. SS 7 adds that substantial expansion of residential development at small dormitory towns within easy commuting distance of PUA's should be resisted.

Regional Economic Strategy

2.11 This is prepared by the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWERDA) and approved by the Secretary of State. Initially it covers the period to 2010 and seeks to improve the competitive position of the South West within the European Union and internationally in order to increase sustainable prosperity for the region and its people. It identifies three strands to the delivery of the strategy: competitiveness, regeneration and improved regional coherence. Improvements to transport infrastructure are supported, as is the promotion of new residential and employment related development at locations well-served (or capable of being well-served) by public transport. A high priority is given to economic, social and physical regeneration.

Joint Replacement Structure Plan

2.12 The Joint Replacement Structure Plan was adopted in September 2002 and covers the period to 2011. Its policies, like those of the Replacement Local Plan, should be read together. Policy 1 (sustainable development), Policy 2 (locational strategy) and Policy 33 (on the number of dwellings to be provided), form the main strategic context for preparation of this Plan. Key policies specific to North Somerset are 7 (the role of Weston-super-Mare), 15 (Royal Portbury Dock), 16 (extension of the Green Belt between Portishead and Royal Portbury Dock), and 61 (with 4R) (Bristol International Airport and the need for surface access improvements). Several policies rely upon the Local Plan to amplify precisely how they should be applied.

2.13 In relation to North Somerset, the locational strategy:

- gives priority to development within and immediately adjacent to Weston-super-Mare;
- seeks to develop and significantly improve public transport between Weston-super-Mare and Bristol/Bath/Yate;
- prioritises the retention and creation of employment in Weston-super-Mare and provides for smaller scale opportunities in other towns;
- seeks to realise the economic development potential of Royal Portbury Dock; and
- provides for extending the Green Belt between Portishead and Royal Portbury Dock.

Other strategies

- 2.14** Other strategies, especially those prepared at the more local level such as the Community Strategy and the various strategies for individual Council services, can have an important bearing on this Plan and its implementation. The key strategies are described in more detail in Chapter 3 and these and others are also listed in the 'related strategies' sections in Chapters 4 to 11. The Replacement Local Plan has a key role to play in realising the land use objectives of these strategies. Other work of relevance to implementation, ongoing at the time the Local Plan was being finalised, includes the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (GBSTS) and the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) that will supersede RPG10.

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Local Plan vision, aims and locational strategy

Introduction

- 3.1** The North Somerset Replacement Local Plan provides the land use expression of the Council's corporate objectives and the Community Strategy. It draws on the response to consultation on the Issues Report and the strategic guidance and over-arching principles of sustainability set out in Chapter 2. As such, it aims to make North Somerset a better place by promoting sustainable growth and managing the pressures for land use change in a more sustainable and equitable way, to improve the quality of life and opportunities for residents, the workforce and visitors.
- 3.2** The Local Plan plays a key role in terms of the Council's corporate commitment to making North Somerset a more prosperous place in which to live and work, and in meeting local needs, particularly in terms of housing, jobs, leisure, community provision, and transport requirements, while at the same time safeguarding environmental assets. It should be read in the context of the other strategies prepared by the Council covering its full range of functions and duties.
- 3.3** The modernisation of local government, with its emphasis on Best Value and partnership working, clearly requires the Plan to be based upon a Vision of how the Council sees the planning process guiding North Somerset in the future. It is appropriate that such a Vision looks beyond the immediate Plan period, the important point being to set the course for sustained improvements in quality of life for the future.

The Council's Vision for managing land use change

- 3.4** The Vision guiding the planning process is:
- "Working in partnership with the community to ensure that development promotes the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area in a way that makes a positive contribution to the quality of life of present and future generations."
- 3.5** The Vision is derived from and influenced by a number of background source documents. These comprise: Local Plan Issues Consultation (2000), North Somerset Community Strategy 2004 – 2025, Corporate Plan 2005 – 8 and Weston Vision, incorporating Phase 1 (2002) and Phase 2 (2003 – 2005).
- 3.6** The Corporate Plan (2005 – 8), sets out the overall direction for all Council services, its values, aims and what it is working to achieve for

the next three years. It has six key aims based on the views of local people and government priorities as set out below:

- Promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- Enhancing health and well being;
- Protecting and improving the environment;
- Building safe communities;
- Increasing prosperity;
- Ensuring continuous improvement.

3.7

Community Strategy Local authorities now have a duty to prepare Community Strategies, developed in conjunction with other public, private and community sector organisations. Community Strategies should promote the economic, environmental and social well-being of their areas and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. They must have four key components:

- a long-term vision for the area which focuses on the outcomes that are to be achieved;
- an action plan identifying shorter-term priorities and activities that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes;
- a shared commitment to implement the action plan and proposals for doing so; and
- arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the action plan, for periodically reviewing the Community Strategy, and for reporting progress to local communities.

3.8

The Council is working with the local community and partner organisations to maintain a long-term sustainable vision for North Somerset to reflect diversity and the aspirations of the entire North Somerset Community, as envisaged by the Local Government Act 2000. The Community Strategy 2004 – 2025 has now replaced Community Pride and is the means by which the aspirations, needs and priorities of local communities are articulated and the actions of the Council co-ordinated in association with the Council's Corporate Plan. North Somerset, working with its partners, met as a local strategic partnership working group from April 2001. The work of this partnership, now known as the North Somerset Partnership (NSP), will continue to develop the Community Strategy which will in turn help inform the new range of planning documents in the LDF.

3.9

Weston Vision The Council in partnership with the South West of England Regional Development Agency, English Partnerships, Persimmon Group and Partners and other key stakeholders, is working to bring forward the comprehensive and co-ordinated regeneration and revitalisation of Weston. Published in August 2002, Weston Vision Phase 1 prepared by Roger Tym & Partners, Llewelyn Davies Ltd and Alsop Architects set an initial strategic direction for the regeneration of the town as expressed in policies E/1, E/2 and E/3 of the NSRLP First Deposit draft 2002. Since First Deposit was published, further work has been commissioned. This has resulted in the publication of an Area

Development Framework (ADF, June 2005). Whilst not part of the development plan process it forms an important material consideration in respect of the future long-term development strategy for Weston-super-Mare.

3.10 The recent work on the Weston Vision has now evolved into the Weston Area Development Framework which was published in June 2005. This seeks to provide an indicative framework for the regeneration and future development of the whole of the town covering a time-scale of over 20 years. Some of the more immediate and land-use elements of this long-term development vision are covered through policies in the replacement Local Plan for the period up to 2011. The longer-term spatial and land-use planning aspects of the Area Development Framework, covering the whole of the project timescale, will be developed as Area Action Plans that will supersede the relevant policies contained within the Replacement Local Plan. The Area Action Plan will be produced under the development plan system introduced through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Local Plan Aims

3.11 From the responses to the Issues Report and the work undertaken by the Council since the Issues Report (2000) it is clear that amongst the highest priorities under-pinning the Council's Vision for North Somerset are the achievement of:

- a more self-sustaining and successful economy which has strengths in growing modern sectors and an emphasis on good quality, well-paid jobs and which relies less on employment outside the district;
- to make Weston a growing, modern urban centre, with a confident, dynamic and diverse economy which is attractive to investors and with a rejuvenated Seafront and Town Centre which makes the most of its superb location on the coast and setting in the Somerset countryside;
- achievement of balanced development in terms of employment, housing, transport, leisure and other facilities which contributes to achieving long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability;
- a reduction in the traffic congestion caused by car-borne commuters and a better transport system.

3.12 In parallel with this it is also recognised that North Somerset must make the most of its existing assets particularly with regard to:

- the quality of the varied natural environment of North Somerset, the coast, the Mendip Hills, the Levels and Moors and the open countryside as both highly valued landscapes and as important habitats for a diverse range of plants, animals and birds;
- the historic built environment in both towns and villages and the cultural heritage and tradition and sense of place that it instils and represents;
- the role of Bristol International Airport, Royal Portbury Dock, the M5 motorway and main railway line, as gateways and important corridors of movement in North Somerset and the South West.

- 3.13** These corporate and community aspirations are consistent with the guiding principles of sustainable development set out in the strategic planning framework. They are brought together as the Local Plan Aims and Objectives set out below. There are five main aims; each is developed further into a series of more detailed objectives, which the Plan's policies will be designed to achieve.

North Somerset Replacement Local Plan Aims

Aim 1: To make provision for development in a sustainable way consistent with RPG10 (the initial Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Joint Replacement Structure Plan's locational strategy

Aim 2: To protect and enhance the quality, safety, character and diversity of North Somerset's environment for present and future generations.

Aim 3: To increase prosperity throughout North Somerset by making provision for a more sustainable local economy that meets the needs and aspirations of residents and businesses alike, taking advantage of North Somerset's location as a gateway to the South West.

Aim 4: To improve the health and well-being of our communities through making provision for the land use needs of our responsibilities for social services, housing, environmental health, education, community safety, transport, leisure and the environment in partnership with the North Somerset Primary Care Trust.

Aim 5: To enable the provision of high quality education opportunities for all and to develop North Somerset as a 'learning community'.

- 3.14** This approach is taken forward in each of the eight land use chapters contained in the Plan, with every chapter containing a specific aim followed by the key objectives which the policies are designed to achieve. The Council has deliberately developed this 'menu' approach in order to promote the interaction between the different land use policies and to promote 'cross-cutting' in the application of the Plan's policy framework. In this way, it is intended to demonstrate that only by using the full range of policies contained in the Plan, as a whole, can the Council expect to achieve its intended outcome as expressed by the Vision, which forms the very core of this Replacement Local Plan.

- 3.15** Finally, as detailed in Chapter 1, para. 1.31, progress towards the achievement of the aims and objectives will be monitored by the use of targets and indicators. The Council does not think it necessary and appropriate to set a target for every policy. Instead, specific policies contain targets where the Council considers this will be most effective in helping to identify positive achievement through the application of policies contained in the Plan, to manage and control the use of land over the Plan period, in accordance with the Council's five core aims and their supporting objectives.

3.16 In this respect, every policy contains a Monitoring Statement, the purpose of which is to express what the Plan is setting out to achieve. This is facilitated through the use of a 'monitoring target' against which the policy's delivery and implementation will be monitored, an 'output' objective explanation of how the policy and the key target will be monitored and an 'outcome' objective statement of what will be achieved as a result of the Council using this policy. In instances where no target is appropriate or necessary, this is clearly identified, as are situations where perhaps no output expression is required. However, policies should normally contain an outcome objective statement, which is the justification for the Council using and applying the particular policy.

Local Plan Strategy

3.17 The Replacement Plan strategy is based on:

- facilitation of physical, economic and social regeneration;
- sustainable locations for development;
- sustainable forms of development;
- identification and protection of environmental assets;
- achieving more self-contained settlements.

Urban focus

3.18 The Plan focuses major development to 2011 on the main towns of Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Clevedon and Nailsea, while supporting a successful and diverse countryside and protection of the Green Belt from inappropriate development. It 'makes the connection', identified in consultation, between land use and transport, reducing the need to travel and contributing towards an integrated transport system that maximises the opportunities to walk, cycle and use public transport.

3.19 Support is given to town, district and local centres in recognition of the importance of maintaining and enhancing their vitality and viability and the key part to be played by regeneration and environmental improvements in keeping these centres at the heart of local communities. Such locations offer the best potential for the widest access to public transport and other facilities.

3.20 The performance of the local economy has a key part to play in achieving sustainable development, particularly in the light of the Council's priority to secure a better balance between homes and jobs to reduce the adverse effects of out-commuting.

A vision for Weston-super-Mare

3.21 The main focus for major development is Weston-super-Mare, the largest town in North Somerset and a Principal Urban Area within the region.

Weston currently faces a number of challenges to establish the town as a modern, and attractive place with a specific economic role within the sub-region. Key to this is the need to work with others to sustain and create new employment and business opportunities to restore the balance between residential and local employment and reduce the level of out-commuting. As detailed in paras. 3.9-3.10, the Council, in partnership with the South West of England Regional Development Agency and English Partnerships, has prepared a 'Vision' for the regeneration and development of Weston over the next 20 years. This work has now moved on and an Area Action Plan (AAP) is currently being prepared which will reflect the Weston Vision Policies of the NSRLP and provide the long-term detailed spatial planning framework for development up to and beyond 2011.

3.22 At the heart of this approach is a 'Vision' of how we imagine the Weston area in say 20 years' time. In the context of managing and guiding land use change up to 2011, as illustrated by Map 3.1, the Council is committed to delivering the Weston Vision. Over the Plan period, the Council will work with core partners and land owners to bring forward development proposals through a co-ordinated and phased approach for the economic regeneration of the whole of Weston. The objective is to maximise the potential of the area, improve the quality of the urban and natural environment and achieve a more sustainable balance between employment and housing, while at the same time respecting the integrity and character of existing village settlements south of Weston. The achievement of these objectives will be influenced by the constraints imposed by the highways and flooding issues affecting the area.

3.23 Pivotal to this is the implementation and delivery of three distinct and related sub-areas. At the heart of this is the need to take a 'whole town approach' for achieving the substantive improvement of Weston. Expressed collectively these elements are:

Regeneration of the Town Centre and Seafront – the vision is of an expanded and successful sub-regional centre, offering quality and choice in shopping, office services, tourism and leisure – capitalising on the seafront setting to offer something distinctive which residents, investors and visitors will positively choose.

Town Centre gateway and outer commercial area – the long term and successful regeneration of Weston will rely on strengthening the functional and physical links between the Town Centre and the rest of the Town. The hinterland around Weston Station is an important gateway, focal point and interchange for visitors, commuters and shoppers. The current physical environment however does not reflect this. The area is poorly integrated, disparate in character and contains underused contaminated and previously developed land. The comprehensive and co-ordinated planning of this area will permit greater potential for investment and the clustering and integration of similar and related activities. This may include mixed-use proposals incorporating high density residential and commercial office development to a high quality of design and opportunities to reduce car usage through improving transport interchange facilities, particularly around the railway station.



Weston Regeneration Area – the vision identifies three main areas that are specifically identified for development and redevelopment. These include; the old aircraft works and Weston Airfield, the former RAF Locking base and the area around M5 Junction 21 at West Wick. Central to the identification of this large regeneration area is the commitment of the Council and partners to attract investment to the town, secure sustainable regeneration and make Weston more self-contained. Over the Plan period the priority within the Weston Regeneration Area is to secure employment led development. To make this happen, a flexible approach to delivering outcomes, where this would meet the principles of the Weston Vision will be considered. However, significant further releases of land for residential development that would exceed strategic housing allocations and urban capacity thresholds up to 2011 would be resisted. The Council is also committed to prevent the village settlements of Hutton and Locking from being absorbed within the urban area of Weston. To support this, it is intended to incorporate a strategic area of open space to act as a community resource. Opportunities will also be explored to maximise the potential of the man-made rhynes and the original lowland landscape.

- 3.24** The policy framework to support the Weston Vision is incorporated in more detail in Chapter 7 and illustrated on the Proposals Map. It comprises the delineation of Weston Seafront and Weston Town Centre, the Town Centre gateway and outer commercial area and the Weston Regeneration Area. A multi-agency approach, involving private sector partners is advocated, with the commitment to deliver comprehensive development and regeneration through partnership working. The achievement of sustainable transport to serve both future development and existing facilities is a key principle that will apply to the Weston Regeneration Area. Likewise the exercising of the necessary pre-requisites to development e.g. flood alleviation works and social infrastructure including health, education and community facilities to deliver genuinely sustainable communities is also a key priority.
- 3.25** Working in conjunction with the South West Regional Development Agency, English Partnerships and other key partners, the Council will look to build upon these principles through the Plan led approach. Area Action Plans (AAPs) and a series of detailed master plans will be produced to provide the long term spatial planning framework for the town.

Infrastructure

- 3.26** Implementation of the Plan, including the major regeneration proposals, requires the resolution of significant and strategic infrastructural constraints, particularly in respect of motorway access and the capacity of the rail network.
- 3.27** In parallel with this Plan therefore, the Council is working jointly with its neighbours, the Government Office, the Highways Agency, the Strategic Rail Authority and others to plan for a more sustainable and efficient long-term transport network to complement the Locational Strategy. The

real benefits of this may not be realised until the latter stages of the Plan period and beyond.

Sequential approach

3.28 The Plan gives explicit priority to the sequential release of sites with preference to be given to urban sites. A sequential test is required of all proposals likely to result in significant trip-generation, as set out at Policy GDP/1, Chapter 4.

Previously developed land

3.29 The Plan also gives priority to the re-use of previously developed land and buildings. The general presumption in favour of the re-use of previously developed land for housing in urban areas does not apply to the countryside, unless such land has been identified as a proposed major developed site in the Local Plan. The Plan recognises that vacant previously developed land can provide important wildlife habitats that need to be taken into account in considering development proposals.

3.30 The rate at which previously developed land is likely to become available will not meet all North Somerset's development needs and therefore land previously committed for development and other vacant or underused land within or adjacent to urban areas has also been taken into account. However, the Council is keen to ensure that all development sites accord with the principles of sustainable development and perform well when tested against the criteria for allocating housing as set out at PPG3 para 31. From November 2006 PPS3 replaced PPG3. This confirms that the strategy for new housing should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. In this respect, undeveloped allocated sites will be reviewed and evaluated to ensure they continue to contribute to balanced communities and sustainable patterns of development.

High quality design

3.31 The Plan requires that the scale of development is appropriate to the size and character of settlements, having regard to the availability of facilities and physical constraints, and that all development should be well-designed. Mixed developments are encouraged with appropriate densities so as to use land efficiently, particularly in the most accessible locations.

Support for economic development

3.32 Most of the investment in North Somerset will be by the private sector and other agencies. The Council will work to boost confidence in the area and attract investment, particularly through improvements to infrastructure and the environment and by active promotion of the

opportunities available. The Plan strategy is designed to be 'business-friendly' and one that provides a balanced portfolio of sites across North Somerset to meet local needs.

- 3.33** Strategic guidance no longer provides an estimate of land required for employment purposes over the Plan period. Experience with the current adopted Local Plan amply demonstrates that the mere allocation of land is not in itself sufficient to attract new development. Those previous allocations have been reviewed and assessed with others to ensure a range of available sites, a reasonable prospect of their development and a positive contribution to a sustainable land use strategy.
- 3.34** As most jobs will continue to be provided by firms on existing sites, there is a presumption against the loss of such sites to other uses and a recognition by the Council of the need to give priority to determining development proposals that will secure additional local employment. The Council intends that the Plan should facilitate the right conditions for local businesses to flourish. It recognises the need to provide for small business start-ups, and areas where lower value activities can take place, which are needed to maintain economic diversity.
- 3.35** In addressing the need to stimulate local economic development, it is proposed that a slightly more flexible approach be adopted towards 'non-business' employment i.e. employment generating commercial activities falling outside the B1, B2 and B8 use classes, on some employment sites where such jobs are clearly ancillary to and supportive of the overall development of the site for business use. Regard will be had to the amount of employment likely to be created, and the availability of suitable alternative sites elsewhere, particularly in town and district centres. In some circumstances there may be the opportunity for mixed uses which include an element of residential use. However, in Weston-super-Mare this would be conditional on the requirement that the employment component should be ready for occupation.

Sufficient housing to meet a range of needs

- 3.36** The Plan not only looks to provide for an adequate overall supply of housing to meet strategic requirements, but also to secure provision that more adequately meets the range of local needs, as established through the Council's Housing Needs Survey. As with employment sites, there is a presumption against the loss of housing to other uses.

Cultural and community facilities

- 3.37** The Plan strategy provides for a wide range of community and recreational facilities to meet local needs and continues to protect the most important open spaces in towns and villages. Particular consideration has been given to meeting the needs of different sections of the community through, for example, raising standards of design to assist those with mobility difficulties and support for neighbourhood centres and the dual use of facilities where practicable.

Protecting the environment

- 3.38** The Plan has had regard to the latest information provided by the Environment Agency in respect of land liable to flooding and the need to safeguard such areas from development that would adversely affect flood storage capacity. The Plan also requires infrastructure for surface water disposal to be adequately provided for as a result of new development proposals and that sites have been identified for development with regard to PPG25.
- 3.39** The Plan provides strong support for conservation of the natural and built environment, including the preservation of wildlife and natural resources and the enhancement of biodiversity and environmental quality, in the knowledge that a high quality environment provides the foundation for a healthy local economy.
- 3.40** The Plan encourages development that is sustainable at the local level, whilst contributing to wider national and global targets of combating climatic change, pollution, resource depletion and loss of biodiversity. Key strands include encouraging a shift from the use of cars to more environment-friendly modes of travel, the adoption of more sustainable building methods for all forms of development, and greater encouragement for use of renewable energy resources.
- 3.41** A character-based approach to landscape conservation and improvement is promoted and the Plan seeks to protect from development the best quality agricultural land in line with Structure Plan policy.

General development principles

Introduction

4.1 The Local Plan seeks to ensure that North Somerset becomes a more sustainable and attractive location in which to live, work, shop and relax. For development proposals to be sustainable, they must recognise the needs of both present and future generations. They should be located and planned to reduce avoidable harm to the environment and risk to the public. It is also desirable that development should be well-designed and regulated with regard to both environmental and social considerations. These and other aspects of good planning practice are applicable to all development proposals; the policies in this chapter remove the need for them to be repeated in other policies elsewhere in the Plan.

Aim

4.2 This chapter provides a framework for achieving better-designed development that does not impose burdens on society or create problems for the future. All development proposals will need to be assessed against the policies in this chapter as well as more detailed policies throughout the Plan. The overall aim includes protection of both the environment and present and future generations from pollution and other harm. Protection of the environment is an important function of the planning system. Both people and wildlife are potential beneficiaries.

Objectives

4.3 The Local Plan objectives in respect of general development principles are:

- to focus development on the towns, particularly Weston-super-Mare, in recognition of its role as a sub-regional centre;
- to encourage higher densities, particularly at locations with good accessibility by means other than the private car;
- to make the best use of existing resources and infrastructure, particularly through bringing empty properties back into use, more intensive use of under-used and vacant land, re-development of previously developed land and buildings and reclamation of derelict land, including decontamination where appropriate;

- to locate and design development, especially mixed uses, to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and to enable cycling and walking to work, school and other facilities;
- to improve public transport infrastructure and services, including the provision of effective interchanges;
- to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town, district, local and village centres and to encourage the provision of a competitive and efficient retail sector;
- to relate the release of residential land closely to the growth of local employment opportunities and availability of sufficient infrastructure;
- to ensure that proposals are well related to public transport and non-car modes of transport, community facilities and services and the availability of infrastructure;
- to ensure that development contributes fairly to the provision of infrastructure and other needs arising from it;
- to ensure that development is of a high standard of design, both visually and functionally, having regard to its location and the efficient use of land;
- to safeguard undeveloped areas vulnerable to flooding from development that does not need to be located in such areas and ensure the conservation of adequate flood storage capacity;
- to plan for and manage change by embracing the opportunities and challenges which development offers, ensuring more balanced communities through mixed development and the use of previously developed sites in preference to 'greenfield' sites;
- to contribute to achieving national targets on reduction of greenhouse gases, reduce noise and improve air quality;
- to ensure that development proposals contribute to the provision and conservation of a clean, pleasant and safe environment, while using energy, water and other resources efficiently;
- to restore the balance between residential and local employment growth by reducing out-commuting and lengthy journeys to and from work so that North Somerset becomes more self-sufficient;
- to support the provision of high quality infrastructure as the key to attracting and retaining new investment;
- to enable people with disabilities to reach their full potential and live in their communities as independently as possible;
- to promote and increase the health, welfare, cultural and leisure opportunities of all sectors of the local population;

- to design-out opportunities to commit crime, while tackling the causes of crime by developing initiatives which divert and dissuade people from participating in criminal behaviour;
- to support the land use requirements of broad-based regeneration programmes such as Weston Visioning and the Single Regeneration Budget to contribute to the regeneration of disadvantaged areas and to ensure equality of opportunity.

Policy GDP/1 – Preferred locations for development

The preferred location for major developments is Weston-super-Mare, including regeneration sites in the Weston area.

Major developments within Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead will also be permitted if:

- i. they facilitate the completion of a scheme for the redevelopment of previously developed land allocated in this Plan; or
- ii. they will primarily meet employment or community needs arising from within the town; or
- iii. they meet other needs in ways appropriate to the scale of the settlement, in particular that they do not result in high levels of additional out-commuting.

Development of any kind within other defined settlements will only be permitted where appropriate to the scale of the settlement in terms of its character and physical identity, local employment opportunities and access to retail, cultural and community facilities.

Except where provided for by other policies, built development in the countryside will not be permitted. Where built development in the countryside is proposed, the maintenance of the character and appearance of the countryside and the avoidance of coalescence of settlements will be objectives of any decision on the proposal.

Priority will be given to meeting development needs through regeneration, utilising previously developed land or vacant buildings within existing built-up areas, and through proposals that reduce the need to travel, especially by car, where infrastructure is available or can be efficiently provided.

A sequential assessment of alternative sites will be required for all proposals likely to result in significant trip generation.

- 4.4.** The Replacement Local Plan seeks to promote development necessary to meet current needs, but in such a way that it is carefully located and planned to avoid, or at least minimise, harm to the environment and ensure the most efficient use of resources. It is based upon an integrated approach to land use and transport planning, which aims to help reduce

the need to travel and to widen opportunities to choose more sustainable modes of travel by locating all intensively-used development close to existing or proposed public transport facilities.

- 4.5** The Locational Strategy gives priority to the regeneration of Weston-super-Mare. Major development is also encouraged within the other towns in tightly-defined circumstances reflecting relevant regeneration and previously-developed land opportunities. Only limited development is envisaged elsewhere, appropriate in scale to the needs and other characteristics of the smaller settlements and the countryside and having regard also to relevant RPG and Structure Plan policies.
- 4.6** Settlement boundaries have been defined on the Proposals Map to identify the limits to development over the Plan period. Boundaries have not been drawn where settlements are either very small or have such a loose or dispersed form that it would be inappropriate to encourage infilling. Where possible, settlement boundaries have been drawn to follow features on the ground, although in certain instances, e.g. large residential curtilages, this is not always practical.
- 4.7** The primary function of the settlement boundary is to prevent sprawl and concentrate development appropriate to the scale and needs of that community. Settlement boundaries define the limit of development that is necessary to preserve and maintain the character and separate identity of many of the towns and villages in North Somerset, including the protection of important 'rural gaps' between settlements.
- 4.8** The settlement boundaries have been tightly drawn except where there are proposals for development that justify including currently undeveloped land. They were most recently confirmed in the adopted North Somerset Local Plan in June 2000. Given that only limited development is envisaged outside the towns it is considered that there is no justification for a general review of settlement boundaries. Exceptions have been made at Backwell, Bleadon, Long Ashton, Portishead, Winscombe and Wrington, where settlement boundaries have been extended to encompass recent development commitments, and minor anomalies have been corrected. At Nailsea, the settlement boundary has been pulled back to reflect the deletion of former proposals for a greenfield urban extension on land at North West Nailsea.
- 4.9** Regeneration opportunities in the Weston area are not limited to sites within settlement boundaries. Specific kinds of development are provided for by Policy as exceptions to the general policy presumption against major development outside settlements in this area. The Weston area is defined as land to the west of the M5, south and west of the River Banwell and any land north of the River Axe that lies outside the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 4.10** Major developments are those with the greatest impacts on the environment and communities and are subject to particularly rigorous guidance. The definitions in Table 4.1 below are derived from various regional and national sources and will guide planning decisions.

Table 4.1 Major developments

Use class	Description of use	Threshold
A1	Shops	1,000 sq.m.
B1	Business	2,500 sq.m.
B2	General Industrial	5,000 sq.m.
B8	Storage or Distribution	10,000 sq.m.
C2	Residential Institutions	2,500 sq.m.
C3	Housing	100 dwellings or 3.33 ha.
D1	Non-residential Institutions	2,500 sq.m.
D2	Assembly and Leisure	1,000 sq.m.
—	Stadia	1,500 seats

4.11 Various Planning Policy Statement's (PPS) advocate a sequential approach to site selection:

- PPS3: Housing (para. 36) in terms of prioritising previously developed land (subject to compliance with environmental and infrastructural constraints, including accessibility by non-car modes);
- PPS6: Planning for Town Centres (paras. 2.44-2.47, 3.13-3.19) in terms of prioritising town centre sites; and
- PPS25: Development and Flood Risk (para. 14 and Annex D) in terms of prioritising areas at little or no risk of flooding (see also Policies GDP/2 and GDP/4 below).
- PPG13: Transport (paras. 19 to 27) similarly emphasises accessibility by non-car modes for development providing jobs, shopping, leisure or services. In taking forward this guidance the Council considers that all proposals likely to result in significant trip generation should be the subject of a sequential search. This will ensure that the locational priorities of Policy GDP/1 are consistently applied, with any departures from these priorities being fully justified. Except where specific locational requirements apply, all development will be expected to conform to the Interim Transport Accessibility Criteria published as Annex A to RPG10, or the corresponding provisions of any document superseding it.

4.12 Opportunities must be taken to maximise the re-use of land and buildings and every effort will be made to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to the local area, having regard to local character.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

Major development concentrated on the towns, particularly Weston-super-Mare and regeneration sites in the Weston area.

Output objective:

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Targets:

- (A) At least 90% of major developments implemented (residential by number of dwellings and non-residential by gross floor area) to accord with the locational priorities set out in Policy GDP/1;
- (B) All regeneration sites (see Appendix 1.2) brought into use.
- (C) No planning applications for built development in the countryside approved except in accordance with policy.

Policy GDP/2 – Environmental and public protection

Development that, on its own or cumulatively, would result in air, water or other environmental pollution or harm to amenity, health or safety will only be permitted if the potential adverse effects could be mitigated to an acceptable level by other control regimes, or by measures included in the proposals, by the imposition of planning conditions or through a planning obligation.

- 4.13** This policy applies where any of the following problems exists or a risk of it occurring is identified, whether or not it arises as a consequence of a development proposal:
- a) Coastal / riverbank erosion;
 - b) contamination (including risk from migrating contaminants);
 - c) electromagnetic fields;
 - d) explosion;
 - e) fire;
 - f) flooding;
 - g) ground instability;
 - h) harmful emissions (including dust and wind-blown litter);
 - i) heat;
 - j) interference with radio transmission;
 - k) light;
 - l) noise;
 - m) radiation;
 - n) smell;
 - o) vibration;
 - p) visual distraction from moving machinery (including shadow flicker from wind turbines).

The Council's aim in applying Policy GDP/2 will be to resolve issues constructively through agreed proposals for mitigation or compensation wherever appropriate. However, there will be circumstances where this

is not possible and the adverse effects predicted, even allowing for all practical mitigation measures, are such as to justify refusal. Developers can assist a speedy decision by early discussion of likely requirements for supporting technical information and by ensuring that all relevant documentation accompanies the planning application.

- 4.14** The Council must be satisfied that development proposals within flood risk areas incorporate appropriate mitigation measures which are themselves environmentally acceptable. The Council will consult with the Environment Agency and Internal Drainage Boards as appropriate. Developers should have regard to PPS25 and the Environment Agency's Policy and Practice for the Protection of Flood Plains.
- 4.15** The main sources of water pollution include industrial processes, disturbance of contaminated land, run-off from roads and other impermeable surfaces, agricultural activity and foul sewage discharge to watercourses and to ground. In certain circumstances, development can increase the risk of foul sewage discharge into open watercourses.
- 4.16** The disposal of surface water run-off from development both during construction and after completion requires careful consideration in order to minimise harm to the environment. Development that, in the opinion of the Council after consultation with the Environment Agency, poses an unacceptable risk of pollution of or damage to the water environment either directly or via the surface water sewerage system, or which does not dispose of surface water run-off in an acceptable manner, will only be permitted if these concerns can be overcome. Policy GDP/4 provides additional policy direction.
- 4.17** 'Light pollution' is outside the scope of any legislation enforced by the Council and planning policies must therefore ensure that artificial lighting does not result in unacceptable intrusion. Policy ECH/8 (Chapter 5) will also be relevant to proposals in the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 4.18** PPG24 indicates that the impact of noise can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and that the planning system has the task of guiding development to the most appropriate locations. Noise-sensitive development is categorised as "housing, hospitals and schools" (PPG24, para. 6). The Council considers that other uses such as libraries and some other community facilities may also be sensitive to an unacceptable degree of noise disturbance. In applying this policy the Council will have regard to the scale, nature and type of existing land uses in the surrounding area.
- 4.19** Proposals for noise-sensitive development that would be exposed to an existing noise source will be determined by reference to expected as well as current noise levels, e.g. if plant or roads are currently not operating at full capacity, their likely noise generation at full capacity will be taken into account. Additionally, permission will not be granted on unsubstantiated grounds that excessive noise is likely to be reduced at some indeterminate future date.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

Accommodation of development needs within a clean, pleasant and safe environment.

Output objective:

None.

Indicator:

Percentage of applications on which advice is received from relevant agencies that are approved against that advice.

Policy GDP/3 – Promoting good design and sustainable construction

Poorly designed development proposals will be rejected. In determining proposals, where appropriate and relevant, account will be taken of:

- i. whether the proposal safeguards and integrates important features such as areas of ecological, amenity or heritage value, views of public importance across the site and rights of way;
- ii. whether the siting, levels, density, form, scale, height, massing, detailing, colour and materials respect the characteristics of the site and its surroundings and avoids adverse effects within the site and upon adjoining areas through overlooking or overshadowing or overbearing impact;
- iii. whether the external areas form an integral part of the design, provide permeability and are of a scale and character appropriate to the development proposed and the surrounding area;
- iv. whether hard and soft landscaping forms an integral part of the design and incorporates important existing features;
- v. whether the proposal includes elements to reduce opportunities for crime through design and ensuring clear distinctions between private and public spaces;
- vi. whether the proposal enables private and emergency vehicular access having regard to the nature of the site, visibility, loading, turning and parking requirements in accordance with the adopted standards;
- vii. whether the proposal makes provision for convenient, safe and attractive access for pedestrians (including those with physical and sensory disabilities), cyclists and where appropriate for public transport and linkages to wider networks;
- viii. whether provision is made for the storage of waste and recyclable materials in locations that would not harm local amenity and that would enable collection from the public highway;

- ix. whether the proposal makes a positive contribution to a high level of energy saving, over and above that required by building regulations, through siting, orientation, built form, renewable energy technologies, design and materials;
- x. whether provision is made for the protection of users from inclement weather and excessive sun;
- xi. whether the proposal would prejudice the comprehensive development of a larger site of which it forms part.

Mixed use schemes in town and district centres will be permitted where the proposed uses are compatible with each other and with adjacent areas.

4.20 A high standard of planning and design is expected of all development. The urban design objectives set out in CABE & DETR's *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice* (2000) are considered an appropriate basis upon which to establish broad design principles to be followed, to include: consideration of character; continuity and enclosure; quality of the public realm; ease of movement; legibility; adaptability; and diversity.

4.21 Design statements and assessments in support of development proposals need to be explicit and focus on fundamental issues such as layouts, movement patterns, pedestrian convenience, definition of external spaces, avoidance of vehicle domination and contextual analysis. These requirements should avoid subjective stylistic preferences. It is not considered appropriate to lay down rigid or prescriptive design criteria, which could lead to a loss of local distinctiveness. In general, new development should seek inspiration from its surroundings, but this does not mean it has to repeat what already exists. Indeed, visual diversity can be complementary if well-designed. What is required is development that responds to its local setting, rather than being 'off the peg'. The *Urban Design Compendium* (2000), published by English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation, provides examples of good practice.

4.22 The nature of development will influence the form of design, but good design will be required regardless of the quality of existing surroundings. All developments should demonstrate that proper consideration has been given to the design and impact of the proposal but particularly high standards of design and finish will be sought in prominent, 'gateway' and environmentally-sensitive locations.

4.23 The Council will aim to lead by example, incorporating best practice into its own schemes wherever cost-effective to do so. It has signed up to the regional sustainable construction charter, 'Future Foundations', making a specific policy commitment to the aims of the document and committing itself to auditing its activity and improving its performance. Through this commitment the Council will seek to ensure new development will contribute to a more sustainable North Somerset. This will be determined against published targets through Government-supported programmes run through the Building Research Establishment

(BRE) concerning environmental standards for different types of building. Current schemes are EcoHomes and BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) and a number of larger developments within North Somerset are being developed to the relevant standards. Further information is available from BRE. Help is also available to developers in providing expert advice to meet these standards. The current scheme is Design Advice.

- 4.24** Design guidance and assessment Policy GDP/3 sets out the main considerations to be taken into account as part of the process of drawing up a planning application. Additional guidance may be appropriate in environmentally-sensitive locations or for areas of major development.
- 4.25** A consistent approach is essential if valued local characteristics are to be retained and enhanced in new development. One poor quality design can undo the hard work that has gone into achieving high standards on neighbouring sites. Supplementary planning guidance (SPG) has been produced to assist designers seeking inspiration from local perceptions of place. The Council has adopted as SPG a number of Village Character Statements, prepared in co-operation with local residents. The Countryside Agency now promotes Parish Plans as a replacement for Village Character Statements. These are more wide-ranging in their scope but some aspects may be suitable for incorporation into supplementary planning documents (SPD), which now take the place of SPG.
- 4.26** More detailed master plans or development briefs will be required for the more significant sites. These should be prepared in consultation with the Council and have regard to advice contained in the DETR guide Planning and Development Briefs: A Guide to Better Practice (1998). Such briefs should be prepared in advance of the submission of planning applications and should be made available for public consultation.
- 4.27** Early informal consultation with planning officers is encouraged, as is the use of architects, or other relevant professionals, for all but the smallest schemes. In the case of larger, architect-designed schemes, the Council will require the submission of a design statement setting out the design principles for the site, immediate buildings and also the wider context. Design statements should include an explanation of the proposed design concept and how the development will address the design principles set out in Policy GDP/3. Other applicants for planning permission will be encouraged to provide supporting statements setting out, against a checklist, how their proposals contribute to achieving sustainable development. Such statements will need to address macro elements, e.g. location and layout, and micro components, e.g. materials and building design. By using externally audited schemes under BRE, the need to provide detailed explanation will be avoided.
- 4.28** **Landscape and layout** The retention of elements of pre-existing landscapes, such as rhynes, roads and hedgerows, can help to integrate new development into its physical surroundings. The retention of traditional names, such as the use of field names for new roads, can re-inforce this. For new planting, the use of native species of local provenance can sustain and enhance distinctiveness and biodiversity (see Policy ECH/10, Chapter 5).

- 4.29** The need to use land more efficiently is putting ever more pressure on open spaces within built-up areas. The value of open spaces, especially where there is the potential for linking spaces, needs to be recognised through the design process. Generally, site layouts should enhance movement choice, giving emphasis to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. Developers should aim to create a worthwhile public realm that is a feature in its own right and not simply the space left over between the buildings (see also Policy ECH/2, Chapter 5). *Places, Streets and Movement – a companion guide to Design Bulletin 32 Residential Roads and Footpaths (DETR, 1998)* gives guidance on how residential areas should be designed having regard to sustainability and the priority to be given to the relationship between buildings, rather than road layout. *By Design: Better Places to Live – a companion guide to PPG 3 (DTLR & CABE, 2001)* provides further advice on residential development.
- 4.30** Layouts should also consider the needs of sustainable waste management, with the aim of facilitating the separation of different wastes for recycling or other appropriate treatment. This will be a significant consideration in commercial developments but will also be relevant to facilitating kerbside collection of separated waste within residential layouts. The Council's specific policies on waste management facilities, including recycling banks, are set out in the North Somerset Waste Local Plan.
- 4.31** PPS3 encourages increased densities in residential developments. These should not be achieved at the expense of amenity, although it will often be more appropriate to consider amenity in terms of objectives rather than over-prescriptive standards. Many well-loved areas in towns and villages are actually built at densities way beyond even the higher figures promoted by the Government, while some high-rise tower blocks were built at lower densities than PPS3 recommends. Given the enormous variety in house size, different schemes with the same average density in dwellings per hectare can have very different visual impacts. A wider mix of housing types within a site will immediately produce greater design diversity.
- 4.32** **Access, safety and security** When a new building or change of use is proposed, developers must consider the needs of people with mobility impairment who might use the building. The same considerations should apply to the design of public spaces. The built environment is often not designed for the needs of people with mobility impairment. As a result, these people often experience a hostile environment that can make activities such as shopping, getting to work and meeting people very difficult.
- 4.33** Part M of the Building Regulations (which covers access and facilities for people with disabilities) imposes certain basic requirements in respect of disabled access. Policy GDP/3 is intended to complement the Building Regulations by ensuring that access issues are considered at an early stage in the development process. When a building is intended to be accessible to the public, suitable access for people with mobility impairment is a material consideration in determining a planning

application and, where appropriate, the Council may impose conditions requiring suitable access provision. However, planning control can only be imposed on the outside environment of such buildings. Such provision can include:

- suitable access to building entrances from adjoining streets and setting-down points, e.g. ramps or ramped kerbs;
- suitable car parking spaces for the disabled;
- signposting of the route to an entrance accessible for disabled visitors.
- the Council has recently prepared guidelines on this subject (see Appendix 2).

4.34 New housing should contribute to meeting the needs of people whose mobility is impaired and enable them to live in the community as independently as possible. Sample figures from the North Somerset 2001 Housing Needs Study indicate that 20% of households in the area contain someone with a disability, suggesting 15,797 households are affected in this way. In only 43% of cases does someone using a wheelchair live in a home that has been adapted for a wheelchair, suggesting a mismatch between houses adapted and those where wheelchair users live.

4.35 The Council will encourage the provision of dwellings adapted, or with the potential readily to be adapted, to meet the needs of disabled occupiers. Where there is clear evidence of local need, the Council will seek to negotiate with developers for an appropriate element of housing which is fully accessible to people with disabilities. This may include the provision of housing to 'mobility' or 'wheelchair' standards, which go beyond the minimum Part M standards. 'Mobility housing' is ordinary housing designed so it can be adapted to meet the needs of most people with disabilities. Overall space standards are the same as ordinary housing, but mobility housing may include:

- a level or ramped approach and flush threshold at the main entrance;
- corridors and doorsets to principal rooms, wide enough for wheelchair use; and
- bathroom, WC and at least one bedroom at entrance level.

Houses on two storeys may be suitable if they have a downstairs WC and a straight flight staircase.

4.36 On all suitable sites, the Council will seek to negotiate a proportion of new homes to be designed to mobility standards to reflect local requirements. The best locations for mobility homes are close to shops and public transport and in an area of level ground. The provision of 20% of new dwellings to mobility standards would reflect the existing proportion of households in North Somerset in need of that type of accommodation. Dwellings designed to mobility standards should extend across all tenures on the site. Suitable sites for such housing will be located close to shops, public transport and be in an area of level ground and pavements.

- 4.37** The Council will encourage developers to further enhance access to new homes by making use of the 'Lifetime Homes' standards promoted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. 'Lifetime Homes' standards seek to make homes more adaptable, convenient, safe and accessible than has traditionally been the case. They can be suitable not only for households that already include a disabled person, but also for those where people develop disabilities through accident, illness or old age. Under such circumstances, it is considered less disruptive if homes can be adapted to meet changing needs; this adaptability is an important aspect of sustainable development. These design features do not necessarily involve major increases in space standards and so need not necessarily involve significant extra costs.
- 4.38** PPS1 makes it clear that crime prevention is capable of being a material planning consideration. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 emphasises the importance of local action to make crime harder to commit. The design of buildings, public spaces and streets can play an important part in addressing problems of crime and disorder, though over-emphasis on physical defensive measures can be both socially divisive and visually unattractive. It is important that measures to reduce the risk of crime are introduced at the earliest stage of the design process so that they can be properly integrated into new developments. A guiding principle should be that public places should be self-policing, where crime is more difficult to commit and/or the risk of detection for potential offenders is increased. An example of how planning can assist is by encouraging residential accommodation within town centres to increase natural surveillance and make the area feel safer.
- 4.39** **Energy, water and climate** DETR's Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice (1998) states that "buildings account for almost half of the UK's delivered energy consumption and associated emissions of CO₂". Energy use starts with the materials used in construction (which themselves embody energy) and continues throughout the lifetime of the building as energy is used for heating, lighting and other purposes. If energy is wasted, it adds needlessly to increased global warming from the burning of fossil fuels.
- 4.40** Energy saving embraces both conservation and efficiency. 'Energy conservation' refers to measures to reduce demand at source, such as roof insulation to reduce heat loss. 'Energy efficiency' refers to the output of equipment producing heat and power in relation to inputs, for example, low energy light bulbs. Increasing the proportion of energy from renewable sources is part of a sustainable energy strategy but this will be more effective if total energy demand can be reduced.
- 4.41** These aspects require due consideration if the Plan is to properly reflect Government guidance (PPS12, para. 2.1) by taking economic, social and environmental considerations into account "comprehensively and consistently". Internal details of buildings are not usually relevant when considering planning applications, being dealt with under the Building Regulations, Part L of which provides guidance on energy efficiency. Planning issues do arise in relation to external appearance (including siting, design and materials) and the wider energy supply infrastructure

(except to the extent that energy utilities have permitted development rights). Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice states that "action by planning authorities to increase energy efficiency can complement building regulations... The areas in which planners can be particularly influential are combined heat and power schemes (CHP), site layout and, to a limited degree, building design... Changes in site layout (orientation, location on slope, landscaping) can reduce the energy requirements of a typical dwelling by 20%, through the 'free' ambient sources created by passive solar gain, and microclimate improvements."

4.42 Policy RE 6 of Regional Planning Guidance advises that development plans should promote energy conservation in new development. Policy GDP/3 therefore requires buildings to be sited and designed with regard to energy considerations. The Council will expect to see consideration given to:

- the design of buildings, for example in terms of maximising natural light and ventilation;
- the use of renewable and high energy efficiency materials in the construction process;
- water efficiency in terms of supply and drainage (see also Policy GDP/4).

4.43 New development should generally seek to maximise passive solar gain, e.g. by favouring southerly orientation of principal habitable rooms and avoiding large windows with a northerly aspect. Buildings that share side walls also generally benefit from reduced heat loss. Deciduous trees provide shade in the summer whilst permitting winter sun penetration. There is also scope for water conservation in landscaping proposals and use of trees and planting generally as windbreaks. Local climate is another important influence on design, quite apart from its influence on energy conservation. Global warming may affect how buildings are designed, to balance out the effects of expected increased rainfall and more intense sunshine.

4.44 At the overall development scale, community heating schemes including combined heat and power (CHP) could have a role. CHP represents one of the most significant means of achieving energy efficiency. It provides for the generation of power from a wide range of potential sources, including renewable biofuels, whilst using the heat generated from the process elsewhere on the development site. An ideal opportunity for CHP is in the development of large sites where the economies of scale are greatest. However, smaller sites, and existing developments may be appropriate for CHP as technology improves and incentives increase. The Government has set a national target of doubling the contribution of electricity from CHP between 2000 and 2010. Regional Planning Guidance also encourages CHP and community heating schemes and their integration into more energy-efficient new-build or redevelopment proposals. Consideration should therefore be given to the potential for incorporating CHP into the development where appropriate.

- 4.45** Policy GDP/3 seeks a high level of energy saving. A written appraisal of how sustainable construction principles will be incorporated into the development will therefore be required. The Council expects that commercial, industrial, retail institutional and community developments above 1000 sq.m. and all new dwellings, will generate a minimum of 15% of predicted energy requirements through on-site renewable energy generation systems.
- 4.46** **Other considerations** Development patterns that are more sustainable are also likely to be more dense and involve a greater mix of uses. Protecting neighbours from the effects of new development will therefore be increasingly important; conditions on noise, odour control and hours of operation (see Policy GDP/2) can complement careful siting and design. While some mixes may prove to be inappropriate in principle, the insertion of public space can sometimes provide a positive solution. Within mixed use areas, existing and potential, the balance of uses will change over time; adaptability is therefore a further consideration in the design of buildings, particularly in the zones of transition between uses.
- 4.47** A multiplicity of land ownerships can create difficulties in bringing land forward in a co-ordinated and efficient way where a development proposal should be considered as part of a wider development area. Where clear plans for comprehensive development exist, planning permission will not be granted for piecemeal development that might prejudice their proper implementation.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

New development to be of a high standard of design, visually and functionally, having regard to its location and the efficient use of land.

Output objective:

Preparation of 'sustainability checklist' for applicants.

Target:

Over remainder of Plan period (2004-2011), 75% of new homes completed to meet EcoHomes 'Good' standard, 5% to meet 'Excellent' standard; 75% of new commercial floorspace completed to meet BREEAM 'Good' standard.

Policy GDP/4 – Sustainable water management

Development that would:

- i. affect the continuing availability of local water resources;
- ii. create a demand for water that cannot be met from existing or planned resources without serious environmental harm;
- iii. alter the water table;
- iv. cause silt deposition;
- v. prevent maintenance of a water body or watercourse; or
- vi. preclude the solution to existing flooding problems

will only be permitted if adequate, environmentally-acceptable measures are incorporated which provide suitable protection or mitigation.

Where practical, such development will be required to incorporate sustainable drainage systems for the disposal of surface waters. If not, it must be demonstrated that an acceptable alternative means of surface water disposal is incorporated.

4.48 Drainage must not only avoid pollution but minimise the risk of flooding. Development itself needs to be located and designed to minimise all of these problems. New techniques such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) require an increasingly integrated approach to water management.

4.49 The Council will work closely with the Environment Agency, the Internal Drainage Boards and the water and sewerage companies to minimise problems and will consult them as necessary on planning applications that affect their interests. It should be noted that land drainage and flood defence in the North Somerset Moors is a complex matter on which specialist advice should be sought at an early stage in formulating proposals.

4.50 Policy GDP/2 seeks to protect the water environment against the risk of pollution arising from development. It also seeks to avoid unacceptable increases in flood risk. Policy GDP/4 is complementary, seeking to protect the availability of water resources and promoting a more holistic, sustainable approach to drainage issues.

4.51 New developments should be located and designed in ways that minimise or eliminate the environmental impact of additional demand for water.

4.52 It is recognised that traditional 'hard' drainage systems continue to play a part in the provision of surface water infrastructure. However, these methods should only be utilised once it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council, advised by the Environment Agency and the appropriate drainage authority, that source control would not be successful and an alternative acceptable means of surface water disposal

has been indicated. The willingness of drainage authorities to adopt and maintain SuDs remains a constraint on their universal use; the suitability – including sustainability – of arrangements for future maintenance will be taken into account in determining whether SuDS is a practicable solution in individual cases.

- 4.53 Maintenance of the water environment** The water environment serves many purposes. It is crucial to sustaining biodiversity, ensuring human health and providing for a range of uses including construction, manufacturing and recreation. The management of surface water features, such as rivers and their corridors, ponds and lakes, offers great potential to contribute positively to biodiversity, the amenity of an area and the wider landscape. Rhynes are important to the character of the Levels and Moors and have a particular ecological significance. They also have an important role in flood prevention (see paras. 4.48-4.49). They can be easily damaged when development takes place and need to be handled sensitively.
- 4.54** Proposals for development adjacent to any water body or watercourse should, where appropriate, provide satisfactory access for future maintenance of the water body or watercourse. Maintaining the banks, cutting vegetation and litter clearance may all require appropriately designed access for machinery but this should avoid conflict with conservation of the ecology or adverse impact on the landscape. The creation of a maintenance strip can also provide a buffer zone adjacent to rivers and streams for landscape, wildlife and amenity purposes.
- 4.55** Where appropriate, the Council will seek agreements with developers to provide for the future management of wetland habitats. Developers will be expected to meet appropriate costs through planning obligations to provide any appropriate measure to mitigate the effects of water discharge and surface water drainage impact and provide appropriate long-term management (see Policy GDP/5).

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

No net rise in rate of run-off from greenfield employment and residential development sites.

Output objective:

None.

Target:

Rate of run-off after development no greater than before development activity took place (measured on catchment-wide basis).

Policy GDP/5 – Developer contributions to infrastructure and other planning requirements

Development will only be permitted where adequate provision has been made for:

- (a) infrastructure necessary in planning terms for the development to proceed; and
- (b) other services and facilities, the need for which arises directly from the development.

Where a proposed development would otherwise result in unavoidable deficiencies in infrastructure, services, cultural or community facilities or environmental protection measures, provision will be sought to remedy such deficiencies. Appropriate provision will also be sought for mitigation or compensation measures to offset any significant environmental harm unavoidably resulting from the development.

4.56 Development can create a need for the provision of additional services or infrastructure and facilities, both on-site and off-site. This provision may include, for example:

- highway and other transport improvements;
- emergency and utility services;
- community and social facilities;
- leisure and recreation facilities;
- education and health facilities; and
- measures to protect and enhance amenity or the environment, including biodiversity and wildlife habitats, or the enhancement of sites of cultural importance.

4.57 The provision sought will be fairly and reasonably related to the development proposals in scale and kind. It will be secured either as part of the proposals, through the use of conditions attached to planning permissions, or through planning obligations (section 106 agreements). Where, in the opinion of the local planning authority, provision on an application site is not feasible or appropriate, provision elsewhere, or a contribution towards this provision (including enhancements of existing provision in the vicinity), will be sought. Where a planning application is for part of a larger area planned for development, pro rata provision, or a pro rata contribution towards provision, will be sought. In such cases, provision must be phased in line with the emergence of needs arising from the development.

4.58 'Infrastructure' will be regarded as including employment infrastructure, such as the provision of suitable employment buildings or serviced employment land to meet the needs generated by the proposed development. In the case of mixed use developments including both employment and housing, phasing will be required to ensure that the employment element is completed in advance of the final phase(s) of housing. On smaller sites, off-site contributions will be sought, together

with identification of a suitable delivery partner, such as the Regional Development Agency.

- 4.59** In exceptional circumstances, significant environmental harm may result from development that is acceptable in principle because of social or economic gains (or indirect environmental gains, such as reduced out-commuting). In such cases, appropriate provision for mitigation or compensation will be sought and planning permission will not normally be granted without it.
- 4.60** As it is undesirable for development to create undue additional burdens on the community or the public purse, developers should accept the financial consequences of their schemes. The Council's preference is that negotiations with developers as part of the process of determining planning applications, or conditions attached to planning permissions, will be used to create acceptable development in line with the policies and proposals in this Plan, including the provision of all relevant services, infrastructure and facilities. DoE Circular 11/95: The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions provides relevant advice. If the necessary requirements generated by a development cannot be achieved through such negotiations or conditions, they will normally be secured as planning obligations under section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by section 12(1) of the Planning & Compensation Act 1991) in association with the grant of planning permission. ODPM Circular 05/2005: Planning Obligations provides general guidance on the use of these powers.
- 4.61** There is a need to ensure that development is co-ordinated with the necessary infrastructure it demands and the development of local communities. In pursuit of these objectives, planning conditions and planning obligations will be used in accordance with Circular advice.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

Development to contribute fairly to the provision of infrastructure and other needs arising from it.

Output objective:

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Target/Indicator:

- (A) All heads of terms under S106 agreements delivered on developments that proceed to construction;
- (B) Value of provision made through planning obligations.

4

C H A P T E R

Environment and cultural heritage

Introduction

- 5.1** This chapter sets out the Council's policies designed to protect the environment and cultural heritage of North Somerset. These include policies to conserve and enhance the built, historic and natural environment, including landscape, and to promote biodiversity.

Aim

- 5.2** The Council aims to safeguard the rich and varied built, historic and natural heritage of North Somerset in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. We need to allow for necessary change and development, but in such a way that the character of the area is not adversely affected by insensitively located and designed development. Policies are included in this chapter that aim to protect and enhance the natural environment, cultural landscape, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings and Historic Parks and Gardens.

Objective

- 5.3** The Local Plan objective in respect of the environment and cultural heritage is:

to protect and enhance the quality, local distinctiveness and diversity of the natural environment and cultural heritage by protecting and enhancing known environmental and cultural assets, wildlife habitats and connecting linear features and continuing to identify new ones.

Local Plan Policies

Policy ECH/1 – Amenity areas and gateways to settlements

Planning permission will not be granted for development that unacceptably harms the amenity of open space of public value defined as an Amenity Area on the Proposals Map, or the approaches or gateways to towns and villages, unless the proposal would result in a qualitative improvement in Amenity Area provision or where the Amenity Area is recognised as being surplus to requirements.

- 5.4** Amenity Areas include the public realm, open space and other land identified in this Plan as having amenity value, such as Millennium

Greens. There are many features in North Somerset that act as familiar landmarks and contribute much to the character of settlements and enhance the quality of the environment. The identified areas of public value may or may not enjoy public access, or be visible from the public highway. The areas may be either in public or private ownership but contribute to the public realm. Parks, playing fields, informal open spaces, allotments and other open areas can all be of great importance to the character of an area. Some open spaces, including allotments and outdoor playing space, are protected by Policy CF/4 (Chapter 11). However, other areas of land of amenity value to the public are not so protected. It is intended that the amenity value of Amenity Areas is protected by Policy ECH/1, although there may be circumstances where their development, wholly or in part, may result in qualitative improvements to such provision. A review of Amenity Areas will be undertaken.

- 5.5** The approaches or 'gateways' to towns and villages are no less important than the appearance and image of towns and villages themselves. They can be of particular relevance to visitors, and it has been a long-standing policy in respect of Weston-super-Mare to protect the approaches from inappropriate development, especially to the south and east, where the open spaces make an attractive entrance to the town. This approach, reflecting the character, should apply to gateways to all North Somerset towns and villages. Village Character or Design Statements can be used to identify approaches or gateways to settlements and identify their distinctive character.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To ensure that development does not unacceptably harm the amenity of Amenity Areas as identified on the Proposals Map.

Output objective:

Through development control and the monitoring of planning applications and the review of Amenity Areas.

Target:

There should be no net loss of Amenity Areas over the Plan period.

Policy ECH/2 – Public art

In determining planning applications, regard will be taken of the contribution made by the new works of art to the appearance of the development, particularly where such works provide benefits to the amenities of the area.

- 5.6** Public art can play a significant role in enhancing local distinctiveness and a sense of place and make an important contribution to the quality of life. It can benefit the local economy by providing opportunities for local artists and local community involvement and help economic

development initiatives by improving the area's image to potential investors. Public art can be a significant element in urban regeneration schemes.

5.7 As part of its responsibility for enhancing the environment, the Council will encourage developers of major development sites to consider the public appearance of buildings and the spaces around them, and, where appropriate, the integration of works of art and craft, or facilities for performing. This will be a particular consideration where there is public access to a site or it occupies a prominent position. Such art, which should reflect its context, may take many forms. For example, it could include pieces of sculpture, the use of relief brickwork, decorative railings, stained glass, metal work, murals, street furniture and performance venues. On major sites where there may be a number of developers, it may be appropriate to negotiate commuted payments to allow for one significant piece of work to be commissioned instead of minor ones. In either case, provision for the maintenance of public art should be made subject to Circular advice on Planning Obligations. The Council agreed guidance on the approach to encouraging public art in 1999.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To increase the number of public art schemes through major development.

Output objective:

Through development control and the monitoring of planning applications.

Target:

80% of major schemes should include or make a contribution to public art.

Policy ECH/3 – Conservation areas

Development within a Conservation Area, or development elsewhere likely to affect the setting of, or the views into and out of, a Conservation Area, will be permitted provided that it preserves or enhances:

- i. the character or appearance of the area; and
- ii. features of special architectural or historic interest of the area; and
- iii. other elements of the townscape, including traditional buildings and public realm that make a positive contribution to the quality of the area's character and appearance.

In the case of proposals for demolition of buildings or structures that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, there will be a presumption in favour of retention unless it can be demonstrated that there is no viable alternative use.

- 5.8** There are 34 Conservation Areas in North Somerset. They vary in scale and character from the Victorian areas in Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon, to whole villages such as Walton-in-Gordano and Loxton. The boundaries of existing designated Conservation Areas in North Somerset are shown on the Proposals Map.
- 5.9** The Council will, when considering proposals within a Conservation Area, secure the retention of the existing features and buildings that contribute to its character. When determining applications for new development, the Council will pay regard to the above, and also to matters such as bulk, height, materials, colour, vertical or horizontal emphasis and design. Outline applications for development will therefore not be acceptable. Before considering proposals involving new buildings or redevelopment involving demolition within Conservation Areas, the Council will request that detailed plans and elevations showing the effect of the proposed development on the setting of the site, for example adjacent buildings, walls, trees and other important features, are provided in support.
- 5.10** Proposals for change of use within Conservation Areas will be permitted where they are consistent with maintaining their viability, character or appearance. Policy ECH/3 is designed to safeguard Conservation Areas from inappropriate development or change that may be detrimental and to encourage development that can make a positive contribution to the preservation or enhancement of these areas.
- 5.11** Permission for the demolition or redevelopment of a building of individual merit or group value will be exceptional. The implementation of any consent for demolition will only be permitted where there is clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to retain existing uses or introduce new viable uses and following the letting of a contract for approved redevelopment. Proposals for demolition or for significant undergrounding of services must also comply with Policy ECH/6 in relation to archaeological assessment and recording of the building or structure.
- 5.12** There are forms of development that can be carried out without planning permission, which in sensitive areas, such as Conservation Areas, would have a harmful effect. Where there is a demonstrable need, the Council may seek to control such development by making an Article 4 Direction.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

- (1) No demolition of buildings within Conservation Areas that contribute to the character of the Conservation Area or new development permitted that detracts from the character of the Conservation Area.
- (2) To undertake a programme of Conservation Area Appraisals and preparation of enhancement schemes.

Output objective:

Through development control and the monitoring of planning applications and an assessment of quality in and adjacent to Conservation Areas, and through Conservation Area Appraisals.

Target:

- (A) Development in and adjacent to Conservation Areas should reflect character;
- (B) Appraise two Conservation Areas each year and prepare enhancement schemes.

Policy ECH/4 – Listed buildings

Development proposals requiring planning permission affecting a Listed Building and / or its setting only will be approved where the following criteria can be satisfied:

- i. the architectural and historic interest of the building and its setting is preserved; and
- ii. the style, design, plan and other features of special architectural or historic interest are preserved; and
- iii. any conversion or proposed new use would be compatible with the preservation of the building.

When considering planning applications that would result in the demolition or substantial demolition of Listed Buildings there will be a strong presumption in favour of preservation.

5.13 Policy ECH/4 sets out the criteria by which any proposal requiring planning permission will be judged. It also seeks to control development affecting the setting of Listed Buildings. Applicants will be expected to justify their proposals and show why works, which would affect the character of a Listed Building, are desirable or necessary. Applicants should provide the Council with full information to enable an assessment to be made of the impact of the proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and its setting. A high standard of design and detailing will be expected where alterations to a Listed Building are proposed. Proposals for Listed Building Consent will also be judged directly against the advice given in PPG15 and English Heritage guidance.

5.14 It is important for applications to have regard to archaeological considerations. Historic buildings may be scheduled as ancient monuments or otherwise of intrinsic archaeological interest, or occupy land that contains archaeological remains. In such cases there should be appropriate assessment of the archaeological implications of development proposals before applications are determined. It may also be necessary for arrangements to be made for recording remains that would be lost as a consequence of the works for which permission is sought. This should be in accordance with Policy ECH/6.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

The retention of the architectural and historic interest of Listed Buildings and their settings.

Output objective:

- (1) Through development control and the monitoring of planning applications;
- (2) Monitoring the number of buildings on the Register of Listed Buildings at Risk.

Target:

No loss of Listed Buildings in North Somerset.

Policy ECH/5 – Historic parks and gardens

Development likely to affect a Historic Park or Garden identified on the Proposals Map, or its setting, will only be permitted where:

- i. its historic character and appearance will not be unacceptably harmed; and
- ii. its historic importance will not be unacceptably harmed; and
- iii. the development enables features, landscaping and planting schemes of historic interest to be conserved, enhanced or restored.

5.15 Historic Parks and Gardens are an important part of North Somerset's heritage. They may illustrate some aspect of the Park or Garden's history or of the history of gardening or horticulture, have an association with a particular person or event or form the setting for a building of historic interest. They are important in historical and landscape terms and may also be of wildlife or recreational value. English Heritage has compiled a Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England with the intention that public knowledge of their existence will help protect them from development pressures. No additional planning controls apply to Parks and Gardens in the register nor are existing planning or Listed Building controls affected.

5.16 Within North Somerset, Ashton Court, Barrow Court, Clevedon Court, Leigh Court, Tyntesfield, Barley Wood, Bristol University Botanic Gardens and Rayne Thatch and Grove Park, Weston-super Mare are included on the Register of Parks and Gardens and are shown on the Proposals Map.

5.17 The sites on the English Heritage Register are considered to be of national importance. There are other gardens, parks, designated landscapes, grounds or places of recreation, which are of historic interest. Some of these may be added to the Register in future. All entries are included on the Proposals Map and are also included on the Sites and Monuments Record and as such are subject to the procedures described below for the treatment of archaeological sites.

5.18 Historic Parks and Gardens are often under threat of unsympathetic development or other activities and the Council will resist proposals that would destroy or harm the character or appearance of these sites, including their setting. Planning applications affecting Historic Parks and Gardens will be referred to the Avon Gardens Trust for advice. Applicants may, where appropriate, be requested to provide historic landscape assessments before planning applications are determined.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To protect the historic character and importance of Historic Parks and Gardens from development.

Output objective:

Through development control and the monitoring of planning applications likely to affect Historic Parks and Gardens

Policy ECH/6 – Archaeology

Development will not be permitted where it would involve significant alteration or cause damage to nationally-important archaeological remains (whether Scheduled or not), or would have a significant impact on the setting of such remains.

5.19 Archaeological remains are not only important for their historical and educational interest, but are often important features in the landscape and can be of recreational value. The Council has adopted six archaeological guidance notes. These relate to archaeology and development in the following circumstances:

- The North Somerset Moors;
- Small Medieval Towns and Historic Village Centres;
- Human Remains and Burial Grounds;
- Military Sites;
- Industrial Sites; and
- The Coast and Inter-tidal Zone.

These will form the basis of forthcoming supplementary planning guidance on archaeology and development. This may also refer to proposals for further archaeological survey or research, including the potential role of community archaeology as a means of providing opportunities for training and for undertaking important research relevant to cultural history.

5.20 The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) contains details of all known sites, structures, landscapes or other areas of archaeological interest in North Somerset and is continually being updated. Applicants will need to consult the North Somerset Archaeologist for a professional opinion on the archaeological implications of their development proposals.

- 5.21 Scheduled Ancient Monuments** Scheduled Monuments are designated by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended). He has a duty to compile a list of monuments of archaeological, architectural and historic and traditional interest which are considered to be of national importance. Scheduled Ancient Monuments are shown on the Proposals Map and are included in the Sites and Monuments record.
- 5.22** Not all sites of national importance have been scheduled and the Council will seek to protect both scheduled and unscheduled sites of national importance and their settings. The Schedule of Ancient Monuments is under continuous revision. Applicants should consult the Council's Archaeologist or English Heritage (who are the statutory advisers to the Secretary of State on archaeological and other 'heritage' matters) concerning the status of land in which they have an interest.
- 5.23** Where planning applications are received on a site that is scheduled or contains a Scheduled Monument, the Council will not determine the application until the Scheduled Monument Consent application has been determined. Buildings can be both scheduled and listed and where this is the case, ancient monument legislation takes precedence and Scheduled Monument Consent rather than Listed Building Consent is required.
- 5.24** In line with advice in PPG16, the Council will ensure that archaeological interests are fully taken into account when determining planning applications. Prior to the submission of planning applications, applicants are advised to consult the Sites and Monuments Record to find out whether their proposals affect, or are likely to affect, important archaeological remains. If the proposal affects a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Scheduled Monument Consent will be required. Planning applications affecting Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other nationally important remains will be assessed against Policy ECH/6.
- 5.25** 'Locally-important archaeological remains' are defined as all sites, structures, landscapes or other areas of archaeological interest which are either included on the Sites and Monuments Record, or which lie within areas known to be of high archaeological potential, such as the Levels or historic village centres. Where there is good reason to believe that development proposals could affect locally-important archaeological remains, the Council will seek a field evaluation and assessment to establish the extent and importance of the remains before the planning application is determined. Where such assessment indicates the development would affect locally-important archaeological remains and the Council considers preservation in situ is not justified it will seek before permission is granted a formal voluntary agreement by the developer to excavate and record the remains, and to publish the results, or may grant permission subject to conditions requiring an approved programme of archaeological work to be undertaken before development commences.
- 5.26** Where the proposal affects, or there is reason to believe that it may affect, locally-important archaeological remains, the Council will not

determine the application until the results of the archaeological assessment are known.

- 5.27** It is nearly always preferable that archaeological remains are preserved 'in situ' as even archaeological excavation means the total destruction of evidence, apart from removable artifacts. In some cases, the proposed development will not adversely affect the particular interest; in other cases, applicants will be required to modify their proposal to take account of the archaeological remains, for example by using foundations which avoid disturbing the remains or by the careful siting of landscaped or open areas.
- 5.28** In cases where the Council decides that it is not necessary to preserve remains 'in situ', developers will be required to make appropriate and satisfactory provision for the excavation and recording of the remains before development commences. Formal voluntary legal agreements will be sought with developers, before permission is granted, to excavate and record the remains and to publish the results. Alternatively, planning conditions will be attached to the grant of planning permission requiring an approved programme of archaeological work to be undertaken before development commences, which may include the deposition of geotechnical information. Where the proposal does not make satisfactory provision for the preservation of the remains either 'in situ' or by record, planning permission will not be granted.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To retain all Scheduled Ancient Monuments and where appropriate, excavate and record locally-important archaeological remains at risk from development.

Output objective:

- (1) Through development control and the monitoring of planning applications likely to affect nationally and locally important archaeological remains, and the Sites and Monuments Record;
- (2) Publication of supplementary planning guidance on archaeology and development.

Target:

All Scheduled Ancient Monuments to be retained.

Policy ECH/7 – Landscape Character Areas

Within the Landscape Character Areas, development will be permitted if it will not adversely affect the particular character of the landscape.

- 5.29** Attractive landscapes are important in their own right but may be of biodiversity interest or of cultural or recreational value. Mendip is a landscape of national significance and has been designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are particular areas within the

North Somerset countryside that have a particularly strong local landscape character and a particularly high visual value. The landscape character of North Somerset is described in the Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document.

- 5.30** Other landscapes or landscape features within North Somerset are of more local significance and are of value, especially to local people. When considering planning applications, the Council will take account of the character of the landscape and will resist development that would significantly detract from the landscape character or quality of the area in which it is sited, but where improvements to the landscape may be regarded as a benefit. Where development is permitted, the Council will ensure new development is of high quality design and that, where applicable, landscape features are incorporated as part of such schemes.
- 5.31** There are rural areas of North Somerset in which there is a particular need to reduce the impact of existing disfigurements or major development, to restore local landscape character and individuality or to create new landscapes. Examples include Bristol International Airport, Royal Portbury Dock, and the southern fringe of Greater Bristol. The future development of these areas will require appropriate landscape management, special care through the operation of development control and the implementation of landscape improvement policies established in the North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, having regard to the operational demands of such businesses. Where practicable, development proposals should incorporate the creation of new landscape features, or elements that contribute to the character of the locality.
- 5.32** Encouragement will be given to proposals that improve the quality of the North Somerset landscape by carrying out tree planting or other enhancement works. Although priority will be given to areas within the Forest of Avon, there are other areas within North Somerset where the landscape should be enhanced. Natural England and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) operate initiatives and provide grant aid to enhance the landscape. These include the Environmental Stewardship, operated by DEFRA, which offers payments to farmers and other land managers to enhance and conserve landscapes, their wildlife and history and to help people to enjoy them. The Forestry Authority offers various grants both to provide new woodland planting and encourage appropriate management of existing woodland, such as their Woodland Grant Scheme. Where relevant, consideration will be given in planning applications to the preservation and sustainable management of the irreplaceable habitat of Ancient Woodland Sites and ancient trees.
- 5.33** Policy ECH/7 relates to development proposals within the Landscape Character Areas that are identified in more detail in Supplementary Planning Guidance on the Landscape Character of North Somerset. The policy is intended to ensure that development does not adversely affect landscape character. Development should contribute to the creation of places and spaces with the needs of people in mind, which are attractive, have their own distinctive identity and respects and enhances the particular local character of the landscape.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To protect and enhance the diversity, distinctiveness and quality of the North Somerset landscape.

Output objective:

- (1) Through development control and monitoring of planning applications;
- (2) Publication of supplementary planning guidance on landscape character.

Policy ECH/8 – Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Proposals for development, including advertisements, within the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will not be approved if they would harm the natural beauty of the landscape. Particular attention will be given to the siting, scale, size, character, design, materials and landscaping of the proposed development taking into account the economic and social well-being of the area.

Major development which would affect the environment and landscape of the Mendip Hills AONB will only be permitted where:

- i. there is a need for the development in terms of national considerations; and
- ii. there is no adverse effect on the local economy; and
- iii. there is a lack of an alternative site outside the area, having regard to the cost or means of meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- iv. any harm to the environment and natural beauty of the landscape of the AONB can be kept to a minimum and the development is carried out to high environmental standards.

Wherever possible new roads should be kept away from the AONB and, where they would be likely to affect it, proposals should demonstrate the need for the road and that the route and design would do as little damage to the environment as practicable.

5.34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's) are areas of fine landscape quality, of such great variety in character and extent that there is a national interest in protecting them. The primary objective of designation is conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape.

5.35 A Ministerial Statement on 13th June 2000 confirmed the Government's view that the landscape qualities of National Parks and Areas of Natural Beauty are equivalent. These areas have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.

5.36 Mendip was designated as an AONB in December 1972. A modification to the AONB boundary was confirmed by the Secretary of State in

October 1989. The Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers 206 sq. km. and is divided between the administrative areas of North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Mendip and Sedgemoor. The AONB boundary within North Somerset is shown, for information purposes on the Proposals Map.

- 5.37** AONB designation confers few additional powers on local authorities. However, the Council will use its powers under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 to ensure that the natural beauty of the area is protected and enhanced.
- 5.38** The Council's policies relating to the Mendip Hills AONB seek to:
- conserve and, where possible, enhance the natural beauty of the AONB; and
 - meet the economic and social needs of the local communities and the demand for recreation so far as this is consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.
- 5.39** PPG7 states that the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions. The environmental effects of new proposals will be a major consideration, though it will also be appropriate to have regard to the economic and social well-being of the area.
- 5.40** Following the Ministerial Statement in June 2000, major development proposals in AONBs are to be assessed against the same criteria as apply to major developments in National Parks. These have to be demonstrated to be in the public interest before being allowed to proceed. Paragraph 22 of PPS7 provides guidance on the matters that will normally need to be assessed in the consideration of proposals for major developments in AONBs. These include the need for the development, in terms of national considerations, and the impact of permitting it or refusing it on the local economy. Also required is consideration of the cost of and scope for developing elsewhere outside the area or meeting the need in some other way. Also relevant is the consideration of any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape, and recreational opportunities and the extent to which that should be moderated.
- 5.41** **Development in the Mendip Hills AONB** In order to achieve the objectives for Mendip set out above, the policies contained elsewhere in the Plan restricting development in the open countryside will apply equally throughout the AONB. In addition to those policies, Policy ECH/8 aims to protect the Mendip Hills AONB within North Somerset from inappropriate development (including alterations or extensions to existing dwellings or other buildings) which would harm the natural beauty of the landscape. Any development which is permitted (i.e. development which would not harm the natural beauty of the landscape of the AONB and is in line with other policies in this Plan) must pay particular attention to detailed siting, design and landscaping matters.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

The retention of high quality Mendip landscape and biodiversity.

Output objective:

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications and through supplementary planning guidance, including the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan.

Policy ECH/9 – Forest of Avon

Within the defined area of the Forest of Avon, landowners and developers will be encouraged to promote its aims and objectives. Where development is permitted, conditions may be imposed or planning obligations sought requiring the design and materials of any buildings, and any related landscaping and planting, to reflect the developing woodland setting, assist in establishing the Forest or otherwise not conflict with community forest projects.

- 5.42** The Forest of Avon aims to develop a multi-purpose green infrastructure that will create better environments for people to use, cherish and enjoy. Although over 1 million trees have been planted the Forest of Avon will not be continuous tree cover. Instead a rich mosaic of woods, farms, nature areas and public open space will form a well-wooded landscape for wildlife, work, recreation and education. Eventually up to 30% of the area will be wooded with exciting new opportunities created for sustainable timber production, woodland crafts, recreation and the arts as well as new habitats for wildlife. The project will take up to 50 years to complete.
- 5.43** Policy ECH/9 is supported by supplementary planning guidance illustrating the way in which development permitted in the area will be encouraged to make an appropriate contribution towards Forest objectives. Depending on the existing landscape character, this contribution may take the form of woodland planting, improved public access or other recreational benefit or new wildlife habitats. Policy ECH/9 does not override Green Belt policy; its intention is to encourage proposals for development to respect and promote the objectives of the Forest of Avon.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To support the achievement of the objectives of designating the Forest of Avon as a Community Forest by increasing woodland cover and improving public access.

Output objective:

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications and through the Forest of Avon Management Plan and supplementary planning guidance.

Policy ECH/10 – Biodiversity

Development that is likely to have a significant impact upon biodiversity will not be permitted unless there is an overriding need for the development in the proposed location or measures can be introduced to mitigate such an impact.

- 5.44** Biodiversity is concerned with the rich variety of plant and animal species of different life forms and the variety of habitats, and is an essential element of sustainable development. Therefore the assessment of the impact of proposals for development on biodiversity is essential if the overall aims and objectives of sustainable development are to be achieved.
- 5.45** North Somerset contains a range of habitats of biodiversity interest. The total area of land is 38,960 hectares, and semi-natural habitats comprise some 8% of the North Somerset land area, with broad-leaved woodland being the most common habitat type. Areas of semi-natural vegetation are the most important for biodiversity because they support the highest number of native British species. It is vital that the remaining areas of semi-natural habitats are protected and enhanced.
- 5.46** All development proposals will be expected to fully consider the implications for biodiversity, and in particular should ensure no net loss of biodiversity, and that species and habitats set out in the UK and local biodiversity action plans will be protected and where possible, enhanced. Where development is permitted it is important to ensure that:
- i. important woodland, trees, hedgerows, watercourses, ponds, wetland habitats, geological features, rhynes and other major natural features, habitats or wildlife corridors are retained and protected during construction work; and
 - ii. compensatory provision, within the site itself, or immediate vicinity if practicable, of at least equivalent biodiversity value is made where the loss of habitats or features of importance to wild flora and fauna is unavoidable; and
 - iii. habitat features attractive to wildlife including those which meet the needs of particular species, are, where appropriate, incorporated in the development; and
 - iv. provision is made for the future management of retained and newly created features of importance to wildlife; and
 - v. where necessary and opportune, arrangements will be made to undertake the management and enhancement of landscape features which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna as part of the development proposals; and
 - vi. local character will be maintained by appropriate planting of native species of local provenance wherever possible.

5.47 Such development proposals will be required to be accompanied by, as part of the application details, a full biodiversity impact assessment to include the following details:

- a) a description of the biodiversity interest of the site, having regard to the Natural Area; and
- b) the nature and extent of the impact on biodiversity of the proposed development or change of use of land; and
- c) the steps to be taken to protect, enhance, and where appropriate, manage, retain and incorporate the biodiversity interest into the proposals; and
- d) where possible, link existing habitats which could potentially be of importance for wildlife; and
- e) where appropriate, the mitigation and compensation measures required to restore habitats and/or create new habitats.

5.48 As part of an evolving programme of drawing attention to species and habitats that are at most risk of damage, and in the interests of promoting biodiversity and sustainability, the Council has prepared Action for Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan for North Somerset.

5.49 Regulation 37 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 ('the Habitats Regulations') provides that the statutory requirement to include in local plans policies for the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of the land shall be taken to include those encouraging the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna. The Council will, where appropriate, carry out such management on its own land or negotiate agreements with other public and private landowners. Where necessary, management will be promoted through the use of suitable planning conditions and / or legal agreements. Priority will be given to those features that can be demonstrated, because of their linear and continuous structure or their function as stepping stones, to be essential for migration dispersal and genetic exchange.

5.50 Trees are important for their intrinsic beauty, their contribution to the landscape or townscape, their role in absorbing carbon dioxide, screening eyesores or softening the appearance of new development, giving out oxygen, and their value for wildlife and timber.

5.51 It is important that existing trees and woodlands are protected, especially as new tree planting takes many years to make a significant impact on the landscape. The Council will use its powers to make Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) where trees and woodland of amenity value are under threat and will take action against anyone destroying or damaging a protected tree. Trees in Conservation Areas are also given some degree of protection. Technical advice on the care of protected trees is available from the Development and Environment Directorate. Hedgerows and shrubs are not protected by TPO legislation but they will be taken into account when planning applications are considered. However, hedgerows are protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, which require that an application is made to the local authority for consent to

remove the hedgerow, which can be withheld if the hedge is of substantial biodiversity or archaeological interest.

- 5.52** The Structure Plan introduces the concept of 'no net loss of biodiversity interest'. Local plans have the role in setting policies to ensure that new development assists the retention of existing habitats, important species, buffer areas and landscape features of major importance for wildlife. Policy ECH/10 is intended to assist in meeting this challenge. There is a geographic as well as an individual site dimension; there is also a species and type of habitat dimension. In considering appropriate applications for development and changes of use, priority will be given to enhancing the overall ecological quality, extent, capacity, structure and functioning of locations and the surrounding ecological network by creating new habitats, buffer areas and landscape features. Particular attention will be given to development proposals in those locations where habitats and / or species have been identified as being particularly vulnerable.
- 5.53** The first step in operating Policy ECH/10 will be the screening process, which will be undertaken by the applicant in consultation with the Council. The initial screening will determine whether the development is likely to involve a significant impact on biodiversity, directly, indirectly or cumulatively. The main focus of the screening process will be on the designated areas and sites, including the Wildlife Sites and adjacent areas as well as areas of semi-natural habitat, protected species and communities and habitats and species identified in Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP's) prepared at national, regional or local levels. Development proposals affecting other sites or other areas may have a significant impact on biodiversity.
- 5.54** The next stage will be the completion of a biodiversity checklist, which would be submitted along with the application. This is not intended to be onerous. It is intended to provide an opportunity for the applicant to describe the biodiversity interest of the subject land, and the likely impact of the development on that interest and the early identification of the measures needed to minimise the impact and enhance the biodiversity interest. Where necessary, it will provide an opportunity to show how the biodiversity impact is to be managed, and in certain circumstances, identify the measures needed to recover the biodiversity interest or create new habitats. Reference should be made to the ecological information gathered. The response to the biodiversity checklist will facilitate the efficient and effective consideration of the relevant applications. The checklist also provides the basis for monitoring the achievement of the strategic concept of 'no net loss of biodiversity interest'.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To ensure that there is no net loss of biodiversity interest arising from development.

Output objective:

- (1) Through development control and monitoring of planning applications;
- (2) Publication of supplementary planning guidance on biodiversity and Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

Target:

No net loss of biodiversity interest measured in terms of the number and type of species and area of habitat.

Policy ECH/11 – Protected species and their habitats

Development which could harm, directly or indirectly, nationally or internationally protected species of flora or fauna or the habitats used by such species will not be permitted unless that particular harm could be avoided or mitigated and the species protected by the use of planning conditions or planning obligations.

5.55 Over 100 species of plants and animals including orchids, bats and otters are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC) and the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW). The Wildlife & Countryside Act also contains provisions for protecting nesting birds and their nests, as amended in the CRoW Act. The presence of a protected species is regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications (PPS9, Key Principles).

5.56 Certain species and habitats are included within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan as requiring urgent and positive steps to arrest and reverse significant declines in UK and European population and range.

5.57 There are 16 species of bat in England. They and their roosts are protected under UK and European legislation – the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 and the 1994 Habitats Regulations. Bats may roost either singly or in groups in trees, buildings, caves, mines and other structures. They may use many different sites at different times of the year, which can be within the same structure or several kilometres apart. Disturbance to hibernating colonies or maternity roosts of any bat species is particularly damaging to the bat population and therefore their survival potential. Where a proposed development affects bats or their roosts, the applicant will be required to commission a thorough site survey and evaluation, while the Council will consult Natural England.

- 5.58** Badgers are given specific protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and other legislation. Where development may affect a protected species, or the habitat used by such a species, the Council will consult the relevant conservation bodies and require the applicant to conduct a thorough site survey and evaluation. Where appropriate, conditions will be attached to the grant of planning permission, or legal agreements sought under which the developer would take steps to secure the protection of the species. Where protection of the species could not be secured through the use of conditions or legal agreement, development would be refused.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

No net loss of protected species and their habitats.

Output objective:

Protection of all nationally and internationally important species. International, National and Other Wildlife Sites.

- 5.59** There are three levels of wildlife site designation or listing. The sites of greatest importance for biodiversity are protected under international or European law as a Ramsar Site, a Special Area of Conservation, or a Special Protection Area. During the mid 1990's, European Union Member States were required to compile a list of potential sites for adoption under the Wildlife and Habitats Directive (termed Candidate Special Areas of Conservation). This list was subsequently moderated by the European Union. Sites of national importance are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and two of these in North Somerset are also National Nature Reserves. Other sites of importance are listed by the local authority as Wildlife Sites or Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites. The following policies, ECH/12, ECH/13 and ECH/14 set out the planning policy stance for each of the levels of wildlife site designation or listing.

Policy ECH/12 – Wildlife sites of international importance

Development which would be likely to have a direct or indirect adverse effect or which conflicts with the conservation objectives of a potential, candidate or designated Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation, or Ramsar Site will not be permitted.

- 5.60** The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 formally transpose the requirements of the EC Habitats Directive into national law. Policy ECH/12 applies to all designated and proposed sites of international nature conservation importance. These are sites that require the highest level of protection. Development which would be likely to have a significant effect on a potential, candidate or designated SAC or SPA may go ahead only if it does not adversely affect the integrity of the site or there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. Where a proposed or designated

SAC contains a priority natural habitat or species under the terms of the EC Habitats Directive, development will be permitted only for reasons of public health and safety or important environmental benefit. All potential projects both in the designated areas and in the consultation zones (whether or not planning permission is required) will have to undergo an appropriate assessment under this legislation.

- 5.61** The Severn Estuary SSSI has been notified as a wetland of international importance (a Ramsar Site), as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EC Birds Directive, with the exception of small areas around Royal Portbury Dock, and as a proposed Special Area of Conservation (pSAC) under the EC Habitats Directive. In addition, the Avon Gorge Woodlands and parts of the Mendip Limestone Grassland in North Somerset are candidate SAC's. Wildlife sites of international importance are shown on the proposals map.
- 5.62** The North Somerset and Mendip Bats candidate SAC sites are shown on the Proposals Map, with the five kilometre consultation areas to be identified as the feeding grounds known to be used by the greater and lesser horseshoe bats from the component SSSI's. These are Brockley Hall Stables, King's Wood and Urchin Wood, Banwell Caves and Banwell Ochre Caves as well as sites adjacent to the boundaries with Bath and North East Somerset and Sedgemoor.
- 5.63** Within the defined candidate SAC consultation areas, development that would adversely affect structures, feeding grounds or landscape features used by greater and lesser horseshoe bats will not normally be permitted. The greater and lesser horseshoe bats are considered to be endangered species not only in the UK but also throughout Europe. The five kilometre consultation area around the important roosts for the greater and lesser horseshoe bats is subject to Policy ECH/11.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

No net loss of wildlife conservation interest in potential, candidate or designated sites of international wildlife importance.

Output objective:

- (1) Through development control and monitoring of planning applications;
- (2) Publication of supplementary planning guidance on biodiversity and Local Biodiversity Action Plans;
- (3) Through appropriate countryside management projects.

Target:

No loss and no damage to internationally important wildlife sites from development.

Policy ECH/13 – Sites of special scientific interest and national nature reserves

Development within or near a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or National Nature Reserve that is likely to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on its biodiversity or geological interest will not be permitted unless other material considerations outweigh the loss of biodiversity or geological value of the site concerned and any broader impact upon the national network of SSSIs.

- 5.64** Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) are the best examples of our national heritage of wildlife habitats, geological features and land forms. They are identified and formally notified by Natural England (the statutory adviser to Government on nature conservation in England) under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Within North Somerset there are 41 SSSI's, covering some 3,372 hectares, the largest being the Severn Estuary, which runs the length of the coastline. SSSI's are shown on the Proposals Map. The Council will protect SSSI's from development that may directly or indirectly have a harmful effect on them.
- 5.65** Sites of Special Scientific Interest will be protected from development that may directly or indirectly have a harmful effect on them. Conditions and planning obligations will be used to mitigate the harmful aspects of development, and opportunities will be sought to conserve and enhance the site's biodiversity and geological interest.
- 5.66** National Nature Reserves are SSSI's managed by, or in agreement with, English Nature. Within North Somerset, parts of the Avon Gorge and Gordano Valley are designated as Natural Nature Reserves. Policy ECH/13 applies equally to Natural Nature Reserves.

Monitoring**Outcome objective:**

No net loss of wildlife or geological interest in designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) unless justified by the criteria set out under Policy ECH/13.

Output objective:

- (1) Through development control and monitoring of planning applications;
- (2) Publication of supplementary planning guidance on biodiversity and Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

Target:

No SSSI's to be adversely affected directly or indirectly by development unless justified by the criteria set out under Policy ECH/13.

Policy ECH/14 – Wildlife and geological sites and local nature reserves

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would have a significant adverse effect on local biodiversity or geological interests, unless the importance of the development outweighs the value of the substantive interest present.

- 5.67** Wildlife and Geological Sites include sites that are of significant value for the conservation of wildlife and of geological and geomorphological features. They provide important habitats for wildlife, and PPS9 recognises that non-statutory Local Sites have a fundamental role to play in helping to meet overall national biodiversity targets.
- 5.68** Wildlife and Geological Sites are distinguished from internationally and nationally designated sites. They are comprehensive rather than representative sites of nationally important wildlife and geological features. They contribute to the quality of life and the well-being of the community by contributing to the public enjoyment of wildlife and they support research and education.
- 5.69** The differential approach to the hierarchy of sites important for biodiversity will need to be reflected in the application of relevant Local Plan policies. Planning conditions and obligations may be used to mitigate unavoidable harm to the particular botanical or other interests of sites.
- 5.70** Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites represent the best examples in North Somerset of wildlife habitats, populations of rare species or geological and geomorphological features and are particularly important in supplementing and supporting the national framework of SSSI's. The sites have been designated against strict criteria, which establish that they are of substantive value for biodiversity, geology and geo-morphology on a regional basis. The Wildlife Sites designated since 1991 are selected on a range of criteria including the usual scientific factors, such as naturalness, size, diversity, rarity, fragility, irreplaceability, population importance, etc., but also including community and amenity value, physical and visual, aesthetic appeal and location in areas lacking natural habitats. Further information on the criteria used for selection is set out in Natural Assets in Avon: a policy guide and criteria for the selection of non-statutory Wildlife Sites (1995). The boundaries of Wildlife Sites and Regional Geological and Geomorphological Sites are shown on the Proposals Map.
- 5.71** Local authorities have powers to establish Local Nature Reserves on land owned or leased by them, which has an inherent biodiversity interest. Local Nature Reserves are important for biodiversity but also provide opportunities for people to see, learn about and enjoy wildlife. Local Nature Reserves have been designated and are being managed at Uphill, Weston-super-Mare; Eastwood and Battery Point, Portishead; Poet's Walk, Clevedon; Backwell Lake, Nailsea; the Cheddar Valley Railway Walk; Cadbury Hill, Yatton; Walborough Common; Felton Common; and Middle Hill Common.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

- (1) No net loss of wildlife and regional geological interest.
- (2) Where appropriate, to negotiate with developers and landowners the proper management of Wildlife Sites.

Output objective:

- (1) Through development control and monitoring of planning applications;
- (2) Through the Biodiversity and Trees Supplementary Planning Document and publication of Local Biodiversity Action Plans.
- (3) Through other guidance including local Biodiversity Action Plans that encourage the management of Wildlife Sites for wildlife.

Target:

The Council will seek to ensure that the biodiversity or geological value of identified Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites is protected from harm from development.

Policy ECH/15 – Coastal zone

Development within the defined Coastal Zone will be permitted only for uses and activities appropriate to and requiring a coastal location that cannot be accommodated elsewhere. When considering such proposals, account will be taken of the likely impact on the coastal environment, the proposal's scale, the degree of risk from flooding, erosion and instability, the effect of any works necessary to remove or minimise those risks, and the provision of public access to the coast.

5.72 The approach to the Coastal Zone North Somerset's coastline is a mixture of 'moor' landscape interspersed with promontories on which are located the three coastal towns of Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon and Portishead. The coast contains areas of high biodiversity value both nationally and internationally, e.g. Severn Estuary, as well as sites of regional importance. The Moors and the coastline are increasingly being recognised as an important landscape of coastal levels and archaeological resource including historic patterns of rhymes and fields dating from Saxon times. Policies are contained elsewhere in the Local Plan that control development which would adversely affect these areas.

5.73 As far as the Coastal Zone is concerned, the Local Plan seeks to:

- conserve the natural environment by protecting and enhancing the natural character and landscapes of the undeveloped coast;
- limit development needing a coastal location primarily to the urban and developed areas;

- minimise the risks to development of coastal flooding, erosion and land instability by directing new development away from areas such as the Moors; and
- improve the environment, especially despoiled areas of the coast.

5.74 PPG20 advises that the undeveloped coast should not be expected to accommodate new development that could be located inland or in existing developed areas. Where new development requires a coastal location, the developed coast will usually provide the best option. In all cases of coastal development it is important that development is minimised in areas at risk from flooding, erosion and land instability (see Policy GDP/2, Chapter 4). In particular, new development should be directed away from areas that would need expensive or environmentally damaging engineering works.

5.75 Just over half of the North Somerset coastline remains undeveloped, ranging from the cliffs between Portishead and Clevedon to the level landscape between Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon. The undeveloped coastline is a valuable asset. It breaks up what potentially could be a large urban sprawl spreading southwards from Bristol, plays a significant role in providing informal recreation opportunities, e.g. fishing and walking, and is of immense biodiversity and cultural heritage value.

5.76 **Definition of the Coastal Zone** The coastline can be readily split into developed and undeveloped sections. The developed coast is clearly distinguishable as that land within the settlement boundaries (as defined on the Proposals Map) of Weston-super-Mare, Kewstoke, Clevedon, Portishead and the line of deviation of Royal Portbury Dock. Outside these areas the 'undeveloped coast' is defined as the 'Coastal Zone'. A Shoreline Management Plan has been prepared for the Severn Estuary which provides a basis for the development of sustainable coastal defence policies. A Coastal Management Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared to provide guidance to Authorities and individuals having an interest in the future management of the tidal zone. This will need to consider such issues as "coastal squeeze", a concept associated with habitat loss. Typically it applies in tidal zones where the coastal margin is squeezed between rising sea level and a "fixed" landward boundary as defined by roads and other forms of development.

5.77 The Coastal Zone for planning purposes extends from low water mark landward. PPG20 advises that the definition of its inward extent should be based on local circumstances and key coastal issues. It is recognised that the zone can be narrow or wide, this being especially dependent on the local topography. Within North Somerset the key local issues are the landscape, ecology and cultural resource of the Severn Estuary and the adjacent moors. The inward boundary of the Coastal Zone is variable because of changes in topography, sections of high land and cliff alternating with substantial areas of low-lying land. The primary local consideration will be that the landward section acts to effectively conserve the high environmental coastal resource of the Severn Estuary.

5.78 The Coastal Zone extends landward to the point where the views of the coast and maritime influences are largely lost. The landward boundary

can be some distance from the coast because there are substantial areas of flat land over which there are views to the coast and maritime influences persist. However, in distances over 2 km from the high water mark the visual dominance of the coast tends to reduce.

- 5.79** There is a 1km Consultation Zone adjacent to the internationally important wildlife site of the Severn Estuary to protect the environmental resource. All development will need to be assessed for the likely significant effect on the international designations of the Severn Estuary. Proposals for development within the Coastal Zone will be assessed against Policy ECH/15.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

No development in the Coastal Zone that does not require such a location. The Council will negotiate with developers and/or landowners to secure uses that do not involve development in the Coastal Zone.

Output objective:

- (1) Production of supplementary planning guidance on coastal management;
- (2) Through development control and monitoring of planning applications in the undeveloped Coastal Zone.

Target:

To ensure that the undeveloped Coastal Zone as defined on the Proposals Map remains undeveloped, except where proposed uses and activities are appropriate to and require a coastal location and cannot be accommodated elsewhere.

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Rural development

Introduction

- 6.1** The countryside of North Somerset has faced considerable development pressure in recent decades. The Plan aims to relieve this pressure by encouraging development to locate in the towns. However, the countryside also faces economic pressures as the declining prospects for farming force farmers to look for ways to broaden their income. There is a need for a planning framework that enables the rural economy to modernise and diversify, yet which protects the countryside from the urbanisation that would reduce its attractiveness to residents and visitors, increase the need to travel and undermine efforts to regenerate existing urban areas.

Aim

- 6.2** The chapter aims to protect the countryside, allowing only such development as is appropriate to a rural area, applying the tightest restrictions within the Green Belt to prevent urban sprawl.

Objectives

- 6.3** The Local Plan objectives in respect of rural development are:
- to make the best use of existing resources and infrastructure, particularly through bringing empty properties back into use, more intensive use of under-used and vacant land, re-development of previously developed land and buildings, and reclamation of derelict land, including decontamination where appropriate;
 - to maintain the integrity of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt and defined settlement boundaries;
 - to sustain and enhance the economy of rural areas by supporting well conceived farm diversification schemes for business and tourism related developments that are consistent in scale with their rural location, accord with the need to conserve the area's natural beauty and minimise impact on the local transport network.

Local Plan policies

Development in the countryside

Definition of Countryside

- 6.4** For the purposes of this Local Plan, 'countryside' is all land outside defined settlement boundaries. This denotes the area where development will be strictly controlled in line with the advice of PPS7. Land within villages or hamlets that are not defined by settlement boundaries is treated as countryside. Most of the Green Belt is also 'countryside', the exceptions being those villages 'washed over' by the Green Belt which have settlement boundaries. These are areas where limited infill is acceptable in accordance with Policy RD/3 .
- 6.5** Policies in other chapters generally seek to restrict development to within settlement boundaries. Chapters 5 (Environment and Cultural Heritage), 7 (Economy), 8 (Housing), 10 (Retailing and Town Centres) and 11 (Cultural and Community Facilities) are particularly relevant. Development in the Green Belt is also subject to Policies RD/3 and RD/4 below and related policies elsewhere (H/5 and H/8, Chapter 8). Within the Green Belt, these policies take precedence over the countryside policies and impose tighter restrictions on what will be allowed.
- 6.6** Proposals for development outside settlement boundaries may be appropriate where associated with the rural economy and with satisfying essential housing, employment and service needs which cannot be met within the settlement. In these cases, a sequential test will be appropriate, requiring sites within the settlement to be considered first, followed by sites adjacent to the settlement boundary and, failing these, sites in the deeper countryside that are, wherever practicable, accessible by a choice of modes of travel. Specific exceptions to the principle of restraint (e.g. for rural workers' dwellings: Policy H/9) are set out in the relevant chapters; these are complementary to the generic policies in this chapter.

Definition of Rural Buildings

- 6.7** 'Rural buildings' are defined as all buildings outside settlement boundaries (other than dwellings, and buildings on existing or allocated employment, quarry or waste sites). New rural buildings, where they come within planning control, will generally be inappropriate unless they are for agricultural purposes, or for farm-based diversification. The re-use of existing rural buildings that become available for conversion will be encouraged. The acceptability of both new buildings and conversions will need to be assessed against criteria that aim to minimise harm to the environment. Those in this chapter supplement the Plan's more general environmental policies. Particular care should be taken in Conservation Areas (see Policy ECH/3, Chapter 5), Landscape Character Areas (see ECH/7), the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (see ECH/8), and other sensitive areas such as the Levels and Moors. Policies in Chapter 4 will be relevant to consideration of design and amenity issues. Policy T/10 is relevant to highway and traffic aspects.

Policy RD/1 – Agricultural and forestry development and farm-based diversification

Planning permission will be granted for agricultural or forestry development, or development for the purposes of farm-based diversification, provided that:

- i. the proposals are reasonably necessary for and ancillary to the use of land for agricultural or forestry purposes or essential for the diversification proposed; and
- ii. the re-use of existing buildings on the holding is given priority over new buildings, only where no suitable buildings are available will new development be acceptable; and
- iii. in the case of diversification proposals, there is sufficient certainty of long-term benefit to the farm business as an agricultural operation and that other rural businesses are not adversely affected.

Proposals involving the development of a farm shop will be determined according to Policy RT/7.

- 6.8** An independently-prepared agricultural appraisal or farm plan may be required to demonstrate that the proposals comply with this policy.
- 6.9** Traditional farm buildings have generally blended into or indeed become attractive features in the landscape. More recent factory-made farm buildings, which are required for modern agricultural practices, can have a major impact on the countryside, especially in prominent or open locations. Care therefore needs to be taken with the size, form, siting, design, colour, materials and landscaping of new farm buildings in order to reduce their impact on the countryside. The Council has adopted supplementary planning guidance on agricultural buildings in the Mendip Hills AONB.

Diversification

- 6.10** Farm diversification activities can contribute to the local economy by providing opportunities for employment or recreation for residents and visitors and by resulting in increased patronage for local shops and services. Such activities, where they come within planning control, will generally be supported provided that the character and appearance of the countryside are not harmed.
- 6.11** Activities that might form part of a diversification scheme are dealt with more specifically in other chapters, such as:
- business employment development in the countryside (Policy E/7, Chapter 7);
 - self-catering holiday accommodation (Policy E/9, Chapter 7);
 - touring caravan and camping sites (Policy E/10, Chapter 7);
 - farm shops and nurseries (Policy RT/7, Chapter 10);

- commercial riding establishments and private stabling; golf courses and driving ranges (Policy CF/3, Chapter 11).

It should be noted that these policies are primarily intended for use in assessing activities that are separate uses in their own right. However, they set out specific requirements that may also be relevant to a diversification proposal. Where the use is an ancillary part of a farm business, it will be Policy RD/1 that will apply in determining the acceptability of the use in principle. This provides criteria for assessing activities where they are intended to form part of a diversified agricultural enterprise, in which case the locational requirements of other policies may be relaxed, if appropriate. Within the Green Belt, proposals will also need to be assessed against Policy RD/3. While new buildings for the purposes of agriculture and forestry are appropriate development in the Green Belt, those for other purposes, including farm-based diversification, are strictly controlled.

6.12 The ownership of rural buildings used for farm-based diversification will, where appropriate, be tied to that of the holding to discourage subsequent fragmentation and consequent pressure for more intensive use.

6.13 Policy GDP/2 (Chapter 4) is also relevant to proposals for housing or other non-agricultural buildings close to any established livestock unit, silage or slurry facilities. Early consideration of agricultural interests can reduce the potential for future conflict in such circumstances.

6.14 Proposals for recreational and tourist-based diversification enterprises should provide appropriate links to and reinforcements of the surrounding public rights of way and public access network that support the implementation of Policy T/7 (Chapter 9).

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To encourage farm diversification activities, where they come within planning control, that contribute to the local economy by providing opportunities for employment or recreation for residents and visitors, resulting in increased patronage for local shops and services, provided that the character and appearance of the countryside are not harmed.

Output objective:

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Policy RD/2 – Conversion and re-use of rural buildings

The conversion or re-use of rural buildings for employment, recreation, tourist or community purposes will be permitted provided that:

- they are of permanent and substantial construction; and
- i. their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings; and
 - ii. they are of suitable size and character for the proposed use; and
 - iii. conversion does not lead to dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice town and village vitality; and
 - iv. in the case of buildings in open countryside, they are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction.

Subsequent extensions must be small-scale and have no significantly greater effect on the character and appearance of the countryside than the building as initially converted.

6.15 Agricultural diversification may result in proposals for the re-use of farm buildings. Non-agricultural buildings in the countryside may also fall into disuse for various reasons. PPS7 encourages the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings, provided various criteria are met. Re-use of these buildings can assist the rural economy by helping to meet the demand for workspace for rural businesses or by providing holiday accommodation. However, buildings remote from main roads and settlements will require particular consideration in terms of the potential for visual intrusion associated with re-use and the access and other services running to them. Policy RD/1 provides the framework for assessing proposals that are ancillary to a farm business; Policy RD/2 applies to all other proposals except those for residential use, which are the subject of H/8 (Chapter 8).

6.16 Conversion of buildings for employment or recreational uses (including tourist attractions) or for holiday accommodation (see Policy E/8, Chapter 7) can help the rural economy and benefit the local community. The Council considers such uses are generally preferable to residential conversion (see Policy H/8, Chapter 8), which does little to help the rural economy and can harm the character and setting of some buildings. Indeed, not all buildings in the countryside will be suitable for conversion and the Council will need to be satisfied that the proposed use is appropriate to the rural area and does not prejudice the vitality of existing towns and villages. Uses that would harm the amenities of nearby properties will be resisted.

6.17 Rural buildings can also be suitable for conversion or re-use for community purposes but much will depend on their location and the kind of use envisaged. Proposals aimed at meeting local community needs should be readily accessible and are therefore unlikely to be acceptable except on the very edge of settlements. In the wider countryside, institutional uses with some residential element (such as boarding schools and training centres) will be regarded as more sustainable than those generating large daily flows of traffic.

6.18 Policy RD/2 applies to all types of rural building but particular care should be taken with proposals for the conversion of Listed Buildings or those in designated areas (see para. 6.7 above). Listed Building conversions will also be assessed against Policy ECH/4 in Chapter 5 and the advice in PPG15. Proposals to re-use buildings within the Green Belt must ensure that the openness of the Green Belt is preserved (see Policy RD/3). The Council intends to produce design guidance on the conversion of rural buildings. This will be supplementary to policies GDP/3, RD/2 and H/8.

6.19 The redevelopment or significant extension of a rural building, once converted, will be resisted. The purpose of allowing conversion is to bring into positive use a building that would otherwise be unused. New building in the countryside is strictly controlled: substantial rebuilding or significant extension would be incompatible with this aim. If a business outgrows converted premises, re-location should be the preferred option.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To encourage the conversion or re-use of rural buildings for employment, recreation, tourist or community purposes that will assist the rural economy and rural communities by helping to meet demand for workspace for rural businesses or by providing holiday accommodation or community facilities.

Output objective:

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Policy RD/3 – Development in the Green Belt

Development within the Green Belt as shown on the Proposals Map is inappropriate unless for the following purposes:

- i. new buildings for the purposes of agriculture and forestry;
- ii. new building of essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it;
- iii. the re-use of buildings in accordance with Policies RD/2 or H/8, the replacement, sub-division, alteration or limited extension of existing dwellings and, within settlement boundaries, the construction of new dwellings in accordance with Policies H/7 and H/8, or employment development in accordance with Policy E/4, provided that there is no materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
- iv. affordable housing in accordance with Policy H/5;
- v. park-and-ride development that meets the tests set out below;

vi. the carrying out of engineering or other operations or for changes in the use of land which maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt;

vii. infilling or redevelopment on sites identified under and in accordance with Policy RD/4.

viii. New buildings for any other purpose will not be approved other than in very special circumstances.

To accord with iii),

- a) a replacement dwelling in the Green Belt must not be materially larger than the dwelling it replaces;
- b) an extension to an existing dwelling must not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling.

To accord with v),

- c) a thorough and comprehensive assessment of potential sites must have been carried out, including both non-Green Belt and, if appropriate, other Green Belt locations, having regard to sustainable development objectives, and the need to be flexible about size and layout;
- d) the assessment must have established that the proposed Green Belt site is the most sustainable option, taking account of all relevant factors including travel impacts;
- e) the scheme must not seriously compromise the purposes of including land in the Green Belt;
- f) the proposal must be contained within the Local Transport Plan and be based on a thorough assessment of travel impacts; and
- g) new or re-used buildings included within the development proposal must be limited to essential facilities associated with the operation of the park-and-ride scheme.

6.20 In assessing whether a replacement building is 'materially larger', regard will be had to bulk, including height and gross floorspace.

6.21 In assessing extensions to dwellings, the Council will normally consider any increase to be 'disproportionate' if it exceeds 50% of the gross floor area of the original building. Account will also be taken of the design and siting of the proposed extension, the visual character of the site and its surroundings, the prominence, visual and physical impact of the extension, the effect of the proposal on the open and rural character of the area in general and the overall scale of the development on the site.

6.22 For the purposes of this policy, 'original' means in relation to a dwelling existing on 26th July 1985 as existing on that date, or in relation to a dwelling built on or after 26th July 1985 as so built. This date relates to the adoption of the Avon County Structure Plan that defined the general extent of the Green Belt in North Somerset. It is applicable to all sites within the existing and proposed Green Belt as set out on the proposals Map. In the case of proposals to extend replacement dwellings, the original floorspace will be calculated as that of the original dwelling

that was on the site on or prior to 26th July 1985 and not that of the replacement dwelling. Outbuildings exceeding 10 cubic metres capacity within 5 metres of the dwelling will be treated as part of the dwelling. Any permission granted within a 5-year period prior to 26th July 1985 but not implemented prior to that date will be considered, if built after 26th July 1985, to form part of the 'original' building.

6.23 Policy RD/3 applies both to the countryside included in the Green Belt and to those villages that are 'washed over' by the Green Belt, but for which settlement boundaries are defined. The 'washed over' villages are:

- Abbots Leigh
- Clapton-in-Gordano
- Cleeve
- Dundry
- Failand
- Felton
- Flax Bourton
- Leigh Woods
- Portbury
- Redhill
- Tickenham
- Weston-in Gordano
- Winford

Within these villages, additional dwellings will be permissible if they meet the tests of Green Belt policy. In practice, new housing is likely to be limited to the unobtrusive infilling of small gaps in small groups of dwellings, although affordable housing provided through the exception policy (Policy H/5, Chapter 8) may in appropriate circumstances lead to more dwellings being provided.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To ensure that new residential and related development comes forward in accordance with the Plan's locational strategy, which promotes the four towns of Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and Weston-super-Mare in order to ensure sustainable patterns of development, preserve the openness of the Green Belt and uphold a general presumption against inappropriate development anywhere within the Green Belt.

Output objective:

Through development control, monitoring of planning applications and the review of existing supplementary planning guidance.

Target:

With the exception of permitted uses identified at Policies RD/3 and RD/4 no planning applications will be approved in the Green Belt. The exception to this will be circumstances where very special circumstances justify the grant of planning permission. Such exceptional cases will be treated as departures from the Development Plan under the Town and Country Planning (Development Plans and Consultation) Directions 1992 and referred to the Government Office for the South West.

Policy RD/4 – Major Developed Site in the Green Belt

Infilling or redevelopment within the defined boundary of Barrow Hospital will be permitted provided that:

- i. infilling has no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing development; does not exceed the height of existing buildings; and does not cause a major increase in the developed proportion of the site;
- ii. redevelopment has no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt, or the purposes of including the land in it, than the existing development and where possible have less; contributes to Green Belt objectives; does not exceed the height of existing buildings; and does not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings except where an associated reduction in height would benefit visual amenity;
- iii. the new building and uses would be compatible with the location and character of the site, be well-integrated with their surroundings; cause no insurmountable amenity or traffic objections; and have no unacceptable travel implications.

6.24 Barrow Hospital for a long time functioned as separate semi-self-sufficient community providing a major source of employment in the rural area of North Somerset. The Council will consider any proposals for its re-use or re-development in accordance with Green Belt policies in the Structure Plan and this Local Plan and the guidelines in PPG2, Annex C, relating to the future of major developed sites in the Green Belt.

6.25 This hospital site has become surplus to the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust's requirements. The site, developed in the 1930's, is located midway between Barrow Gurney and Long Ashton. It is an unregistered Historic Park or Garden set in ancient woodland with a number of buildings worthy of retention. Being isolated from local facilities, it is not seen as a suitable location for additional residential development, having regard to the overall land supply in North Somerset and the sequential approach to housing (see Policies H/1 and H/2, Chapter 8). Alternative uses could include education, employment or leisure uses. Any future use would need to ensure the conservation of the sites' environmental assets.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To achieve infilling or redevelopment within the defined boundary of Barrow Hospital in accordance with principles of sustainable development as expressed in the Structure Plan and this Local Plan as well as the guidelines in PPG2, Annex C, relating to the future of major developed sites in the Green Belt and other PPG's where relevant.

Output objective:

Through development control, master planning and monitoring of planning applications.

Economy

Introduction

7.1 This chapter contains the Council's land use policies for maintaining a prosperous and diverse local economy and for delivering the Council's corporate aim to regenerate and revitalise the economic base of Weston as a town. This will comprise the three main sub-areas, and their component parts, as set out at para. 3.23. This is intended to set the overall framework and direction for the long-term regeneration of Weston, to attract new inward investment in key growth sectors, encourage indigenous business growth and enable North Somerset to meet the challenge of a changing tourism climate.

Aim

7.2 The Council's aim is to ensure that North Somerset has a successful and diverse local economy. The need to provide appropriate local employment opportunities for North Somerset's resident population is recognised by the Council as a key component of its efforts to create a more self-sustaining economy, thus reducing the levels of out-commuting currently experienced and creating a better balance between homes and jobs. Paramount to achieving this is the need to meet the locational needs of growth business sectors by working with other partners to bring forward the right quality and quantity of land to deliver long-term economic development and regeneration.

7.3 In this respect, the range of new sites allocated and existing sites safeguarded for business employment in the Plan, as well as the policy framework within which business proposals are assessed, aims to contribute to the corporate strategy of reinforcing Weston-super-Mare and the other towns in North Somerset as preferred locations for businesses to invest and grow. Alongside this, the Council is also positively committed to improving the tourism infrastructure and attractions available across North Somerset, as well as improving the general quality of the accommodation stock and enhancing key tourist attractions, particularly in Weston-super-Mare. The emphasis of the overall development strategy will be that the majority of it will be focused on Weston-super-Mare, thereby acknowledging and promoting its status as a Principal Urban Area, as determined through Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10) and that the development that does occur in the town will be primarily employment-led.

7.4 The Plan also seeks to take advantage of North Somerset's geographical location as a 'gateway' to the South West. Business and tourism generating developments will be encouraged which recognise and

respect the environmental quality and distinctiveness of the area for its own sake and which contribute to bolstering the rural economy through appropriate diversification schemes. The aim is to deliver a competitive and strong local economy that embraces sustainable development, regeneration and enterprise. It is also intended to provide local people with appropriate employment opportunities reasonably close to home, offering residents and visitors alike a genuine choice of means of travel, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

Objectives

7.5 The Local Plan objectives in respect of the economy are:

- to restore the balance between residential and local employment growth by reducing out-commuting and lengthy journeys to and from work so that North Somerset becomes more self-sufficient;
- to work with others to sustain and create new employment and business opportunities particularly in growing modern sectors and niche markets in particular financial and business services, leisure and recreation, higher education, new town centre retail and high-tech and R&D;
- to rejuvenate all of Weston-super-Mare and to establish the town as a modern, confident and attractive place with a specific economic role within the sub-region which has a positive and distinctive profile as a place for investors to locate and grow business;
- to ensure that a range of suitable land and premises is available and developed in appropriate locations to meet the regeneration aspirations incorporating the needs of industry, commerce, leisure, recreation and tourism;
- to encourage the efficient re-use of brownfield land for new employment uses and where appropriate, for mixed use schemes;
- to encourage and support the development of existing businesses in North Somerset to help ensure the future prosperity of the area;
- to take account of the changing holiday patterns of visitors and try to cater to their specific needs so as to maximise visitor spend and develop facilities and services of good quality throughout the district;
- to sustain and enhance the economy of rural areas by supporting well conceived farm diversification schemes for business and tourism related developments that are consistent in scale with their rural location, accord with the need to conserve the areas natural beauty and minimise impact on the local transport network.

7.6 These specific objectives are derived from the Council's Community Pride Strategy and the JRSP (see Policies 2, 7, 15, 30, 31 and 32). Consideration has also been given to Government planning policy guidance, particularly that contained in PPS1, PPG4, PPS7 and PPG21. In addition, responses to the Council's Issues Report consultation in Spring 2000, the Weston Vision Statement as well as the Council's Economic Development Strategy and Blue Skies Strategy for the future of tourism in North Somerset have also influenced the identification of these objectives.

Local Plan policies
Delivering the 'vision' for Weston**Policy E1 – Weston-super-Mare Vision**

The Vision aims to rejuvenate all of Weston and to establish the town as a dynamic and diverse modern economy which has a positive and distinctive profile. To achieve this step change, the Vision for Weston includes three distinct but related sub-areas, as defined on the proposals Map. These comprise:

- Weston Seafront & Town centre (Policy E/1A)
- Town Centre Gateway and Outer Commercial Area (Policy E/1B);
- Weston Regeneration Area (Policy E/1C)

Area Action Plans will provide the basis for guiding future development up to and beyond 2011, complemented by a series of detailed and integrated master plans. An area development framework, brought forward as Area Action Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents, will provide the basis for guiding future development of Weston up to, and beyond, 2011.

7.7 The purpose of this policy is to:

- determine the extent of the area within which there are land-use, infrastructure and transportation planning issues that would be best addressed through a comprehensive and co-ordinated process of regeneration, guided by an area development framework;
- provide a context for the area development framework by setting out the principles to which it will be required to adhere; and
- prevent the village settlements of Hutton, Locking and Uphill from being absorbed within the urban area of Weston and thus losing their individual community identity.

7.8 The economic regeneration of Weston-super-Mare is a key strategic aim of North Somerset Council. This is to be achieved through the promotion of a more sustainable balance between employment and housing whilst maximising the potential of the area and improving the quality of the urban and natural environment. Over the plan period, the Council will work with core partners and landowners to facilitate delivery of the Vision by bringing forward development in a co-ordinated and phased way.**7.9** The lack of a coherent package of employment opportunities in Weston-super-Mare has resulted in significant out-commuting, which is predominantly car-based; these trips contribute to congestion on the local inter-urban highway networks. Increasing local employment opportunities will assist in minimising the number of residents who have to commute to work destinations outside the town. So as not to transfer congestion from inter-urban routes to those within Weston-super-Mare, the Vision will be based around a sustainable transportation strategy, which promotes public transport, cycling and walking in particular.

7.10 Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10) defines Weston-super-Mare as the only Principal Urban Area within North Somerset, thereby recognising its important role and function and the potential to promote sustainable change and growth within the Authority and the wider sub-region. Policy SS 10 of RPG 10 sets out the agenda for future change and development in Weston-super-Mare:

- 1) Promotion of employment-led regeneration;
- 2) Enhance the town's environment;
- 3) Investment in tourism and business facilities;
- 4) Focus transport investment on public transport;
- 5) Limit further housing growth until employment development is more closely in balance with housing.

7.11 The key aims set a clear and challenging framework within which the town must develop in the future. The Weston Vision exercise, being led by: North Somerset Council, South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and English Partnerships, has sought to address this agenda for change, targeting a substantive improvement for Weston through:

- a) achieving long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability;
- b) diversifying the local economic structure through the introduction of high quality employment development;
- c) the provision of high quality proposals for urban form, the design of buildings and public realm;
- d) achieving balanced development in terms of employment, housing, transport, leisure and other facilities;
- e) encouraging and guiding growth;
- f) regenerating all of Weston;
- g) establishing Weston as a modern, distinct and different place; and
- h) making the most of existing and substantial historic assets.

Implementing the vision

7.12 The area development framework will determine the function and priorities for delivering comprehensive and co-ordinated regeneration. It will address the phasing, form and scale of development that will be acceptable. This will include design guidance to secure high quality development, as well as identify the transport and infrastructure (environmental, social etc.), needed to enable the development of the town in a sustainable way. This will be consistent with the Joint Replacement Structure Plan, urban capacity thresholds and the principles of sustainable development. It is acknowledged that with the introduction of the new development plan system through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, that the detailed planning of the regeneration area in the form of an Area Development Framework (ADF), would be more appropriately dealt with as an Area Action Plan (AAP).

The master-planning of specific areas within it could be dealt with through similar planning vehicles or as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). These will cover a longer time-frame than that covered by the Replacement Local Plan and will subsequently supersede it once they are themselves adopted.

- 7.13** A fundamental component of the regeneration of Weston-super-Mare is the provision of high quality and high skill jobs in the town to rebalance the economic structure. In order to attract investment capable of providing such opportunities, an appropriate amount of high quality employment land must be provided which can house modern business accommodation within an attractive environment and capitalise on the pool of skilled labour available in Weston. The success of the strategy will also depend upon changing commercial perceptions of Weston and securing a high standard of accessibility to the motorway at Junction 21 and the national rail network. The area development framework will include a delivery plan and given the likely scale of development up to, and beyond, 2011 public / private sector partnership working will be required to facilitate the realisation of the Vision.

Delivering sustainable regeneration – spatial strategy

- 7.14** National planning policy advocates that previously developed land in and around urban areas should be developed ahead of new greenfield sites. In the case of Weston, the town has a number of sites that meet this description. The area development framework will achieve this by making the best use of this resource through the phased delivery of the Visioning programme, whilst also seeking to create the basis for balanced and sustainable communities.
- 7.15** The Weston Vision process is a long-term regeneration programme for Weston-super-Mare covering a time-scale of 20+ years. It is still at an early stage in its evolution. The details concerning the precise location, distribution, type and mix of uses, other than those specifically allocated in the Replacement Local Plan, and the phasing of development will be determined through the Area Development Framework and master-plans for specific sub-areas. These will be incorporated within the new style of development plan as Area Action Plans and/or Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 7.16** The provision of appropriate transport infrastructure to support any developments is fundamental to realising the Vision. The design of developments must encourage use of sustainable modes of transport, not only by providing safe and attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists, but also by ensuring that developments are served by quality bus services. These networks and services need to be fully integrated within and between the developments as well as with those already existing in Weston-super-Mare. The highway networks required to support the developments should be designed to the appropriate standards and include priority measures for buses, cyclists and pedestrians.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

Working in conjunction with the South West of England Regional Development Agency, English Partnerships and other key partners, the Council will look to build upon the principles outlined in the Weston Vision exercise. It will produce an Area Action Plan or Plans that are Development Plan Documents contributing to the development framework and will be used to guide the regeneration of Weston.

Output objective:

To work with core partners and landowners to bring forward development proposals, based on a series of detailed master plans for the regeneration of this area, which accord with the area development framework.

Target:

Production of an area development framework for the whole of Weston including the land-use up to, and beyond 2011 as an Area Action Plan or Plans.

Policy E/1A – Revitalisation of Weston seafront and town centre

Within the Weston Seafront and Town Centre areas as defined on the Proposals Map, development proposals will be required to:

- i. Make a positive and distinctive contribution to the existing built environment;
- ii. Promote more efficient use and re-use of land and premises including the intensification of land-use activities;
- iii. Increase the diversity of land use activities;
- iv. Provide investment opportunities;
- v. Contribute to improving the environmental quality and strengthen transport and other linkages in and around the Town Centre and Seafront; and
- vi. Capitalise on the coastal setting and promote sub-regional role and function of the Town Centre.

The priority locations for regeneration and redevelopment are: the Town Centre, Birnbeck Pier, Knightstone Island, the Tropicana and Dolphin Square environs.

- 7.17** The purpose of Policy E/1A is to provide the land-use policy framework on which investment decisions can be made. The aim of the policy is to encourage investment and promote the regeneration and integration of the Seafront and Town Centre areas. The extent of the Seafront and Town Centre Regeneration Area is identified via the Proposals Map. It also seeks to improve accessibility to and through the area for residents, shoppers, workers and visitors without compromising the quality of the local built environment and pedestrian safety.

7.18 It is acknowledged that the Town Centre area and the activities within it will have a close relationship with some of those in the adjoining sub-area (Town Centre Gateway and Outer Commercial Area) covered by Policy E/1B. It is intended to strengthen the relationships and linkages between the two areas in both the commercial and physical sense. This will require a close co-ordination of the detailed planning for both of these areas in order to ensure that the activities are complementary. Proposals for development in adjoining sub-areas will receive careful and favourable consideration provided that they do not prejudice the vitality and viability of the Town Centre, and the wider area, but will make a positive contribution to the regeneration of it.

7.19 Realising the Weston Vision means changing the perception of the town, and particularly its two most public areas, the Town Centre and the coastal promenade. The best way to do that is to change the way it works and looks, by positively managing and regulating land use change. If new appropriate retail, leisure and office businesses are to be brought to Weston, adequate development opportunities must be made available in the form of land and premises in good locations that are easily accessible by a variety of modes of transport. The area including the Seafront and the Town Centre meets these requirements and can provide the opportunities. The Council therefore considers that the best way to promote the economic revitalisation of the centre is through a comprehensive 'facelift' and upgrading of public and private spaces. Evidence of the commitment to this can be found through the following strategies, initiatives and plans:

- Connecting Spaces, Places and People – Public realm framework and enhancement for WsM
- Heritage and Urban Design Strategy
- Gateway Strategy
- Blue Skies – Tourism Strategy
- SRB6 scheme: "Together, we can make a difference"
- Weston-super-Mare Townscape Heritage Initiative
- North Somerset Local Transport Plan

These, and relevant future initiatives, will assist in the improvement and integration of the physical environment of the Seafront, Town Centre and other parts of the town. They will provide an important link to non landuse aspects of the overall scheme of regeneration for the town that cannot be directly influenced through the Replacement Local Plan.

7.20 Tourism and leisure activities have traditionally played an important part in Weston's economy. Although the holiday market has been characterised by a move away from long-stay holidays in resorts like Weston, short breaks and visitor numbers have grown. The Council recognises that tourism is an important part of the Weston economy, but also recognises the changing holiday patterns of visitors and the need to develop new ways to cater to their specific accommodation and leisure needs.

7.21 The Council considers that the best way to achieve these goals is to improve the leisure and recreation offer of Weston. The Council accepts that Weston is relatively poorly provided for in terms of leisure facilities; there is only one cinema, and few good quality sports facilities. The long-term revitalisation of Weston Seafront and Town Centre is therefore intended to benefit not only new investors and residents, but also visitors and tourists.

7.22 The Council is committed to setting a coherent agenda for change in Weston. Within the framework of Policy E/1A, the objective is to build on and develop work already underway to ensure the detailed development of the following priority locations:

- the primary retail area of the Town Centre;
- Birnbeck Pier;
- Knightstone Island;
- the Tropicana; and
- Dolphin Square area.

7.23 The Council is committed to securing the long-term viability and vitality of these five locations. The following principles will guide development in these five priority areas:

- i. having regard to the sequential approach to development based on PPS6, whilst recognising the circumstances of a coastal town resort where entertainment and leisure uses are traditionally located close to the sea front and tourist accommodation and not solely located in the defined retail core of the Town Centre;
- ii. encouraging diversity in activities and mixed use development including entertainment, leisure, retail, residential and other appropriate uses that are compatible with each other and existing surrounding uses;
- iii. establishment of strong physical, visual and perceptual links between and through areas;
- iv. contribution to the achievement of a high quality urban environment and sense of place for residents and visitors;
- v. enhancing the vitality and viability of the Town Centre; and
- vi. providing a distinctive offer for Weston-super-Mare that does not simply replicate development from elsewhere in terms of design and form.

7.24 In terms of the broader context, whilst there is little prospect of all these sites being regenerated together and at the same time, they should not be considered in isolation but as integral components of the wider regeneration scheme of which they form a part. Connecting Spaces, Places and People is one example that can be used to ensure that the physical linking and integrating of these, and any other priority areas identified in the future, occurs. Also, physical and functional links will need to be developed with the Town Centre Gateway area covered by Policy E/1B.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

- (1) To make Weston a growing, modern urban centre, with a confident, dynamic and diverse economy which is attractive to investors by promoting distinctive development proposals that contribute to capitalising on the coastal setting and to maintaining the Town Centre as a successful sub-regional shopping centre;
- (2) To rethink the promenade and how it relates to the Town Centre and the residential hinterland and, through the regeneration of the five locations, to offer a better range and quality of leisure, commercial, retail and residential facilities which will appeal to residents and visitors alike.

Output objective:

- (1) Working in conjunction with the South West of England Regional Development Agency, English Partnerships and other key partners, the Council will look to build upon the area development framework and produce detailed master plans for the revitalisation of the Town Centre and Weston Seafront;
- (2) Working in conjunction with the South West of England Regional Development Agency, English Partnerships and other key partners, the Council will look to build upon the area development framework, and produce detailed master plans for the regeneration of the primary retail area of the Town Centre, Birnbeck Pier, Knightstone Island, the Tropicana and Dolphin Square environs.

Target:

To secure the long term viability and vitality of these five sites with uses that offer a better range and quality of leisure, commercial, retail and residential facilities which will appeal to residents and visitors alike.

Policy E/1B – Town Centre Gateway and Outer Commercial Area

Within the area shown on the Proposals Map development and redevelopment will be permitted where:

- i. It contributes in whole or part to the comprehensive and co-ordinated regeneration of contaminated land and previously developed land, strengthening the functional integration of the sub-area with the Town Centre;
- ii. It is compatible with and/or complementary to the existing types of development within the immediate locality;
- iii. It will not harm the viability and vitality of the Weston Seafront and Town Centre regeneration sub-area;
- iv. The design is of high quality that will enhance the visual image, and emphasis the importance of the gateway approach to the Town Centre; and

- v. It minimises the generation of car trips by improving public transport, cycling and pedestrian links and the interchange facilities at the railway and coach stations.

7.25 The purpose of this policy is to acknowledge the importance of the transport links that pass through the area and its role in providing a high quality and welcoming image to visitors to the town on their final approach to the Town Centre. Due to the dynamic nature of the type of businesses and activities that are increasingly attracted to the area, there is an opportunity to improve and enhance the physical environment through which people will pass. It will enable stronger functional and physical links to be established between the Town Centre and Weston Airfield areas over the longer term. It will also allow for greater clustering of similar types of activity within a limited area to contribute towards reducing the need to travel short distances by private car.

7.26 The area including Hildesheim Bridge, Weston-super-Mare railway station and the associated car parks form an important gateway focal point and transport interchange for visitors, commuters and shoppers to the town. The current physical environment however, does not reflect the importance of this transitional zone. There is a need to ensure that the physical and visual image of the approach to the Town Centre and Seafront is attractive and welcoming whilst ensuring that its transport functions are not adversely affected. There is a need for a strong distinctive visual image that provides visitors with a sense of arrival and the development that takes place within this area should reflect this. The gateway should not just be confined to the edge of the area closest to the Town Centre but incorporate the approaches of all the transport corridors to it, including pedestrian and cycle access routes, and the soft environment adjoining them.

7.27 An important characteristic within the Town Centre Gateway area is its evolution, over the years, into an out-of-town retail warehouse park. Retail warehousing is a dynamic element of the retail industry and because of this, it provides an opportunity for the improvement and enhancement of the built and soft landscape environment when re-development proposals are presented. However, the Council will only encourage a further extension of this existing provision where it can be demonstrated that it forms part of a much larger and comprehensive proposal, in which the retail element only forms a small part of the overall development. There would be an expectation that any retail proposal would positively contribute to the regeneration of the area particularly with regard to the re-use of contaminated and previously developed land. The requirements of the sequential approach to retail development should ensure that it only occurs after it has been clearly demonstrated that no other more sustainable and appropriate location is available.

7.28 The master-planning of the area will permit greater potential for the clustering and integration of similar and related activities. This may include mixed-use proposals incorporating high density residential and commercial office development to a high quality of design. Such developments may be considered particularly appropriate in areas around the main railway station, reinforcing its important role as a

transport node and interchange. It would also provide opportunities to reduce the number of short journeys by private car that are generated within the area.

7.29 The dynamic nature of most of the development activity that has occurred in the recent past throughout the area provides the opportunity, through the detailed master-planning process, to establish strong physical links between the Town Centre and Weston Airfield. This could be achieved through a number of distinctive landmark buildings and structures located along the main transport links or at either end of it.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

The Council will look to build upon the area development framework and produce detailed master plans for the development and re-development of the Town Centre Gateway and Outer Commercial Area.

Output objective:

- (1) Working with investors and developers to achieve high quality developments with high standards of design in all new developments;
- (2) Working with land owners and developers to create detailed master plans that will permit the comprehensive regeneration of the sub-area.

Target:

- (A) Creation of a high quality environment on the main transport routes leading to the Town Centre including the provision of distinctive landmark features that will identify the 'gateway' to it;
- (B) Creation of mixed-use developments, including high density residential and commercial offices, that contribute to sustainable development criteria around the main railway station.

Policy E/1C – Weston Regeneration Area

Within the Weston Regeneration Area shown on the Proposals Map, development will take place to create a number of new neighbourhoods each comprising a mix of land-use activities. Development in the first phase, up to 2011, will be employment-led. Major employment developments comprising approximately 84 Hectares are proposed at the following locations:

- i. Weston Airfield (East), where this will comprise approximately 33 Hectares of land for high quality business uses, primarily of activities within the B1a Use Class;
- ii. Weston Airfield (West), where this will comprise approximately 26 Hectares of land for commercial office, industrial and warehousing activities within the B1, B2 and B8 Use Classes; and,
- iii. Former RAF Locking camp, where this will comprise approximately 25 Hectares of land for high-tech activities including; incubator units,

new technologies, research & development, innovation, recycling and environmental technology within the B1 Use Class and related educational uses.

Provision for the wider infrastructure needs of the entire Weston Regeneration Area will be taken into account when preparing the proposals for employment development on these sites. Development will be planned on a comprehensive basis in conjunction with the associated community, transport and, environmental infrastructure, facilities and services to meet the needs of the individual site allocations. These will include the early provision of:

- a cross airfield road link between the A371 Locking Moor Road and Winterstoke Road for a new bus route, cyclists, pedestrians and vehicular traffic as part of the implementation of i) and ii);
- use of the existing road access from the A371 through the former RAF Locking camp site including a public transport corridor through the site with the opportunity to extend northwards around the West Wick mixed-use employment site and on to Worle Station from the site as part of the implementation of iii);
- effective and attractive options for walking and cycling within Weston Airfield and the former RAF Locking camp utilising the existing and proposed networks;
- a sustainable flood management scheme incorporating creation of a new rhyne wetland and network of rhynes for the Airfield (and adjoining areas), including the re-instatement of a main rhyne to replace the culvert crossing Weston Airfield to control flows in the Cross Rhyne;
- a landscaped buffer zone between the A371 Locking Moor Road and the employment allocation at the former RAF Locking base as part of the implementation of iii; and,
- regular bus service links to serve the employment sites and to connect them with existing residential areas, the town centre and, railway stations.

Development of the sites will only be permitted after the following have been provided:

- 1) Master Plans for the sites at Weston Airfield (East) and the former RAF Locking camp, demonstrating how the employment elements will integrate with and contribute to the longer term development of the respective neighbourhoods and the wider urban area, beyond the plan period. This will include comprehensive water management plans including the implications for flood alleviation works for the long term development of the whole of the Weston Airfield and former RAF Locking camp;
- 2) Design Guides to provide the framework to sites and achieve exemplar urban design including Weston Airfield (East) and the former RAF Locking camp;
- 3) Demonstration that the land has been satisfactorily decontaminated to levels acceptable to the relevant authorities.

Introduction and background

- 7.30** The Weston Regeneration Area comprises circa 650 hectares of land including significant areas of previously developed land. Over the plan period to 2011 the Council will work with core partners and landowners to bring forward development proposals. This will form a critical part of the Council's commitment to promote the town as a destination for employment investment, increasing accessible employment and providing regeneration opportunities whilst reducing the need to travel and enhancing the town's environment and its surroundings. The regeneration proposals, which incorporate a 'Whole Town' approach, as set out in Policy E/1, will enable Weston-super-Mare to fulfil its potential as a Principal Urban Area. It is anticipated that the early development of Weston Airfield and RAF Locking will form the critical components of this regeneration strategy under Policy E/1C.
- 7.31** The regeneration area will be developed in a detailed and comprehensive way over a time-scale that extends well beyond that covered by the Replacement Local Plan. The development and redevelopment of the land within it will eventually comprise a mixture of uses and activities although the emphasis in the early phases will be on the redevelopment and re-use of the larger areas of previously developed land at Weston Airfield and the former RAF Locking base. In the initial phases of the regeneration process, the priority will be to focus on the development of land for employment generating activities. Developers of the employment land sites will be expected to demonstrate how their proposals will contribute towards the raising of the quantum and quality of the jobs in Weston. They will also be expected to submit an economic impact assessment showing how their proposal will complement existing business provision throughout the town and enhance its overall economic capacity. An early indication of the land most likely to be affected by development within the Weston Regeneration Area has been provided through the Weston Area Development Framework.
- 7.32** The longer-term master-planning of the whole of the Weston Regeneration Area and the sub-areas within it will contribute to delivering a series of neighbourhoods. The phasing and detailed distribution of development within these neighbourhoods will be determined through an Area Action Plan that will succeed part E/1C of the Weston Vision policies contained in the Replacement Local Plan. During the early phases of development of the Weston Airfield and the former RAF Locking camp, land-owners are to be encouraged to work collaboratively and in a participative way to prepare the master-plans and relevant design codes. The design codes for Weston Airfield (East) and the former RAF Locking base are expected to complement each other and provide a degree of consistency in the overall design and development within the Weston Regeneration Area.
- 7.33** The emphasis during the period covered by the local plan will be on delivering the employment led aspects in the early stages in order to redress the significant jobs/ homes imbalance, in Weston, that has occurred in recent years. The long-term objective will be to create a number of new neighbourhoods that will complement and enhance the existing communities that make up the current urban area of Weston and nearby villages to the south, particularly Hutton and Locking. Each

new neighbourhood will have the potential to demonstrate local self-containment by itself in many economic, environmental and social respects and/or contribute to a greater degree of self-containment for the larger urban area of Weston. However, the residential, social and community elements of each of these new neighbourhoods are not expected to commence until after the plan period (post 2011), with the residential components being closely linked to the successful delivery of the employment land.

- 7.34** The development and evolution of the new neighbourhoods and the communities within them, both meet the reasonable unmet requirements of existing neighbouring communities as well as that generated by the new ones being created. Throughout the evolution and development of the new neighbourhoods through the Replacement Local Plan and the subsequent Area Action Plan, the extent of the development will have to be clearly defined in respect of impact on the settlements of Hutton and Locking. This will be to ensure that the identity, integrity and character of these settlements and their communities is respected and protected from being absorbed within the larger urban area of Weston.

Purpose

- 7.35** The purpose of this policy is to provide the incentives for the early implementation of this longer-term regeneration initiative that will eventually affect development throughout the whole of the 650 Hectares that comprises the Weston Regeneration Area. A key component of the early stages of the process is to ensure that the development that does occur is clearly 'employment-led'. This is in order to redress the imbalance that has occurred in recent years with housing development easily outstripping the creation of new employment opportunities in the town. It is intended that the employment developments Weston Airfield (East), Weston Airfield (West) and the former RAF Locking base will form the starting point and an important focus for larger mixed use developments, within which they will form an integral part. The Area Action Plan will primarily determine the distribution and phasing of the longer-term development in the period beyond 2011. The new communities will develop over a much longer time-frame than that covered by the Replacement Local Plan and will provide the potential to become relatively self-contained within the Principal Urban Area that is Weston, and thus, more sustainable. There may be an element of overlap between the two types of plan towards the end of the Replacement Local Plan period as its successor moves through the closing stages to adoption. This should, however, ensure a degree of consistency and continuity between the two plans.

Context of development in the regeneration process

- 7.36** The detailed development and master-planning of the new communities that the employment allocations will form a part, will be determined through the Area Action Plan. This will take forward the Weston Vision policies of this document. However, in order to understand how the

employment sites referred to in this policy will relate to the wider development of the surrounding area of each allocation, an employment master-plan for the Weston Airfield (East) and an employment master-plan for the former RAF Locking base will need to be submitted with the initial planning applications. These will show the long-term intentions for the whole of the employment allocations plus an indicative representation of how it will relate to the proposed new neighbourhoods, of which they will form a part or, adjoin. Developers will be expected to provide information on the economic impact of the development of the sites. They will also be expected to provide details as to the type of jobs that are likely to be created as a consequence of the successful development of the respective sites and how these will improve and enhance the range and quality of employment in the Weston area. This is necessary in order to understand and appreciate the longer term needs and demands of the infrastructure that will be required to service both the employment sites and the communities with which they will be integrated.

- 7.37** Consideration may be given for complementary and related employment activities to those within the B Class uses where these can be demonstrated to be meeting the needs of the employment operators on the respective sites. They will also need to demonstrate that they are consistent with the requirements of the criteria in Policy E/5. Whilst proposed neighbouring residential development beyond the plan period may need to be identified in an indicative form in the master-plans for the Weston Airfield (East) and former RAF Locking base, no provision is made for this to be implemented or land safeguarded for residential in the first phase of development covered by the Replacement Local Plan. The quantum and distribution of future housing provision as part of the long-term regeneration process for Weston will be determined through the Area Action Plan which, on adoption, will supersede part E/1C of the Weston Vision policies of the Replacement Local Plan.
- 7.38** Development proposed in the first phase of the Weston Vision regeneration process in the Weston Regeneration Area can be identified as two discrete areas. These comprise Weston Airfield and its immediate environs and the former RAF Locking camp.

Weston Airfield

Introduction

- 7.39** Weston Airfield is a prominent site situated partly within the existing urban area adjoining Winterstoke Road. The remainder of the airfield, which is immediately adjacent to the town, is readily seen from the A370 and A371. Weston Airfield offers a critically important opportunity for regeneration at Weston-super-Mare where employment-led redevelopment would bring about immediate and obvious benefits to the town's economy, environment and image. This is consistent with the strategic approach contained in Policy SS 10 of RPG 10 and Policy 7 of the Joint Replacement Structure Plan. The site can be brought forward for redevelopment consistent with the sequential approach contained in Policies VIS 1 and VIS 2 of RPG 10 to facilitate and promote a

sustainable and inclusive pattern of urban development. An important objective of this proposal is to raise the profile and image of Weston-super-Mare. It is an important component of the 'whole-town' approach to regeneration in the Weston urban area.

Master Plan

- 7.40** Any development within the first phase allocations for Weston Airfield (East) will need to conform to a master plan which will provide for the whole of the site allocated for employment use. It will also provide indicative representations of longer-term development on land immediately surrounding the employment site plus any infrastructure that is directly related to its development. This master plan will be submitted in conjunction with the outline application for the development of the first phase.

Design

- 7.41** New proposals will represent developments of a high quality exemplar design. The design of the proposal will be assessed against and expected to be consistent with national and local design guide including an Urban Design Code, that will cover the whole of Weston Airfield (East), and other relevant guidance.

The phasing of development

- 7.42** Early redevelopment will be encouraged at Weston Airfield in order to raise the profile of Weston as a location for employment development and particularly commercial office development in a high quality business park setting, in a gateway location. The promotion of employment-led development at both parts of Weston Airfield is consistent with Policy SS 10 of RPG10, to promote the town as a destination for employment that will increase 'accessibility to jobs'. It will also be contributing to the Council meeting its obligations as set out in PPG 4, to ensure that a range of employment sites will be readily available for development.

- 7.43** The phasing will be regulated by an Agreement between the Council, landowners and developers. It will also secure the appropriate and timely provision of new facilities and on-site infrastructure plus off-site S106 contributions. A Master Plan, including an Urban Design Guide, will be required for the whole of the Weston Airfield (East) site and will need to identify the necessary details within the first phase and how development will be co-ordinated. The Master Plan will also illustrate how the first phase can facilitate and integrate with further and other types of development that will adjoin Weston Airfield (East) and that will be implemented in subsequent phases of the regeneration process, beyond the plan period.

Employment uses

7.44 The objective is to create a prestige office park at Weston Airfield (East) given its prominent location on the main gateway approach to the town centre from the M5. A high quality designed office development in such a location will be attractive to the strategic and regional markets including major office relocations. Weston Airfield (East) will primarily be for employment activities that fall within the definition of B.1a of the The Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (As Amended). Employment development at Weston Airfield (West) will be primarily aimed at the traditional manufacturing activities that fall within the definitions of the B1 Use Class, plus those in B2 and B8. The specialist employment sectors to be provided at RAF Locking will be different and distinct from the primarily office based development at Weston Airfield (East). In combination with the employment proposals at the former RAF Locking, this will accord with the 'employment-led' development strategy established elsewhere in the Replacement Local Plan. It is also consistent with the requirements of the higher tiers of the development plan particularly, Policy SS 10: Weston-super-Mare of RPG10 and, Policy 7 of the Joint Replacement Structure Plan.

Residential

7.45 Whilst the Replacement Local Plan does not allocate residential development at Weston Airfield during the plan period, it is acknowledged that the employment allocations of Policy E/1C have the potential to form integral parts of much larger mixed-use neighbourhood developments. The residential elements of these proposed neighbourhoods will be determined through an Area Action Plan that, on adoption, will supersede part E/1C of the Weston Vision policies in the Replacement Local Plan. The quantum and specific allocation of land for housing will be planned to be implemented in phases that will commence beyond the end of the plan period in 2011 will be determined through the subsequent Area Action Plan.

Landscape

7.46 The existing site comprises degraded former airfield uses. In the west, adjacent to the railway line and former airfield buildings, there are abandoned rhynes including variable vegetation cover and some willow trees. The Cross Rhyne lies along the southern boundary of the site. It is expected that the majority of the existing rhynes will be retained, along with their vegetation and trees, where this is practicable. The Master-Plan for the development of the airfield will have regard to the restoration of the former (plan) rhyne pattern to that represented on the 1885 (1st Edition) Ordnance Survey maps of the area. This will then form part of an airfield-wide rhyne and drainage system. It will incorporate a new water body and an area of wetland, wet meadow and species rich meadow on the southern edge of the site.

7.47 The buildings and design together should create a major gateway entrance feature that is to be located adjacent to the A370/A371 roundabout. The east-west Cross Airfield Link is to be provided, designed as a boulevard with trees and a main east-west rhyne. The Winterstoke Road frontage will be landscaped to achieve an improvement to this degraded urban area. Landscaping will form an important element of the business park development at Weston Airfield (East) integrating the open aspect of the traditional, managed landscape features of the area, and enhancing the visual appearance along one of the important gateway approaches to the town.

Community facilities and Local Centre

7.48 Weston Airfield already adjoins a part of the built urban fabric of Weston-super-Mare where it is particularly important to both create new employment opportunities and provide investment in facilities. The long-term development at Weston Airfield will include provision for economic, environmental social and, community facilities such as a hotel, public house, local centre and creche as part of the creation of new mixed-use neighbourhoods. Proposals for this type of development in the first phase of the regeneration process, will need to demonstrate that they will directly complement the employment activities on the allocated sites and/or meet the needs of the workforce and neighbouring existing communities. Where these are proposals, to be supported during the plan period, on land allocated and/or for employment use, they will also need to demonstrate that they meet the requirements of Policy E/5.

Transport infrastructure and services

7.49 The redevelopment of Weston Airfield will incorporate and secure the provision of the Cross Airfield Link. This new link is vitally important to the proper functioning of the town. The Cross Airfield Link will relieve areas of acute congestion in the existing highway network and will facilitate important improvements to the public transport network. The link will also provide a vitally important connection between the existing and new communities in the Weston Regeneration Area. Two essential elements of the overall development will be:

- i. the provision of a new road link between Winterstoke Road and the A371 (the Cross Airfield Link); and
- ii. the provision of adequate and sustainable public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to service the development and to integrate into the wider regeneration area.

The Cross Airfield Link will be provided within the plan period to 2011. It will be linked with the first phase developments of employment land at the east and west of the airfield. Transport infrastructure and services will provide direct links to important nodes such as the town centre and the railway stations. It will integrate the existing and future developments in a co-ordinated transport network as part of the wider Weston area. Contributions will be sought from the development to ensure the provision

of regular and frequent bus services between Weston Airfield and important nodes. In the initial phases of development, the services will be provided utilising the existing routes and services along Winterstoke Road and the A371. When the Cross Airfield Link is completed, new and appropriate existing services will be diverted through the site. The phasing and status of the different transport links through the site will be indicated on the Master Plan for Weston Airfield (East).

Water management and flooding

7.50 The Environment Agency mapping system indicates that part of the Weston Airfield is at risk to flooding. Surface water run-off from the new development will need to be controlled in order not to compound this risk. This will be achieved by a comprehensive and environmentally sensitive flood management scheme, which will control flows in the Cross Rhyne. The Environment Agency will require that adequate mitigation is provided so as to ensure that there is no unacceptable risk of flooding on the site and that development of the site will not exacerbate or displace the flood risk to adjoining and other areas. This will be achieved by developing a new network of Rhynes and a wetland area along the southern part of the site. The flood management scheme for the Weston Airfield will be designed to be compatible with any comprehensive flood management scheme prepared for the whole of the Weston Regeneration Area.

Contamination

7.51 The demolition, site clearance and remedial works at Weston Airfield should deal with the contamination legacy of the previous and existing development and activities that have occurred on the site. The proposals for remediation must ensure that the historic contamination and poor practices that could otherwise lead to future contamination will be removed by the redevelopment. An integrated remedial strategy will be developed. A sustainable approach is envisaged where by soil excavated from the new drainage works will be used as fill to secure the additional benefit of increased land levels to provide further flood protection, as well as covering any residual contaminated soil. Before any new development commences on the site a decontamination and remediation strategy will be required. The strategy will ensure that pollutants that would cause harm to the future development and the environment would be removed and/or remediated.

RAF Locking

Opportunity

7.52 RAF Locking is a brownfield site in a mature setting situated adjacent to the A371 with visibility from the M5 and the A370. This site offers an important opportunity for regeneration at Weston-super-Mare where

employment-led development would bring about immediate and obvious benefits to the town's economy, environment and image. The extensive previously developed area at RAF Locking provides flexibility for a new mixed-use development in a location where it can be effectively 'employment-led'. An important objective of this proposal is to raise the profile and image of Weston-super-Mare. It is an important component of the 'whole-town' approach as set out in Policy E/1. It also provides the opportunity for the creation of direct linkages to West Wick and Worle station in the longer term.

Master Plan

- 7.53** Any development within the first phase allocation for RAF Locking will need to conform to a master-plan that will provide for the development of the entire site over the longer time-scale than that covered by this Local Plan. This master-plan will be submitted in conjunction with the outline application for the development of the first phase. It will show in detail how the employment allocation will be developed during the plan period. It will provide an indicative representation of how the employment development will be integrated with the former married quarters beyond the plan period. It will also provide details of any infrastructure that will be required as a direct consequence of the development. This is in order to ensure a consistent approach to the longer-term development on the whole of the site.

Design

- 7.54** It is essential that the proposal constitutes high quality exemplar development. The design of the proposal will be assessed against and expected to be in accordance with national and local design codes and other relevant guidance. The design for the area will have regard to the existing mature treescape that is a legacy and a feature of the previous development of the site. It will also need to take account of the two residential areas that were formally the married quarters of the RAF Base and need to be integrated into the future development proposals for the whole of the site.

The Phasing of Development

- 7.55** The early development of this site will be encouraged to raise the image and perception of Weston-super-Mare. The promotion of the employment led development at RAF Locking will be consistent with RPG10, Policy SS 10 to promote the town as a destination for employment that will increase accessible job and regeneration opportunities and reduce the need to travel whilst enhancing the town's environment and its surroundings. The phasing will be regulated by an Agreement between the Council, landowners and, developers. Through the Section 106 agreement the release of land for all types of development will be phased in order to ensure that the strategy is employment-led and that the overall

development is balanced and sustainable. The phasing, to be controlled by the agreement, will also secure the appropriate and timely provision of new facilities and on site infrastructure and off site Section 106 contributions. A Master Plan, including an urban design code, will be required for the whole site and will need to identify the necessary details within the first phase and how development will be co-ordinated. The Master Plan will also illustrate how the first phase can facilitate and integrate with the existing residential estates adjoining the north-western and south-eastern boundaries of the site and, further development at the site beyond the plan period.

Employment uses

7.56 The objective is to create a high quality employment facility. The former RAF Locking camp is expected to appeal to a range of B1b, B1c uses within the Use Classes Order and, related types of activity. B1a activities will also be considered where this is complementary and related to the other uses on the site. The site will also include a range of facilities to enable small-scale fledgling businesses to evolve and develop without the need for frequent disruptive relocations. The employment development will target hi-tech activities, business incubators and grow-on space, advanced engineering, biotechnology, recycling, environmental technologies, ICT and creative industries and education and learning activities. The specialist employment sectors to be provided at RAF Locking will be different and distinct from the primarily office based development at Weston Airfield (East). In combination the proposals will accord with the employment-led development strategies established elsewhere in the Local Plan and will be consistent with the requirements of Policy SS10: Weston-super-Mare of RPG10, and Policy 7 of the Joint Replacement Structure Plan.

Residential

7.57 Whilst this Local Plan does not allocate residential development at Weston Airfield or at the former RAF Locking camp, during the plan period, it is acknowledged that the employment allocations of Policy E/1C may form integral parts of much larger mixed-use neighbourhood developments in the longer term. The residential elements of these proposed neighbourhoods will be determined through the Area Action Plan for Weston that, on adoption, will supersede the Weston Vision policies in the Replacement Local Plan.

Landscaping and public open space

7.58 The existing site benefits from a mature landscape that has evolved as a consequence of its previous use and the management of the land to meet the needs of that activity. This includes extensive areas of open space plus numerous mature trees, some of which were made the subject of a Tree Preservation Order in 2004. It is expected that in the

development of the site much of the existing landscaping features will be retained particularly where this enhances the setting for the development and the existing neighbouring built environment. In terms of the early phase of development at the site, which will comprise employment-led activities, the objective will be to produce a science park style development in a campus setting utilising much of the existing landscape and incorporating social and community facilities. The location and extent of an area of public open space will be identified on the master-plan. This document will also be required to show provision of a landscaped buffer zone, between the new development and A371. This will take the form of sensitive landscape treatment in order to integrate the new development with the important features in the existing landscape. This is in order to create a transition zone between the predominantly rural character of area surrounding Locking village and the 'urban village' type of neighbourhood that is proposed in the longer-term for the former RAF Locking camp. This will help to protect the separate integrity and identity of both the existing settlement of Locking and the new neighbourhood.

Community facilities

- 7.59** As part of the longer-term redevelopment of the former RAF Locking camp, it will be necessary to provide the local community and social infrastructure to service the emerging communities requirements. The quality, capacity and accessibility of existing facilities will need to be taken into account, particularly in relation to those that are currently available in the nearby village of Locking. The timing of the provision of certain types of community facility (e.g. primary school) will be closely linked with other development, especially residential. Much of this is likely to occur in the later phases of the regeneration process and, therefore beyond the period covered by this Local Plan. However, where there is evidence of a demonstrable need arising for social and community services arising from the workforce that is generated by the employment development, provision of the relevant facilities will be considered. The use and/or re-use of existing facilities for community use, such as the former church building and sports facilities adjacent to the A371, to accommodate such services will be encouraged. Where such development is proposed on the land that has been allocated for employment purposes, the requirements of Policy E/5 would also have to be met.

Transport infrastructure and services

- 7.60** An essential element of the overall development will be the provision of adequate transport infrastructure to service the long-term development of the site and especially public transport services. These will provide direct links to important transport nodes such as the town centre and Worle station. It will also assist the existing and future developments into integrated transport networks both within the area and as part of the wider systems for Weston. The provision of adequate and sustainable public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to service the

development and to integrate into the wider regeneration area is an important consideration for the longer term development of the area. Contributions will be sought from development to ensure the provision of regular and frequent bus services from RAF Locking to these locations. In the initial phases of development these services will be provided utilising the existing access to the site and via the A371. Contributions will also be sought to fund pedestrian, cycle and public transport link northwards from the site to Worle station. However, the northward public transport link will not need to be implemented until subsequent phases of the regeneration process, beyond the time-scale covered by the Replacement Local Plan. Details as to the timing and location of such a link will need to be included on the master-plan for the former RAF Locking site. Contributions will also be sought for new and improved pedestrian and cycle networks, both within the site and to adjoining areas.

Water management and flooding

7.61 The Environment Agency mapping system indicates that the northern part of the former RAF Locking camp is identified as being potentially at risk from flooding in extreme circumstances. Water run-off as a consequence of development on the site is expected to flow indirectly into the River Banwell to the north. The Environment Agency will seek contributions from any proposal that could be subject, and/or exacerbate flood risk to property within the site as a consequence of the development, and properties outside of it as a result of water displacement. These contributions would be used in the provision of necessary flood alleviation measures that would be required. The flood management scheme for RAF Locking will be designed to be compatible with any comprehensive flood management scheme prepared for the Weston Regeneration Area.

Contamination

7.62 Most of the buildings and structures associated with the site's former role, as a training establishment for the Ministry of Defence, have been demolished although the basic transport and utility infrastructure to service it remains. Before any new development commences the site will need to be subject to a thorough examination in order to ensure that no pollutants exist from its former use that would cause harm to future development on the site. Any harmful contaminants found in the soil will need to be removed prior to the commencement of any new construction work.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

Master-planning of the areas within which the employment allocations will be located. These will show how the employment land-use will be integrated within the longer-term development of mixed-use neighbourhoods primarily on previously developed land.

Output objective:

Working with public and private sector landowners and developers to provide a range of strategic employment sites that will encourage the employment-led regeneration of Weston.

Target:

- (A) Over the plan period, to achieve employment-led regeneration on three strategic sites totalling 84 Hectares which, when developed, will contribute a minimum of an additional 6,000 (net) jobs for the Weston area of a higher overall quality from that currently available.
- (B) Provision of a link road across Weston Airfield connecting the A371, Locking Moor Road, with Winterstoke Road.
- (C) A significant increase in the level of self-containment within the Weston urban area from the 2001 Census proportion of 64%.

Policy E/2 – Future regeneration potential within the Weston Vision Area

Where opportunities arise which are not directly addressed by Policies E/1A, E/1B, E/1C and E/3, that present common development and environmental challenges in the future, the resolution of which would be best serviced through a comprehensive and integrated regeneration solution, these may be designated as new regeneration sub-areas. They would be subject to the general provisions outlined in Policy E/1 and an Area Action Plan developed for the newly designated area(s). A key component of the Area Action Plan for any newly designated area will be the requirement to ensure that the sub-area acknowledges the characteristics and functions of any adjoining sub-areas.

7.63 The purpose of this policy is to acknowledge the limitations of the Local Plan within the Weston Vision process as the latter covers a much longer time-scale. It seeks to:

- i. recognise that the Local Plan's influence only covers the period up to 2011 in terms of forecasting and the assumptions under-lying the allocations and distribution of development;
- ii. establish a policy framework that can facilitate development within the regeneration sub-areas;
- iii. establish a framework for the rapid and comprehensive regeneration of new areas and locations that had not been previously identified through the Weston Vision process;
- iv. ensure that there is continuity of approach between established and newly created regeneration sub-areas especially where they have a common boundary.

7.64 The Council also recognises that the development of settlements is essentially an organic process. Economic, social and environmental pressures can and will change the character of areas over time. In some instances change to an area can occur rapidly (e.g. the closure of a major local employer) and this may manifest itself in the form of a

deterioration of the social and physical environment. In these circumstances it may be necessary to create one or more new regeneration sub-areas in addition to those covered by Policies E/1A, E/1B and E/1C. This policy seeks to provide the context through which a development brief, Area Action Plan or, Supplementary Planning Document can be created to provide the necessary planning policy framework for a new regeneration sub-area without resort to the more lengthy process of an alteration to the Local Plan itself.

7.65 The Weston Vision process seeks to create a regeneration and development strategy for the town that looks 20 – 30 years into the future. The North Somerset Replacement Local Plan will perform an important role in the delivery of the land-use planning expressions of this strategy. However, due to the current constraints of the development plan process, this version of the Local Plan can only make provision, with any degree of certainty, for the period up to 2011. Beyond this date horizon it cannot predict with the same level of certainty but can give an indication as to the future policy direction. Longer-term planning issues, such as the possible extension of the settlement of Weston to accommodate future development in keeping with its identified role as a Principal Urban Area in RPG 10, the long-term re-development prospects of RAF Locking and Weston Airfield, may require a policy context. This policy seeks to establish the basis upon which this, and new regeneration sub-areas for the Weston Vision Area, could be created beyond 2011.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

Agreement amongst core partners, key land owners and developers of the need to maintain the principles of the Weston Vision process and the planning policy role within it beyond 2011.

Output objective

Agreement amongst core partners, key land owners and developers to adhere to the principles of the Weston Vision process.

Target

Maintain the effectiveness and relevance of the Weston Vision process.

Policy E/3: Mixed use development (inc. employment)

Land is allocated within the settlement boundary of Weston-super-Mare for a mix of uses including employment development at the locations identified in the accompanying Schedule and, as defined on the Proposals Map. The employment element of these proposals will be ready for occupation in whole, or in part, ahead of the release of land for any other specified uses. Details concerning the quantum, thresholds and phased release of land for specific purposes will be determined through a combination of detailed master-planning and a Section 106 planning agreement that will accompany the approval for development on each site.

Proposals for mixed-use developments and re-developments incorporating employment as a significant component on previously developed land within the settlement boundaries of; Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and, Weston-super-Mare, not included in the Schedule will be considered. This will be in the context of the overall development strategy as set out in Policy GDP/1, the requirements of Policies E/5 and H/2 specifically and, any other relevant policies. Any approved developments will be made subject to similar master-planning and Section 106 planning agreement requirements concerning the quantum, thresholds and phased release of land for specific purposes.

Purpose

7.66 The purpose of the policy is to give a clear indication of how mixed-use sites of the type covered by the policy will be implemented. Such developments will include clear commitment to the implementation and provision of employment development ahead of other activities. This will ensure consistency with the overall strategy, particularly in Weston, of employment-led development and/or regeneration. It will also conform with higher level policy requirements contained in Policy SS 10 of Regional Planning Guidance for the South-West (RPG 10) and Policy 7 of the Joint Replacement Structure Plan.

Context for mixed-use development

7.67 RPG 10 identifies the settlements throughout the south-west that are expected to be the main focus for future development through their designation as Principal Urban Areas (PUA's). Within North Somerset, Weston-super-Mare is the only settlement that is identified in this way. The guidance also recognises that the emphasis of development activity in the recent past has been for residential use and this has created a significant imbalance in the proportions of homes and jobs within the town. This factor has contributed to the high levels of out-commuting and declining self-containment of Weston in recent years. In order to address this, Policy SS 10 explicitly states that future development should be employment-led in order to redress the imbalance in housing and jobs. Policy 7 of the Joint Replacement Structure Plan re-iterates this approach. Policy E/3 provides the policy context for this to be applied at the local level.

7.68 There is an increasing preference for mixed-use development proposals in order to achieve more integrated and sustainable patterns of development. PPS1 para. 27 (ii) supports the use of mixed-use developments as part of regeneration initiatives. It is seen as helping to build more sustainable communities and encouraging the establishment and/or reinforcement of linkages between different types of activity and development. Policy E/3 is an opportunity to integrate different types of development activity and offers an additional option to the traditional single use approach to development planning. It will also enable the

gradual removal of distinct zoned areas with clear boundaries between potentially compatible uses. This will lead to the increased integration of compatible land-uses, facilitating the physical, psychological and, perceptual integration of activities. It will also provide the opportunity to create local nodes and/or focal points of activity using different types of land uses. The combination of different size and mix of development uses will create a range of different design opportunities.

- 7.69** The policy is not intended to impose a moratorium on particular types of development but to ensure that any employment element of a mixed-use proposal is implemented in the first or early stages. This will then be consistent with the employment strategy and contribute towards redressing the homes/jobs imbalance. The employment first approach to mixed-use development will also assist in ensuring that a quantum of employment land is readily available for development as required through para. 6 of PPG 4.

Mechanism for delivery

- 7.70** The policy provides a clear indication to potential developers of the proportion of the total employment development that is expected from each site included in the schedule. Where such developments are proposed, particularly within Weston, Policy E/3 provides a mechanism to ensure that the overall development strategy is adhered to. In Weston-super-Mare, where a mixed-use proposal includes residential and employment, the emphasis will be on employment first. In other settlements, other arrangements may be negotiated. Such arrangements will need to be done in the context of requirements for particular types of development as expressed through other policies within the local plan. Phasing arrangements will be included in the grant of outline planning approval either through conditions or as part of an accompanying Section 106 Agreement. The employment threshold ratio that would be applied to trigger the commencement of residential development would be 167sq.m. of new employment development floorspace per dwelling based on a housing density of 40 dwellings per Hectare. (Where the residential density of the mixed-use development is proposed to be higher than 40 per Hectare, then the ratio of employment floorspace per dwelling may be reduced.) A minimum of 1000sq.m. of employment floorspace would need to be ready for occupation before construction of the first dwelling could commence. This is to ensure that a given level of employment floorspace is ready for occupation ahead of the construction of any dwellings where these form part of the mixed-use development, and is commensurate with the future economically active population expected to occupy any residential element. The initial employment floorspace provision threshold may be raised on the larger development sites.

- 7.71** The use of specific thresholds to regulate the release of land for other development uses will be employed and the outline approval for each site will also be accompanied by a master-plan. The master-plan will be an integral element of any outline planning approval. It will identify locations for different types of activity and demonstrate how, through

innovative design and layout, a genuine mix of uses will be achieved including techniques for dealing with incompatible uses. The Section 106 Agreement will establish the legal framework regarding the phasing of development and will contain clear emphasis on employment-led development including the identification of the appropriate development thresholds. This will be in accordance with the requirements of Policy GDP/5 and para. 4.58. It is not expected that planning permission will be granted without such an agreement and the master-planning works having been undertaken in advance.

Mixed-use sites

Schedule of Mixed Use Development Sites

NSRLP Ref	Location	Total Area (Hectares)	Total Employment Area (Hectares)	Requirements
M1	Weston Gateway Tourist Park, West Wick, Weston-super-Mare	8.4	2.75	136 dwellings only on 2.85ha
M2	East of Park and Ride site, Summer Lane, Weston-super-Mare	9.4	7.4	100 dwellings at 50 per ha on 2.0 ha
M3	Land at the Ridings St George's, Weston-super-Mare	1.63	0.73	Office and/or commercial on 0.73ha including managed workspace and 35 – 45 dwellings on 0.9ha
M4	Land adjacent to Bridge Farm, Bristol Road, Weston-super-Mare	1.5	0.5	Maximum of 50 dwellings
M5	South of Herluin Way, Hutton Moor, Weston-super-Mare	30.6	10.5	Retail proposals linked to agreement on town centre regeneration
M6	Land adjoining Great Western Centre, Aiscombe Way, Weston-super-Mare	9.4	5.8	Retail restricted to approved 3.6ha site
M7	Part of former gasworks site, Marchfields Way, Weston-super-Mare	3.5	2.3	Maximum of 1.2 ha for retail/leisure uses

M1 – Weston Gateway Site

- 7.72** This 8.4 Hectare site is identified as suitable for a combination of commercial development including B1 employment and hotel uses, plus some residential. It has an important dual role as it is in an important gateway location for the town whilst at the same time of strategic significance due to its close proximity to Junction 21 and the M.5. The hotel development is expected to occupy the main road frontage with a B1 class business park development adjoining it.
- 7.73** The housing element of the development will be restricted to 136 dwellings. This will be located on 2.85 hectares of land, at a gross development density of 50 per hectare. It will also be subject to the criteria for affordable housing identified in Policy H/4. The housing element will be located at the western end of the site adjacent to the existing residential area. It will be phased so that it will not be commenced until a specific quantum of the employment element is ready for occupation. The specific details concerning the phasing arrangements and appropriate development thresholds will be set out by way of a site brief supporting a master-plan and Section 106 Agreement that will accompany the planning permission for the development of the site.

M2 – East of Park & Ride site, Summer Lane

- 7.74** This is comprised of two individual greenfield sites that were previously identified and allocated for single uses. The site comprises a total of 9.4 Hectares of land, of which 2 hectares would be developed for residential purposes. The master-planning of the site will ensure that the main access points to the employment element of the development will not encourage commercial traffic movements through the residential area to the east of Locking Castle District Centre. This would mean that access should be provided off Somerset Avenue. This will then provide business operators with direct access to Junction 21 and the motorway network. The employment element would be suitable for B1, B2 and B8 developments with some B1 uses located in close proximity to the residential development areas. Live/work units may also be considered.
- 7.75** The details of the location and phasing of the various components on the site will be determined through a master-plan for the whole site development plus the Section 106 Agreement that will accompany the relevant planning approval. The emphasis of the overall development will be for the early release of land for development for employment purposes. Residential development will be phased in tandem with the provision of serviced employment land and the necessary highway infrastructure from Somerset Avenue, but in any case before the occupation of the 80th dwelling. The residential development element will also be subject to the criteria for affordable housing identified in Policy H/4.

M3 – Land at the Ridings, St George's, Weston-super-Mare

- 7.76** This 1.63 Hectare site is identified as suitable for a combination of commercial development including B1 office employment plus some residential. It may also be suitable for employment end users in the medical services and care home/sheltered housing sector. Proposals for those activities outside of the B1 Use Class would need to demonstrate that they have met the requirements for alternative forms of development contained in the criteria to Policy E/5. Located in close proximity to a new housing development, district centre and with good public transport links, including Worle Parkway, the site is well placed to contribute to the sustainable development of the St George's neighbourhood by adding to the range and type of activities currently present.
- 7.77** The office/commercial element of this mixed-use scheme is expected to occupy the first (0.73 ha) portion of the site, between the magistrates court and the land drain to the east. This will provide an opportunity to integrate with the office building element of the new magistrate's court, with the possible end use being for managed office workspace. The housing element of the development will be restricted to the remaining 55% of the total site area, comprising 0.9 hectares of land, at a gross development density of 30-50 dwellings per hectare. The housing element will be located at the eastern end of the site adjacent to the existing residential area. With a potential capacity to 35-45 dwellings it will be phased so that it will not be commenced until a specific quantum of the employment element is completed and ready for occupation. The residential development element will also be subject to the criteria for affordable housing identified in Policy H/4.
- 7.78** The layout of the development should seek to limit the exposure to noise and impact on the living conditions of future residents as a result of proximity to the railway line. This should include limiting the distance between the residential development and the railway line, as well as through measures which include acoustic barriers, landscape bunds and screening as considered relevant. The specific details concerning the phasing arrangements and appropriate development thresholds will be set out by way of a site brief supporting a master-plan and Section 106 Agreement that will accompany the planning permission for the development of the site.

M4 – Bridge Farm, Bristol Road, Weston-super-Mare

- 7.79** This 1.5 hectare site is identified as suitable for a combination of commercial development including B.1 office employment and/or business starter units plus some residential. It may also be suitable for employment generating community uses such as health clubs, care/nursing homes and animal medical services. Proposals for those activities outside of the B1 Use Class would need to demonstrate that they have met the requirements for alternative forms of development contained in the criteria to Policy E/5. The site is located close to the new commercial and social development at Queensway District Centre and the centre of Worle itself. It adjoins Worle station, which has been



identified as a potential main-line rail link in the future and a possible public transport interchange. The site is well placed to contribute to the sustainable development of the surrounding neighbourhood by adding to the range and type of activities that are currently present.

- 7.80** The office/social employment element of this mixed-use scheme is expected to form the first part of the development and account for 0.5 Hectares of the total site area. The housing element will be restricted to the remaining 67% of the total site area, comprising 1.0 hectares of land, at a gross development density of 50 dwellings per hectare. The housing element will be located at the western end of the site adjacent to the existing residential area. With a potential capacity of 50 dwellings, residential development will be phased so that it will not be commenced until a specific quantum of the employment element is ready for occupation. The residential element will also be subject to the criteria for affordable housing identified in Policy H/4.
- 7.81** The layout of the development should seek to limit exposure to noise and the impact on the living conditions of future residents, for those parts in close proximity to the railway line. This should include limiting the distance between the residential development and the railway line, as well as through measures including acoustic barriers, landscaped bunds and screening as considered relevant. The specific details concerning the phasing arrangements and appropriate development thresholds will be set out by way of a site brief supporting a master-plan and Section 106 Agreement that will accompany the planning permission for development of the site.

M5 – South of Herluin Way, Hutton Moor

- 7.82** The whole of this 30 Hectare site of previously developed land will comprise a mixture of employment, retail and leisure, including public open space. The site is in an important gateway location to the approaches of the town centre. It has a potential strategic role as a part of the Council's proposals for the regeneration of the town as set out in Policy E/1B. The site will also contribute towards the creation of a 'green heart' for the town linking Hutton Moor with open space to be created as part of the longer term development of Weston Airfield, The Rhynes and RAF Locking as part of the Weston Vision project.
- 7.83** It is recognised that a mix of development activities is required in order to make the overall development commercially viable and attractive to the market. This is due to the need to decontaminate and rehabilitate the land prior to development being allowed to commence. The full range of B class employment activities will be encouraged on the site with consideration given to excluding particular incompatible uses in close proximity to existing developments, particularly the residential and caravan park south of the railway along Hutton Moor Lane. The business employment generating development activities will account for about 35% of the total area, at the southern end of the site. Provision will be made for a specific quantum of employment land to be ready for occupation before other development activities will be allowed to

commence. This will be regulated via the planning approval that will include both a masterplan for the development of the whole site, and a Section 106 Agreement as integral components.

7.84 The retail development will be restricted to out-of-centre activities that could not be easily and successfully accommodated within or on the edge of Weston town centre, the designated district centres, those centres with a strong local influence and, the retail park identified in Policy RT/6. Retail developers and operators will have to demonstrate that their proposals will not affect the vitality and viability of these existing centres and are consistent with the requirements of Policy RT/6 and Policy E/1B. They will also have to demonstrate that the proposed development could not be successfully accommodated within the nearby retail park through development or redevelopment measures. Retail proposals will not be permitted to come forward in advance of an agreed quantum of the employment development being ready for occupation. The specific details concerning the phasing arrangements and appropriate development thresholds will be set out by way of a site brief supporting a master-plan and Section 106 Agreement that will accompany the planning permission for the development of the site. The amount of land available for retail purposes within the area will be restricted to a maximum of 10 Hectares. Consideration will also need to be taken of the physical impact of the retail structures and their infrastructure on the residential and caravan park area south of the Great Western Main Line along Hutton Moor Lane.

7.85 An important part of the long-term regeneration strategy for Weston-super-Mare, as proposed through the Weston Area Development Framework, is the creation of an area of strategic open space. This is proposed to be a continuous swathe of open land to be used primarily for formal and informal recreation, leisure and, public open space. It will connect the future centre of the built urban form of the town arising from the regeneration and development of the town, with the extensive areas of high quality environment and landscape areas to the south that includes Weston Woods. The setting aside of approximately one third of the total area for open space, recreation and some leisure development will comprise an important component of this 'green heart' concept. Leisure development may be permitted on this remaining part of the whole site. It will be subject to the same locational and sequential requirements as for out-of-centre retail proposals. Preference will be given for those leisure activities that do not require substantial amounts of structures in order to maintain a green linkage between Weston Airfield and the existing Hutton Moor leisure complex to the north of Herluin Way. The identification of the area affected and the location of any related built structures that will be permitted on it, will need to be shown on the master-plan that will accompany the application to establish the principle of development. Consideration will also need to be taken of the physical impact of any leisure structures and their infrastructure on the residential and caravan park area south of the Great Western Main Line along Hutton Moor Lane.

M6 – Aisecombe Way, Weston-super-Mare

- 7.86** Part of this site has already been developed with a mix of employment and retail related activities, such as car showrooms, that fall within the *sui generis* category of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended). A number of the existing operators that are within the B1, B2 and B8 Use Classes also have retail related trade counters. In recognition of this existing mix of uses on the developed parts of the site, the remaining undeveloped parts are identified as suitable for a mixture of employment and out-of-centre retail warehouse development. 3.6 Hectares of the land at its north-eastern end, adjacent to Flowerdown Bridge and the railway, is allocated for out-of-centre retail development. This is consistent with the Secretary of States decision of 4th August 2005 (Ref. APP/D0121/A/04/1143008) in respect of this part of the site. Any retail development proposals on this land will be subject to meeting the requirements of the sequential approach contained in PPS 6 and the policies within the Replacement Local Plan, particularly Policy RT/6. An essential condition of this type of development will be to ensure that it does not directly or incrementally contribute to the loss of vitality and viability of Weston town centre, other district and local centres and the retail park area designated under Policy RT/6.
- 7.87** The remainder of the undeveloped land will be reserved for activities within the B1, B2 and B8 Use Classes and subject to the provisions of Policy E/5. As the site is located within the Town Centre Gateway and Outer Commercial Area covered by Policy E/1B, particular attention will be paid to the design and external appearance of the developments due to its location alongside one of the gateway approaches to the town. This is in order to ensure that the visual appearance of the built form at the gateway to the town is enhanced.

M7 – Former Gas-Works site, Marchfields Way, Weston-super-Mare

- 7.88** The total amount of land covered by this site is 3.5 Hectares and surrounds the existing gasometers and low pressure gas storage units. Much of the land is currently contaminated and would require remediation work before it could be used for alternative forms of development. In order to help fund this remediation work some higher value development will be required. Given its proximity to the out-of-centre retail warehouse park activity around Marchfields Way and Winterstoke Road, a mix of development activities is considered to provide the best solution to the redevelopment of this land. This will comprise 1.2 hectares of out-of-centre retail warehousing and retail related (e.g. car showrooms) activities on the eastern part of the site closest to similar existing activity. This will be in order to encourage more sustainable patterns of activity by offering the opportunity of linked trips to potential users of the existing and future facilities. The development of retail activities on this part of the site will be subject to meeting the requirements of the sequential approach contained in PPS 6 and the policies within the Replacement Local Plan, particularly Policy

RT/6. An essential condition of this type of development will be to ensure that it does not directly or incrementally contribute to the loss of vitality and viability of Weston town centre.

7.89 The remainder of the site will be available for a mix of employment and leisure development but in the case of the latter, proposals for retail related leisure activities would not be supported. Leisure development proposals, like retail will be required to demonstrate that they meet the provisions of national and local planning guidance and policy with regard to potential impact on existing town and local centres. Given its location within the Town Centre Gateway and Outer Commercial Area covered by Policy E/1B, particular attention will be paid to the design and external appearance of the developments due to its location alongside one of the gateway approaches to the town centre.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

Early development and redevelopment of the employment elements of the sites identified in Policy E/3, within Weston, with the emphasis on their development being primarily employment-led. This will contribute towards providing the potential for existing and future residents to achieve more sustainable lifestyles.

Output objective:

Working with land-owners and developers to achieve high quality mixed-use developments on a range of small and medium sized sites, providing a range of employment opportunities for new and developing businesses.

Target:

Development and/or redevelopment of the sites identified within Policy E/3 as genuine mixed-use developments.

When completed the sites will provide, in total, 29.48 Hectares of employment development achieving a minimum of an additional 2,400 (net) jobs for Weston."

Creating additional business employment opportunities

Policy E/4 – Proposals for new business developments within towns and defined settlements

Proposals for business development (Use Classes B1 to B8), within the four towns of Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and Weston-super-Mare and the boundaries of settlements, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be permitted provided that:

- i. The proposal in terms of jobs created, layout, scale and design makes efficient use of the site in relation to its location, accessibility and surroundings.

- ii. Adequate space is made on-site to accommodate the servicing and delivery activities of both workers and visitors to ensure the development does not give rise to unacceptable levels of vehicular traffic, or on-street parking, to the detriment of highway safety.
- iii. The proposal would not have unacceptable environmental effects or lead to the character or amenity of the area or settlement being adversely affected.
- iv. Individual proposals would not, taken together with existing or proposed uses, lead to the cumulative build-up of business uses within residential areas so as to detract from the privacy, amenities and well-being of adjoining and existing residents.
- v. Where the form of development is likely to be travel intensive (B1 office development), or involve large scale B8 storage and distribution uses, these should be located, in the case of B1 uses, so as to be well served by public transport or capable of being well served, and for B8 uses seek to minimise impact on the local highway network and disturbance to residential neighbourhoods.
- vi. Finally, within the boundaries of settlements as defined on the Proposals Map and washed over by the Green Belt, proposals for employment development will be restricted to infilling, extensions and conversions and reuse of existing buildings.

7.90 The Council seeks to encourage continued economic development and to ensure that, wherever possible, firms receive a positive response to development proposals. It accepts business has always sought locational advantage and it is therefore important that the needs of businesses are taken into account (PPS1, para. 23). Policy E/4 is intended to assist development, setting out clearly the requirements and conditions that the Council will use when assessing proposals for new business developments. This is intended to promote job creation, while at the same time reducing uncertainty over planning matters and preventing the wasted cost of submitting potentially unacceptable planning applications.

7.91 The Council recognises that new, small scale commercial generating uses within urban areas can make a positive contribution to sustainability objectives in existing urban areas, providing locations which offer good access to customers, the workforce and other businesses, as well as contributing to urban vitality and viability and reduce the need to travel, particularly around town centres. The Council also supports proposals which offer opportunities to sustain the rural economy, where this would not harm the landscape, wildlife, agriculture, natural resources and recreational value of the countryside. Finally, proposals for working at home, where consent is required, and mixed use premises (dwellings with ancillary business floorspace) will also be assessed against the criteria set out in Policy E/4. The Council recognises the potential job generation and sustainable development advantages of such uses, but is also keen to ensure that the amenity of existing residents is not prejudiced or highway safety compromised.

7.92 However, for larger scale end users, often involving speculative development or re-development / changes of use within existing

employment areas, the Council recognises that proposals may be incompatible with existing land uses. Therefore, it may not be possible to meet all the criteria in Policy E/4, based on the residential amenity, environmental and transportation impacts of the proposed development and the associated HGV movements. In these circumstances, larger scale uses are most likely to satisfy the criteria where sites in the vicinity of town centres are identified, for B1 or B2 purposes, or where sites are specifically identified for employment purposes, as defined on the Proposals Map (Policy E/5). This is certain to be the case for travel-intensive B1 (Office) uses, which will only be permitted in locations well-served by public transport. Equally, proposals for B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage and Distribution Uses), other than opportunities identified at Policy E/5, are likely to be severely limited.

- 7.93** Indeed, in the case of B8 proposals the Council is particularly keen to ensure that on remaining employment areas, even where existing outline consents seek to provide for B8 uses, the benefits of retaining sites in uses likely to provide a higher level / density of employment are not unnecessarily prejudiced or harmed, particularly where they are well-related to existing or proposed residential areas. In accordance with similar concerns expressed by neighbouring planning authorities, the Council defines 'large scale' B8 uses as greater than 235 square metres floor-space and not ancillary to other employment activities on the same sites (c.f. GPDO permitted development allowance for change of use to B8).
- 7.94** Proposals which include retail elements such as showrooms, wholesale areas and/or customer counters open to the general public will also not be permitted unless these are small in scale, clearly ancillary and include appropriate levels of customer parking. This requirement is intended to ensure that opportunities to retain and attract existing and potential future business job creating activities are not prejudiced, and that retail uses do not become established in predominantly business areas which would have the propensity to undermine or cause conflict with other established retail centres, which would be contrary to the objectives of PPS6, para. 3.30 and Policy RT/6 (Chapter 10) relating to the proposals for out-of-centre retail development.
- 7.95** The Council will also assess development proposals for business generating uses against the policy objectives of Policy GDP/1 (Chapter 4). In addition, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate high standards of design and will be evaluated against the criteria set out at Policy GDP/3. Finally, and where appropriate, in accordance with PPG4, paras. 17 and 27, as well as Policy GDP/5, the Council will consider the use of planning conditions or planning obligations to safeguard local amenity and to restrict the subsequent intensification of the use, which cannot be controlled if unconditional planning consent has been granted. Examples of common conditions relate to the range of uses / activities permitted and hours of operation or a time limit placed on an unusual activity.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

Most business development (Use Classes B1 to B8) including extensions, conversions and changes of use and the re-use of existing buildings and working from home, to be located within the boundaries of the main urban areas of Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Clevedon and Nailsea and other settlements, as defined on the Proposals Map.

Output objective:

Monitoring of industrial and office construction activity and employment land supply based on the Council's agreed scheme of monitoring through the publication of the Council's annual Employment Land Survey.

Target:

New employment development, within use classes B1 to B8 to be located on sites within the boundaries of the four towns and other settlements, as defined on the Proposals Map, including extensions, conversions, changes of use and the re-use of existing buildings and working at home in accordance with Council's locational strategy for business employment development.

Policy E/5 – Safeguarded Employment Areas

Within existing B1–B8 business employment areas, as well as land identified on the Proposals Map for business employment development, proposals for unrelated non B1–B8 development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- i. the proposal would not harm the range or quality of land and premises available for business use development within existing employment areas or expressly identified in the Local Plan to meet economic development or local business employment needs and the number of job opportunities provided; or
- ii. there is a specific requirement associated with neighbouring business uses. Any retail or other town centre uses would also be assessed against the recognised sequential tests; or
- iii. the site is no longer capable of offering accommodation for business use development, or that the proposals would lead to the removal of incompatible development, resulting in greater potential benefits to the community in terms of environmental benefits, significant improvements in the amenities of existing neighbouring residents or contribute to a more sustainable pattern of development that would outweigh the loss of employment capacity in the locality.

Schedule to Policy E/5 – Proposed safeguarded sites for new business employment development

NSRLP Ref	Location	Area (hectares)
Nailsea		
E1	Land at ABB, High Street, Nailsea	0.4
E2	Land at Southfield Road, Nailsea	0.7
Portishead		
E4	Gordano Gate, Wyndham Way, Portishead	6.8
E5	Land at Conference Avenue, Wyndham Way, Portishead	1.7
E6	Old Brickworks, Bristol Road, Portishead	1.6
E7	Land at Portishead Quays, Portishead	6.5
E8	Ashlands employment area, Portishead	1.5
E34	Severn Paper Mill, Harbour Road, Portishead	1.7
Weston-super-Mare		
E9	Land at Lynx Crescent, Weston Industrial Estate,	3.5
E10	Land at Gazelle Road, Weston Industrial Estate,	1
E11	West of Winterstoke Road, Weston-super-Mare	4.6
E12	Land at Winterstoke Road Business Park / Weston Euro Park, Winterstoke Road, Weston-Super-Mare	26.0†
E13	Land at Sunnyside, Weston-super-Mare	1.2
E14*	Former Gas Works, Marchfields Way, Weston-super-Mare	2.3
E15*	Land off Winterstoke Road / Old Junction Road,	10.5
E16	Land adjacent to Transfer Station, Aisecome Way,	1.7
E17*	Land at Aisecome Way, Great Weston Centre,	5.8
E19*	Land East of Park and Ride Site, Weston-super-Mare	7.4
E20*	Land at Bridge Farm, St Georges, Weston-super-Mare	1.5
E21*	Land at the Ridings, St Georges Weston-super-Mare	0.73
E22	Land at Locking Castle Business Park, Weston-super-Mare	12.5‡
E37	Land at Weston Gateway Tourist Park, West Wick, Weston-super-Mare	2.75
Other Remaining Areas		
E24	Land at Moor Lane, Backwell	3
E26	Clevedon 5/20, Rear of Portbury House, Kenn	4.1
E27	Land at Former Ham Green Hospital, Pill	5.7
E28	Employment land provision at former Long Ashton Research Station	1.2

* See also, Schedule to Policy E/3

† Site can come forward for B1, B2 and/or B8 uses as part of a Master Plan and development Brief for the whole of Weston Airfield or, separately for B1, B2 and/or B8 uses during the plan period provided such development does not prejudice the objectives of Policy E/1C

‡ to include 12 residential dwellings as part of a live/work scheme

E29	Land at Havyat Road Trading Estate, Wrington	1.4
E30	Land at Wemberham Lane, Yatton	4.4
E31	Land at Arnolds Way, Yatton	0.1
E32	Park Farm, Yatton	0.4
E33	Land south of Wemberham Lane, Yatton	1.2
E35	Land at Former RAF Locking camp, Locking Moor Road, Weston-super-Mare	25.0
E36	Land at Weston Airfield (East), Locking Moor Road, Weston-super-Mare	33.0
E38	Weston Business Park, Locking Moor Road, Weston-super-Mare	5.3
E39	Land west of Kenn Road, Kenn	8.2
E40	Land at Slough Pitt Farm, Winscombe	0.14
North Somerset		195.52

7.96 In line with the Structure Plan strategy of developing a better balance between where people live and work and prioritising the provision of more jobs in Weston-super-Mare and other urban areas (taken to mean B1, B2 and B8 uses, as set out in the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended), this policy seeks to safeguard existing business and industrial premises and sites from inappropriate development proposals and changes of use. The policy also seeks to achieve a portfolio of sites that the Council considers offer the best opportunities to both secure existing and attract additional 'higher value' business employment opportunities, principally in the office, general industrial and storage and distribution uses. In recognition of the need to ensure that Weston is an attractive and competitive location for employment generating development at a strategic level, the Council and its partners are committed to delivering the 'Weston Vision'. This is expressed in the Plan at Chapter 3 (Local Plan Vision, Aims and Locational Strategy), and at Policy E/1C with the priority to ensure that future development within the town is employment-led. By selectively resisting the loss of existing premises and sites and restricting other non employment uses, the Council intends to broaden, expand and diversify the local economy and the economic base of North Somerset in the most sustainable locations, as well as ensuring the continued vitality and viability of existing town and district centres as set out in Policy RT/1 (Chapter 10).

7.97 In accordance with the Council's objective to strengthen the local economy and to provide the range and choice of employment land required to deliver a competitive and strong local economy, the Council is keen to ensure that, within North Somerset, there is a wide choice of land and premises available to businesses. Moreover, there are many existing business employment sites, some catering for starter and workshop businesses, which meet the needs of the local economy. These are suitably located in terms of the highway network and residential areas, which if lost to alternative uses could result in job losses and

pressure to release further greenfield sites in the future. In this respect, the Council considers that existing employment sites and premises, as well as the portfolio of vacant or undeveloped land listed in the supporting schedule to Policy E/5, as defined on the Proposals Map, represent the most suitable locations for established businesses in the B1-B8 use classes to continue to function, operate and invest. In this respect, Policy E/5 seeks to resist the loss of such land and buildings to unrelated uses and thereby prevent the gradual erosion of the core business employment function of these sites, as has occurred over recent years by incremental redevelopment.

- 7.98** The range and choice of sites listed in Policy E/5 has been reviewed in accordance with the Local Plan Strategy. This has taken on board the Government's commitment, in PPS3 at paragraph 44, to advise local planning authorities to consider some existing employment allocations as better used for mixed use developments incorporating housing. In this context, and in order to inform the Council's detailed district Urban Housing Capacity Study, previous employment allocations / commitments and established employment areas have been reviewed. Therefore, in accordance with the Structure Plan, Policy E/5 seeks to safeguard sites for employment which the Council considers are capable of continuing to offer development and accommodation opportunities for employment. This is in preference to other competing uses (residential, leisure and retail), for which specific and adequate provision and opportunity is considered to be made elsewhere in the Plan, either through new allocations or supportive policy criteria: see Chapters 8 (Housing), 10 (Retailing and Town Centres) and 11 (Cultural and Community Facilities).
- 7.99** However, the Council does acknowledge that changing trends in employment, primarily from the introduction of modern technology, have blurred the distinction between different types of industry. There may also be instances where employment / commercial uses outside the B1 to B8 use classes, which owing to their individual site requirements or complementary support function, are more appropriately located within these safeguarded business employment areas. In exceptional cases, the Council would not wish to prohibit such activities, provided that elsewhere within the defined employment area, existing and potential future business employment activities are not prejudiced and access and parking arrangements are satisfactory. However, in such instances the Council would need to be satisfied that there was a justified and proven need for this alternative proposal, that no alternative sites were available, as demonstrated by the findings of a sequential search study, and that the proposal was not likely to have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of existing town centres or other more sustainable locations.
- 7.100** The Council also recognises instances where employment sites were built when little regard was had to landscaping, screening and the overall design of employment buildings, which has resulted in some existing employment purposes raising unacceptable environmental or traffic problems. This may be a factor that impacts on whether the site is capable of continuing to accommodate employment uses. The general environmental quality of sites and associated traffic problems, where this is recognised as being below their modern counterparts, will be taken

into consideration when proposals come forward for redevelopment for non-business uses, in order to secure any resulting improvements in the amenities of existing neighbouring residential occupiers. In addition, the Council will also have regard to measures taken to secure employment uses and the length of time the site / buildings have been vacant.

Bristol International Airport and Royal Portbury Dock

7.101 These two transport hubs generate a significant amount of development within their legally defined operational areas associated with their respective functions. These, in turn, generate considerable levels of employment. Both facilities benefit from reduced regulation in terms of development activity arising from primary legislation and exemptions provided via elements of the General Permitted Development Order 1995. Within the specifically designated areas affecting both the port facilities and the airport, the local planning authority has limited regulatory influence; however, it is committed to working with both to achieve a comprehensive approach to future development.

7.102 Bristol International Airport is located primarily within the existing Green Belt. Future employment generating development proposals beyond the limits provided for through legislation and the GPDO 1995 are considered primarily in the context of Policy T/12 (Chapter 9, Transport), but also other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

Policy E/6 – Proposals for development on safeguarded land at Court House Farm

Land as shown on the Proposals Map south of Royal Portbury Dock, at Court House Farm is identified as land safeguarded for port uses subject to:

- i. demonstrable need for those uses that cannot be accommodated within the existing developed area;
- ii. satisfactory environmental safeguards;
- iii. there being no significant demonstrable harm to the amenities of residents of Easton-in-Gordano and
- iv. demonstrating that development would not prejudice proposals for a station and associated parking facilities off Royal Portbury Dock Road in accordance with Policy T/3ii.
- v. The land to remain open and safeguarded against any permanent form of development until such time as the need for port uses is clearly demonstrated.

7.103 As a major economic driver, the Council aims to work with the Port and other partners to develop a positive land use and transportation strategy framework for the longer term development of Royal Portbury Dock. This must be based on a clear and objective understanding of the Port's

current and future business strategy and development needs. It will ensure the effective and efficient use of previously developed land and be consistent with environmental, transportation and Green Belt factors and constraints.

- 7.104** Development proposals to extend Royal Portbury Dock into the safeguarded land identified on the Proposals Map will be dependant on there being a demonstrable need for port uses which cannot be met by the effective and efficient use of land already identified for development, in particular under-used sites at RPD and Avonmouth. Account will be taken of the need to provide for rail freight facilities and for additional capacity for moving goods between Royal Portbury Dock and Avonmouth, and for a station and associated parking facilities as set out in Policy T/3. The impact of the proposal on living conditions in nearby settlements in particular Easton-in-Gordano, Portbury, Sheepway and the relocated Elm Tree Park mobile home development in terms of traffic generation and effects on the environment and landscape plus other relevant policies within the Local Plan will be taken into account and appropriate measures to reduce any adverse impacts of the proposals sought.
- 7.105** Parts of the safeguarded land are recognised as important wildlife sites. Full surveys of the existing biodiversity will need to be conducted prior to any planning application being submitted. Measures will be sought that incorporate the existing biodiversity into the development and to ensure that there would be no unacceptable harm or net loss to the biodiversity of the designated areas as a result of the proposals in accordance with Policy ECH/10 and SPD on Biodiversity and Trees. Should damage to parts of the existing habitat be unavoidable, appropriate mitigation proposals will be required.
- 7.106** It is recognised that not all of the safeguarded land is suitable for port uses. To accord with the Policy the Port will be expected to show the net area to be developed for port uses and the necessary mitigation and compensation measures needed to address the environmental, landscape and traffic issues. Provision will also need to be made for the future development of the railway station and park and ride facility within the area of search set out for this on the Proposals Map.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To ensure that if further expansion of the Dock for port uses is required, which cannot be accommodated on the existing site, it takes place on the identified land and that appropriate environmental safeguards and mitigation and compensation measures are included in any proposal.

Output objective

Through working with the Port and other relevant stakeholders to redevelop existing sites within the Bristol Port estate area, and through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Target

The provision of sufficient employment land (within use classes B1 to B8) to meet the requirement of business and industry over the Plan period.

Policy E/7 – Proposals for business development in the countryside

The extension, conversion or intensification of use of existing employment-generating sites outside settlement boundaries for uses within use classes B1 to B8 will only be permitted, provided that it can be achieved without major or complete reconstruction and the effect on the character and appearance of the countryside is not significantly greater than that of the existing development.

- i. Any development proposals for new B1 to B8 employment generating uses in the countryside will only be permitted where:
- ii. the site is outside the Green Belt and on land adjacent to a settlement boundary; and
- iii. there is no alternative site available for employment development within the adjacent or neighbouring settlement; and
- iv. the employer is an existing indigenous employer looking to expand locally; and
- v. the materials, form, bulk and general design of buildings are in keeping with their surroundings; and
- vi. there are no insurmountable amenity, highway, or traffic objections.

7.107 In line with revisions made to PPSG7, the Council's preference for development in the countryside remains the re-use of existing buildings, provided they are good quality, rather than build new buildings outside of defined settlement boundaries. The Council is supportive of well-conceived farm diversification schemes for business and enterprise purposes which encourage the re-use of redundant farm buildings. In this context, this policy should also be read alongside Policies RD/1 and RD/2 (Chapter 6). These set criteria for development in the countryside, outside settlement boundaries, involving new rural buildings that are essential for farm-based diversification outside the Green Belt and the conversion and re-use of existing rural buildings.

7.108 The Council is committed to sustaining and enhancing the economy of areas outside and beyond the four towns, but it also considers it important to restrict new development that would lead to sporadic, inappropriate or ribbon development outside of the defined urban areas (Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Portishead and Nailsea). This policy is therefore intended to ensure that the quality of life and character of other smaller settlements and villages is protected, as well as the open countryside, as a resource in terms of its biodiversity, amenity, heritage, agriculture and forestry.

7.109 In the case of proposals involving the extension, redevelopment or intensification of existing employment-generating uses and sites, the Council's objective is not to unduly restrict proposals for employment-generating purposes. However, the Council will need to be satisfied that

such activities would not lead to unsustainable travel patterns, a concentration of land uses which cause conflict with their surroundings or result in a dispersed form of development that would undermine efforts in the four towns of Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Clevedon and Nailsea to deliver allocated business employment sites, promote initiatives to develop the regeneration of existing urban areas and previously used land and buildings, in preference to alternative locations, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. In this respect such proposals will also be assessed with regard to Policy E/4. The Royal Portbury Dock area however does not relate to any settlement, but as it is a key location for employment, a specific exception is made.

- 7.110** The Council nonetheless acknowledges, in accordance with PPS7, the importance of effective planning for sustainable farm diversification projects and the re-use of redundant farm buildings. In this respect, the Council is supportive of proposals for the conversion and re-use of rural buildings for business and enterprise purposes that are consistent in their scale with their rural location, adjacent to a village settlement and readily accessible to the local workforce, and preferably with an agricultural or forestry association which would make alternative 'urban' locations unsuitable, provided the criteria set out in Policies GDP/1 and GDP/2 (Chapter 4), E/4 (above) and RD/3 (Chapter 6) in particular are respected. The Council would not want to be seen to be endorsing wholly new speculative development in rural locations that, in turn, might encourage businesses from urban areas, with no local connections, to relocate there as this would be contrary to the principles of sustainable development.
- 7.111** The Council also recognises that there are instances where firms have become established in certain locations and may wish to expand. While the Council's preferred choice would be schemes to re-use good quality existing buildings and put them to a new business use, rather than build new buildings in the countryside, there may be instances where new buildings, beyond the Green Belt, either to replace existing buildings or to accommodate expansion of enterprises, may be acceptable to allow an existing business to expand or relocate provided that they satisfy sustainable development objectives and are of a design and scale appropriate to their rural surroundings (see PPS7, paras. 30-31).
- 7.112** In determining such proposals it is important to assess whether it is beneficial for the local economy and community that the business continues to operate from the same site or locality and whether as a result of expansion there will be a detrimental effect on the character of the area. In such circumstances, the Council will seek to evaluate such proposals in accordance with Policies E/4 (above), GDP/1 and GDP/2 (Chapter 4) to ensure it is beneficial for the rural economy that the business continues to operate from the same locality or whether, as a result of expansion and intensification, there will be a detrimental effect on the character of the area. Within the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Policy ECH/8 will also be relevant.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

Increase in business job opportunities and the establishment of new business enterprises from the conversion or reuse of existing rural buildings and other proposals for new business employment development outside settlement boundaries.

Output objective:

Monitoring of development control approvals for new business employment developments involving the conversion or re-development of rural buildings and other development on safeguarded sites made in accordance with the above policy criteria reported through the Council's annual Employment Land Availability Surveys.

Managing the changing tourism industry

Policy E/8 – Proposals for change of use of hotel and tourist accommodation

Within the Weston Seafront and Town Centre, proposals that would result in the change of use of hotels, tourist accommodation and facilities will be permitted unless:

- i. the proposed use would reduce the overall capacity and attractiveness of Weston as a tourist destination and result in the loss of an otherwise viable hotel or tourist facility which would consequently harm the provision of tourist accommodation.
- ii. the proposed use or uses would be incompatible with the surrounding area and businesses and would harm the character of the Weston Seafront and Town Centre.
- iii. there would be no clear, additional benefits arising from the proposal in terms of improving the character of the area, the vitality and viability of the Town Centre and the economic, cultural and environmental impact on the town as a whole.

Outside the Weston Seafront and Town Centre, proposals involving the loss of serviced accommodation will be permitted where the site:

- iv. provides accommodation that is of poor standards and does not have the potential to provide a tourist facility of appropriate quality without substantial investment; and/or
- v. is of limited significance in terms of its impact on the North Somerset tourism product and relationship to other facilities.

Specifically, the Council will only permit changes of use from holiday and self-catering accommodation to permanent residential accommodation where:

- vi. the property lies within a settlement boundary; and
- vii. the standards of accommodation and amenity are suitable for permanent residential accommodation.

- 7.113** The steady reduction in recent years in the numbers of staying visitors has led to an over-supply of accommodation in Weston-super-Mare. This has resulted in some cases in the lowering of prices and standards and therefore has had a general effect on the appeal of the tourist accommodation on offer. Over recent years there has been a marked increase in the number of applications for change of use of serviced accommodation to permanent residential use. In particular, there has been some loss of prestige hotel accommodation on the sea front and a rapid increase in the conversion of lower quality, unprofitable properties to residential bed and breakfast and thence to largely unregulated single room lets. Both trends are of concern: the loss of large hotels undermines the appeal of Weston to conference organisers, while the proliferation of poorer quality accommodation often offering longer stay room lets has led to a lowering of the perception of the town as an attractive place and holiday destination.
- 7.114** Weston Seafront In Weston-super-Mare, tourist accommodation (other than caravan/ campsites) is concentrated in an area primarily adjacent to the sea front, which helps to maintain the town's position as a major resort and is important as a focus of tourist and leisure activity. The Council recognises that tourism is important to the financial well-being of the town. If Weston is going to develop and grow in accordance with the principles of Weston Visioning as expressed in land use terms in the Plan the focus of the town must be broadened.
- 7.115** The Council is very much aware of the issues expressed by hoteliers concerned at this apparent trend, but it also recognises that North Somerset did not have in the past an up-to-date and effective policy for assessing change of use proposals. The previous North Somerset Local Plan (adopted June 2000) sought to resist such development proposals and operated a policy of restraint to prohibit changes of use through the operation of the Prime Tourist Area (PTA). This Plan has not retained this policy, nor does it contain a PTA boundary. Instead, the Council is seeking to manage the natural restructuring that is occurring within the sector in a more positive and flexible way.
- 7.116** In preparing this Plan, the Council has undertaken research into the location, distribution and quality of the tourist accommodation and facilities. Based on this information, the intention of Policy E/8 is to assess change of use proposals within the Weston Seafront area using a clear set of criteria. This will enable the Council to assess the contribution and impact each proposal would have on the range and type of tourist accommodation available and whether it would have a detrimental effect on the capacity, quality and attractiveness of tourist accommodation in Weston. Through Policy E/1A it will also enable the Council to assess whether new development proposals are going to offer a form of development that will contribute to revitalising and maintaining the Town Centre as a successful sub-regional shopping centre as well as tourism area.
- 7.117** Evidence about the impact of the loss of tourist accommodation and facilities on the capacity and attractiveness of Weston as a tourist destination should include:

- an assessment of the property's location and accessibility in relation to the main focus and concentration of tourist accommodation, facilities and the sea front, in accordance with the Council's strategy to enhance Weston Seafrot, the changing trends in accommodation needs and the requirement to improve the general quality of the accommodation stock;
- evidence that the accommodation is not graded to a national quality assurance standard and does not have potential to be upgraded with some investment;
- whether the proposed change of use is compatible with surrounding development in order to avoid harming the tourism function, nature and appeal of the area;
- overall bed stock numbers should remain broadly consistent.

7.118 Evidence about the viability of the existing use as a commercial concern may include:

- consideration from a survey on the condition of the building, estimates of repairs and projections of financial returns;
- the building is physically constrained and unsuitable for a tourism use, including appropriate access for all users;
- based on the above, an assessment of whether the property is capable of achieving a satisfactory harmonised grading (2-3 star or 2-4 diamonds or equivalent) standard of accommodation; and in the case of properties that are currently vacant or for sale:
- the length of time for which the property has been vacant or for sale, the number of similar properties in the vicinity also vacant or for sale and evidence of the property having been actively and widely marketed as a going commercial concern.

Managing change elsewhere

7.119 Maintaining and improving the standard of holiday accommodation is a Council objective, which includes the managed decline of poor quality accommodation outside Weston Seafrot. Encouragement will be given for the change of use of existing serviced and self-catering establishments to residential use where they are either poorly located to serve the visiting population or are unable to provide an appropriate standard of accommodation as required by harmonised grading schemes for tourist accommodation. The Council can provide advice to proprietors to assist premises to reach the appropriate standards. Where a change of use is approved, it will usually be for conversion into self-contained flats; the Council discourages further changes to HMO status, particularly where further HMO's could harm the character of an area, in accordance with Policy H/6 (Chapter 8). In appropriate circumstances the Council will also negotiate with proprietors to seek to achieve affordable housing in accordance with Policy H/4.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To assess the contribution and impact that proposals for the change of use of hotel and tourist accommodation would have on the capacity and attractiveness of Weston as a tourist destination, taking into consideration the Local Plan objective of enhancing the town and assisting in the regeneration and increasing the vitality of Weston Seafront.

Output objective:

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Policy E/9 – New or extended hotel accommodation and tourist facilities

A site west of M5 Junction 21 at Weston-super-Mare is proposed for hotel purposes. Elsewhere, proposals for new or extended tourist accommodation and facilities will be permitted:

- i. in the case of Weston, where site selection complies with a sequential approach which firstly identifies sites within the Weston Seafront and Town Centre followed by locations adjoining, and failing that a location elsewhere within the Weston area, defined as land to the west of the M5, south and west of the River Banwell and any land north of the River Axe that lies outside the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- ii. within other settlements, provided that the site is well-related to tourism and recreational facilities and public transport, or, in the case of proposals for major new hotel facilities elsewhere within settlement boundaries, where it does not conflict with objectives for the economy and accords with the Locational Strategy and Policies GDP/1-5.
- iii. in the countryside outside the Green Belt, provided that the proposals would not harm the landscape or lead to unsustainable patterns and forms of development.

Weston-super-Mare

7.120 Weston already provides conference and business meeting facilities; however, there is a need for larger, high quality three and four-star hotels to service this market. In order to meet the Local Plan objectives of enhancing the town and assisting in the regeneration and increasing the vitality of Weston Seafront, it is important that this need should be met close to the sea front and the Town Centre. A number of sites in Weston-super-Mare have potential to be developed for such purposes, including the land at the junction of Beach Road and Carlton Street and potential redevelopment sites on the sea front. The Council will accept applications for suitable proposals but no firm allocations in the central area can be made at this time.

7.121 The Council also recognises the need to extend its tourism products and facilities, with particular emphasis on all-weather attractions to maintain a competitive edge. Such improvements will also benefit residents.

Proposals for sustainable, well-located, good quality, all-weather facilities will therefore be encouraged, as will the relocation of existing facilities to more suitable locations. The policy reflects the aims of Blue Skies to enhance the sea front and recognise the demand for new attractions. It also accords with PPS6 and advocates a plan-led sequential approach to selecting sites for entertainment, leisure and other such uses but reflects the circumstances of a seaside resort, where such uses are traditionally located close to the sea front and tourist accommodation rather than concentrating solely in the defined Town Centre.

- 7.122** As employment sites and business parks become more established, there may be a demand for additional hotel facilities to service the business market away from the sea front and main tourist areas. A hotel site is identified on Inset Map 43 in close proximity to the West Wick and Worle Business Parks. The Council will need to be satisfied that any other such proposals do not conflict with the Plan's Locational Strategy and Vision for the regeneration of Weston as detailed in Chapter 3.
- 7.123** Some suitable larger scale tourism developments may not be capable of being appropriately accommodated within the settlement boundary of Weston-super-Mare. Such proposals will be dealt with as an exception to Structure Plan Policies 7 and 46. However, it is essential that they are of a high standard and suitably located so as not to affect those qualities in the environment that are a major attraction for tourism. All proposals will also be assessed against sustainability criteria and Policy ECH/15 for the Coastal Zone (Chapter 5).
- 7.124** Ideally, such proposals should be restricted to the Weston-super-Mare area as defined by this policy. This will limit the distance that visitors travel from tourist accommodation and avoid the need to cross Junction 21 of the M5. Large-scale tourist facilities are not appropriate development in the Green Belt (see Policy RD/3, Chapter 6). They will only be permitted in non-Green Belt countryside outside the Weston-super-Mare area if the sequential test set out in this policy has been exhaustively applied. The detailed planning of new or extended facilities outside settlement boundaries must have regard to environmental constraints: environmental improvements to existing sites and/or long-term conservation management plans may be required where landscape impact and/or nature conservation issues are significant.

Small-scale tourism development in the countryside

- 7.125** North Somerset tourism follows the global increase in small-scale tourist/recreation attractions, often in rural areas, that are often linked to special interests such as horse riding, golf, bird watching, painting, walking, farming and industrial heritage. In addition, many rural businesses welcome tourists, e.g. local potteries and cider farms. If sensitively located and suitably designed, such developments can blend in with the local environment, meet the demands of visitors and residents alike and create valuable employment opportunities.

- 7.126** The Council encourages such opportunities, especially those that promote

and interpret the natural, historic and developed features of North Somerset in a sensitive way and thus promote the objectives of sustainable tourism. Outside settlement boundaries, use should be made of existing buildings wherever possible and any new built development in the countryside will need to be small scale, e.g., toilets, reception, interpretative centres, and be designed to blend in with the rural environment. Likewise, any proposals will also ideally safeguard, enhance and promote a better understanding of the environment and in the countryside should involve an appropriate pursuit for the surroundings. This is in line with the aspirations of Blue Skies for rural tourism. The policy framework for such proposals is provided principally by GDP/1 and GDP/3 (Chapter 4), ECH/7 (Chapter 5), RD/1, RD/2 and RD/3 (Chapter 6) and T/10 (Chapter 9).

Self-catering accommodation

- 7.127** Self-catering units are an important part of the overall provision for tourist accommodation and demand is likely to grow during the Plan period. Falling household sizes have meant that holiday flats offer an appropriate alternative use for large older houses. Similar considerations to those for sub-division of dwellings will apply: see Policy H/6 (Chapter 8).
- 7.128** Many farmers have converted rural buildings to self-catering tourist accommodation. Such conversions can help to diversify the rural economy, and are generally preferable to permanent residential occupation. The Council encourages such proposals, provided that, except within the Green Belt, extensions to existing buildings and construction of new free-standing accommodation are within the curtilage of existing buildings, and protects the countryside for its own sake (see also Policies ECH/7 and ECH/8, Chapter 5 and the criteria laid down in Policy RD/2, Chapter 6). Camping and caravan sites are dealt with separately under Policy E/10 below.
- 7.129** However, it is recognised that self-catering holiday accommodation frequently lacks amenities that are required for permanent occupation and places less demand on local services, e.g. schools. The use of such units for permanent residences therefore requires additional consideration. For this reason the Council will attach conditions to planning permissions or negotiate legal agreements to limit the use to holiday occupation only, PPG21 and Circular 11/95 also provide relevant advice. Applications to remove these restrictions will be assessed against Policy E/8.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To ensure that demands for new tourist accommodation and facilities are met sustainably in ways that do not harm those qualities in the environment that are a major attraction for tourism.

Output objective:

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Target:

Development of a new business hotel west of M5 Junction 21.

Policy E/10 – Camping and caravan sites

Planning permission will be granted, outside the Green Belt, for new or extended touring caravan or camping sites provided that proposals are based on evidence supporting the demand for additional provision and:

- i. in the case of the Weston-super-Mare area (as defined in Policy E/9), proposals for new sites or extensions to existing sites are appropriate to the scale and character of the area; include environmental improvements to the existing site (where presently intrusive), and are well-related to the primary road network;
- ii. in other areas, be appropriate to the scale and character of the area and related to existing buildings.

New or extended static caravan sites will be permitted as long as they are based on evidence supporting the demand for additional provision and would not harm the landscape. Proposals for extensions to sites that are presently considered intrusive must include environmental improvements to the existing site.

Proposals for changes of use from touring pitches to static pitches will be granted provided that:

- iii. there is little demand for touring pitches in the area; and
- iv. the site is poorly located to meet the short-stay demand for touring pitches; and
- v. there are visual benefits arising from the proposal.

The use of caravan and camping sites for alternative uses will not be permitted if they would have an adverse effect on the level and quality of tourist accommodation within North Somerset, or harm the sustainability of existing businesses and services, or harm the character of the local area.

Touring caravans/campsites

7.130 Throughout North Somerset there are approximately 1,200 touring pitches, the vast majority located within 5 miles of Weston-super-Mare. Caravan pitches prevail in numbers over tents. Research aimed at investigating the potential for enhancing the number of high quality touring caravan sites in the area has shown that average occupancy rates over the four peak summer months (year 2000) is around 60%. The occupancy rate of sites needs to be periodically monitored to ensure that any future proposals do not result in a deficit of appropriate sites.

7.131 Given their potential impact on the landscape and the importance of raising the standard and therefore attractiveness of accommodation in the district, the Local Plan strategy is to encourage investment in and retention of the most appropriately located sites. Consideration will also

need to be given on the impact of development through extension to existing or new sites where these are located within areas identified as being liable to flooding. Proposals for such developments will need to take account of the relevant requirements contained in Policy GDP/2.

- 7.132** Within the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the effects on the landscape and the narrow roads of new or extended sites need careful consideration. Reference will be made to the AONB tourism management plan when considering applications within the area. Outside of Weston-super-Mare, proposals should be small-scale – no more than 15 pitches – and well related to existing development. This will protect the countryside from further sporadic development.

Static caravans

- 7.133** Static caravans are placed on site on a permanent basis, that is usually in one ownership. The definition excludes estates of residential caravans occupied on a full-time basis, which are known as 'mobile home sites'. In 2001, there were over 1,000 static caravan pitches in North Somerset, the majority located in the Sand Bay/Kewstoke area and between Clevedon and Portishead. There has been some increase in demand for change of use to residential; while to date this is not considered to compromise the availability of suitable accommodation, the situation will continue to be monitored. The effects of year round use of the sites will be compared to the impacts of holiday use.

- 7.134** There has been an increasing trend in recent years to replace touring caravan pitches with static caravan pitches. Although there are advantages in that touring caravans have a greater impact on the highway network, statics are unable to accommodate the short-stay demand that touring caravanners require. They also have a greater year-round effect on the landscape. For example, caravan provision in the Kewstoke/Sand Bay area is predominantly static and further provision should be resisted in order that the impact on the landscape can be minimised. Only where demand for tourers is low and visual benefits can be achieved throughout a site, e.g. improved landscaping and site layout, will the Council give favourable consideration to a change from touring to static pitches. Consideration will also need to be given on the impact of development through extension to existing or new sites where these are located within areas identified as being liable to flooding. Proposals for such developments will need to take account of the relevant requirements contained in Policy GDP/2.

Improvements to existing holiday sites

- 7.135** Many existing sites contain little or no landscaping, and boundary screening is generally no more than a hedgerow. In many instances, internal site environments and the external appearance of the sites within the landscape could both be significantly improved by substantial

planting schemes. Tree planting and other boundary treatments benefiting views from nearby highways or other publicly accessible areas will be particularly encouraged. The most significant opportunities for such environmental improvements are likely to occur in the Kewstoke/Sand Bay area.

7.136 Where existing sites detract from their surroundings, environmental improvements will be required as a condition of approval for extension, related in scale and kind to the proposed development. It is not usual to require applicants to resolve existing problems but an exception is justified in the case of camping and caravan sites. Extension may be expected to improve the viability of a site that might otherwise close. Planning permission for extension that did not address the issue of existing visual impact would carry the risk that the existing problems would be perpetuated instead of removed; it is therefore appropriate that the issue should be taken into account in determining the application. This is also in line with the aims of Blue Skies to enhance the appearance of key tourism areas and improve the general quality of the accommodation stock. Consideration will also need to be given on the impact of development through extension to existing or new sites where these are located within areas identified as being liable to flooding. Proposals for such developments will need to take account of the relevant requirements contained in Policy GDP/2.

7.137 The General Permitted Development Order 1995 grants planning permission for certain caravan sites (under Part 5) and for the use of land by certain recreational organisations (under Part 27). These permitted development rights constrain the extent to which the Local Plan can control the use of land for camping and caravaning. In particularly sensitive locations, permitted development rights have been withdrawn by Article 4 Directions.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To regulate the development of caravan and camping sites so as to protect and, where possible, enhance the character of the landscape.

Output objective:

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications and the regular survey of occupancy levels.

7

C H A P T E R

Housing

Introduction

- 8.1** This chapter contains the Council's land use policies for ensuring that there is provision of sufficient housing in a choice of locations to meet the needs of the area, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

Aim

- 8.2** The Council's aim is to ensure that there is sufficient housing available so that everyone has the opportunity for a decent home. However, the Council also recognises that North Somerset's proximity to Bristol, together with its attractive natural environment and landscape, has resulted in considerable pressure on the demand for new housing. The Council therefore considers that the availability and supply of new housing must be balanced with other requirements, such as; additional employment opportunities, protection of the countryside, particularly the Green Belt and AONB, the conservation and enhancement of the environment, and the efficient use of land and resources. This chapter identifies sufficient land and housing capacity to meet the strategic dwelling requirement as set out in Policy 33 of the Structure Plan, and in line with PPS3: Housing.

- 8.3** The Council's preferred approach to achieve this comprises bringing together three concurrent strategies which focus development within the four main towns of North Somerset and on other sustainably-located previously-developed sites. The first element comprises the completion of up to 3050 remaining dwellings at a number of key strategic sites, now subject to revised densities, identified in the preceding North Somerset Local Plan (adopted June 2000) at East Portishead and Locking Castle and St Georges at Weston-super-Mare. The second relies on the construction of around 2,100 remaining dwellings over the Plan period from the redevelopment of previously-developed land and buildings within the existing settlement boundaries of Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead; and the regeneration and redevelopment of key sites within Weston in particular. Thirdly, the Council seeks to ensure that other sustainable locations outside the four main towns are also available for housing to ensure an appropriate choice and range of new housing across North Somerset. This Plan provides sites or makes allowance for around 915 remaining dwellings outside the four main towns, subject to minimising the dispersal of dwellings outside the four main towns, avoiding the creation of unsustainable patterns of development and protecting the character and landscape of the countryside.

8.4 Finally, through the operation of the planning system, this chapter seeks to ensure that a proportion of the new housing built or converted up to 2011 is affordable for people living in both the main towns and in the countryside. It is also concerned that the problems associated with houses in multiple occupation in parts of North Somerset are recognised and managed effectively, and that where possible those sections of the community that have special needs have those needs met in the most appropriate way.

Objectives

8.5 The Local Plan objectives in respect of housing are:

- to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the community, reduce homelessness and seek to ensure that everybody has the opportunity for a decent home;
- to identify sufficient suitable land for residential development to meet the needs of existing and future residents over the Plan period in accordance with the principles of sustainable development;
- to relate the release of residential land more closely to the growth of local employment opportunities and availability of sufficient infrastructure;
- to restore the balance between residential and local employment growth by reducing out-commuting and lengthy journeys to and from work so that north Somerset becomes more self-sufficient;
- to increase access to good quality affordable housing by working in partnership with the Housing Corporation, registered social landlords and private landlords;
- to encourage higher densities, particularly at locations with good accessibility by means other than the private car;
- to make the best use of existing resources and infrastructure, particularly through the re-development of previously developed land and buildings, the re-use of derelict or vacant land, the decontamination of land, and the bringing back into use of empty properties.

8.6 These objectives are derived from the Council's Community Pride Strategy and from Policies 2 and 33 of the Structure Plan. Regard has also been had to Government planning policy guidance particularly that contained in PPG3 and PPS3. In addition, responses to the Council's Issues Report consultation in Spring 2000, as well as the Council's adopted Housing Strategy 2004-2009 and the findings from the North Somerset 2001 Housing Needs Study and Housing Needs Assessment Model 2004 - 05 have also influenced the identification of these objectives.

Policy H/1 – Residential Development Strategy

To achieve more sustainable patterns of development and to comply with RPG 10 and the JRSP, development will be located within the boundaries of Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Nailsea and Clevedon, with only limited development elsewhere. The following order of preference when considering new residential proposals will be applied:

- i. previously-developed land and buildings within the towns of Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Nailsea and Clevedon; then
- ii. other suitable land within the four main towns; followed by
- iii. extensions to the four towns, where access to existing local employment opportunities, infrastructure, services and facilities, by means other than the private car, can be demonstrated to be good or, alternatively, based on sustainable development objectives; and/or
- iv. previously-developed land or other suitable land within other settlements, where access to employment opportunities, services and facilities by means other than the private car can be demonstrated to be satisfactory.

Housing development in excess of ten dwellings in Weston-super-Mare will have regard to the over-riding principle that this will be limited until more closely in balance with employment development. Planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would lead to greater imbalance. Residential development outside the four towns identified above, on its own, or with other development, will not be permitted where it would be poorly related to centres of employment, place unacceptable pressure on infrastructure, including the highway network, and other local community facilities, or where development would simply add to or contribute to creating a dormitory settlement with high levels of out-commuting.

- 8.7** In setting how the plan's housing provision will be made through allocations and the development control framework sites are identified for development by applying a search sequence. The first choice for housing development is the re-use of previously-developed land and buildings within the settlement boundaries of the four main towns as defined under Policy GDP/1 (Chapter 4). The Council is supportive of residential development from previously-developed land and the benefits quality of new residential development (new build/conversions), can make to the vitality and viability of the four towns. However, it is keen to make sure that where appropriate viable commercial, business and community uses are retained and that in certain circumstances proposals for residential use are resisted. In order to establish whether existing uses are no longer viable and to assess whether residential proposals would offer clear benefits to the well-being of an area, clear evidence should be provided where relevant to demonstrate;
- There is no realistic prospect of the existing operational use and/or last use in the case of vacant/derelict land and buildings, being reused/resumed;

- The loss of existing commercial, business or community use would not have a detrimental effect on the locality and the accessibility and availability of such facilities;
- Evidence that the property has been actively and widely marketed.

In order to reflect RPG and JRSP policy objectives of achieving a closer balance between employment development and jobs and housing within Weston-super-Mare, larger housing schemes (over 10 units) will be expected to include an element of employment development, unless such uses would be unacceptable having regard to the location, site circumstances or other material considerations.

8.8

Next in order of preference for new residential development is other suitable land. This will exclude public open spaces, recreation and leisure space within the four towns in accordance with Policy CF/4 and ECH/1. Other land coming forward for development will be assessed on its merits subject to it not undermining the Plan's locational strategy with regard to achieving sustainable patterns of development, economic development and regeneration and not leading to an over-provision of housing. In circumstances where residential development is proposed to supersede an existing allocation, as shown on the Proposals Map, evidence that the site is "unneeded" will be required. Where residential development is proposed to supersede an existing allocation as shown on the Proposals Map, genuine evidence will be required to demonstrate that there is no realistic prospect of the allocation being needed and taken up for its stated use and that its development for housing would not undermine or prejudice regional, sub-regional and local strategies. The Council wants to avoid the loss of potentially important sites just because an allocation has not been taken up, or there has been relatively little interest in it. Moreover, many allocations, for example employment / education sites, are 'strategic' by nature of their size, location, and/or intended use. They may not be fully utilised during the Plan period, but they may not be easily replaced at a later date if requisitioned for other uses.

8.9

Therefore, taking into consideration uncertainty about the scale and direction of economic and social trends and forecasts, genuine evidence will need to be provided that demonstrates a convincing case that:

- Following an up-to-date allocations review, the site is surplus and will not be required / developed in the future – this needs to be taken across the local authority as a whole, and not simply on a site by site basis.
- In the case of major strategic sites and/or locations a review across the wider sub-region will be required, since the case for retaining such sites cannot be argued on the basis of the commercial take-up within individual authorities.
- The site is not suitable, or considered appropriate for the land use needs of alternative commercial, business or leisure sectors, which as a result are predicted to grow and expand over the Plan period.
- An alternative use or mix of uses offers greater community benefits and contributes to delivering sustainable communities.

- 8.10** New residential development coming forward from Policy H/1 categories i) and ii) must ensure that it performs well with regard to the location and accessibility to jobs, shops and services by modes other than the car, and the potential for improving such accessibility. Existing and potential infrastructure, including good public transport (good being assessed with regard to reliability, frequency, accessibility and sufficient capacity to cope with the likely additional patronage), as well as the ability of water and sewerage, other utilities and social infrastructure to absorb further development and the cost of adding further infrastructure, will be taken into account. In addition, the ability of the site, if developed for residential, to build and contribute towards balanced communities, as well as the physical and environmental constraints on the development of the land, will also be taken into account.
- 8.11** Only when evidence from urban capacity studies confirms that the existing settlement boundaries of Weston, Portishead and the other towns of Nailsea and Clevedon are not going to generate all the housing land required over this period will alternative locations be considered. In accordance with Policy H/1, the residential strategy then sequentially considers alternative development opportunities offered by extensions to urban areas, where access to local employment opportunities, services and facilities by means other than the private car can be demonstrated to be good, and/or alternatively, previously-developed land, or other suitable land, within other settlements where access to employment opportunities, services and facilities by means other than the private car can be demonstrated to be satisfactory.
- 8.12** Urban extensions constitute built development in the countryside. To be considered appropriate under Policy GDP/1 it is essential to demonstrate that they are the most sustainable way to meet housing needs that cannot be met within the settlement boundaries of the towns.
- 8.13** With regard to new housing in other settlements, in addition to para 8.11 above, it must also be demonstrated to be housing of an appropriate scale and type that improves the viability of villages and promotes living communities, in accordance with the sequential search approach. This is to ensure there is adequate housing provision outside of the four main towns to meet the needs of local people, while ensuring that urban housing needs are not met in rural areas in accordance with the Council's general development principles as set out in Chapter 4. Residential development outside the four towns identified above, on its own, or with other development, will not be permitted where it would simply add to or contribute to creating a dormitory settlement with high levels of out-commuting.
- 8.14** The Council has carried out a detailed Urban Housing Capacity Study to assess the extent to which new greenfield sites may be required. A separate technical report is available drawing on the conclusions of this work, entitled North Somerset 2002 Urban Housing Capacity Study.
- 8.15** The policies and proposals in the Plan will ensure not only the general availability of land for housing, but will also assist the Council, in its duty as a housing authority, in enabling the provision of housing for those in need and in the improvement of the housing stock. Where the

Council has the power to influence decisions, it will seek to ensure that previously-developed sites, incorporating conversions, anticipated urban windfalls and other allowances for development built into the Council's 2002 Urban Housing Capacity Study, will be developed before greenfield sites. Likewise, whilst large scale additional sites are not needed to meet the JRSP housing requirement, the development of suitable sites will be considered for the 2006 – 2011 period provided they accord with the plan's locational strategy, do not undermine the self containment objectives of RPG10 SS 10 and JRSP Policy 7 and / or lead to more dispersed and less sustainable development patterns and associated transport movements.

Policy H/2 – Proposed sites for new residential development, incorporating target for previously-developed land and phasing policy

In accordance with the findings from the Council's 2002 Urban Housing Capacity Study, land is identified or an allowance threshold made to accommodate and phase the residual additional dwellings (net) to meet the needs of the area over the remaining Plan period up to 2011 in accordance with Policy 33 of the JRSP. Of this total, 55% of all dwellings are targeted to be completed on previously developed land including conversions. Incorporated into this strategic total is the threshold allowance that 40 dwellings per annum will come forward from unidentified previously-developed windfall sites and 161 dwellings per annum from the other small sites incorporating the intensification of existing housing, over the Plan period.

As set out in the schedule below and shown on the Proposals Map, between April 2006 and March 2011, excluding allowances for unidentified windfall sites and small sites over the Plan period, sufficient provision will be made for 5,024 additional dwellings (net).

Schedule to Policy H/2-proposed sites for new residential development

NSRLP Site No	RLS Ref No.	Address	Affordable Housing % Target	Negotiated Affordable Housing	Total dwellings remaining to 2011
Clevedon					
H1	4/448	Staddon's Timber Yard, Moor Lane, Clevedon	100%	38	38
H2	4/384	Land at Beach Avenue, Clevedon	30%		16
H68	4/486	Royal Pier, Clevedon			17
H77	4/506	The Regent, Clevedon			17

NSRLP Site No	RLS Ref No.	Address	Affordable Housing % Target	Negotiated Affordable Housing	Total dwellings remaining to 2011
H85	4/523	Linden Road, Clevedon			13
H87	4/526	Moor Lane Clevedon			10
<i>Clevedon sub-total</i>					111
Portishead					
H7	4/352	Land at former Portishead Power Station site	10%		108
H8	4/353	Dockside, Portishead (including DC EPD's)		87	1000
H9	4/354	Land at East Portishead (Ashlands)	10%	150 dwellings	1131
H13	4/410	Charlcombe Caravan Park			2
H60	4/479	Albert road Portishead		£485,000	52
H65	4/522	Paper Mill site, Portishead	30%		120
H69	4/489	141 High Street, Portishead			13
H88	4/525	The Farm 117 High Street Portishead	30	20	
<i>Portishead sub-total</i>					2446
Weston-super-Mare					
H14	4/087	Land at Atlantic Road, WsM	30%		23
H15	4/044	Land at Milton Hill. WsM			10
H17	4/261	East of Park and Ride, Summer Lane, WsM. Mixed use site see also E19 and M2 chapter 7	30%		100
H24	4/387	Land at Ebdon Grounds; adjacent to Ebdon Rd, Wick St Lawrence	20%	7 dwellings	36
H18	4/438	Land at Moor Lane, Locking Castle		19	211
H26	4/376	Manilla Cove, Manilla Place, WsM		9	

NSRLP Site No	RLS Ref No.	Address	Affordable Housing % Target	Negotiated Affordable Housing	Total dwellings remaining to 2011
H19	4/439	Land at Airport View Caravan Park, Moor Lane, WsM		3 dwellings	119
H21	4/321	St Georges			7
H27	4/440	Land adjacent Plum Tree Farm off Summer Lane, WsM		8	
H28	4/442	Manor Farm Caravan Park, WsM	30%		20
H29	4/443	Orchard House, Ebdon Road, WsM	30%		12
H38	4/466	39 South Road. WsM	14		
H39	4/467	The Old Calor Gas Centre, Rectors Way, WsM	30%		12
H40	4/477	WsM Football Club	20%	29 dwellings	135
H56	4/472	Beach Road/Clarence Road		£239,138	106
H61	4/518	Weston Gateway, WsM. Mixed use site see also E37 and M1 chapter 7	30%		136
H62	4/519	The Ridings, WsM. Mixed use site see also E21 and M3 chapter 7	30%		45
H63	4/520	Bridge Farm, WsM. Mixed use site see also E20 and M4 chapter 7	30%		50
H64	4/521	Land to the rear of Wellsea Grove, WsM	30%		54
H65	4/478	Royal Pier Hotel, WsM			16
H72	4/492	141 Milton Road, WsM			17
H70	4/496	Dorville Hotel, WsM			22
H71	4/497	Severn Road, WsM		11	11
H73	4/499	New Bristol Road, WsM			23
H74	4/501	Walford Avenue, WsM			12
H78	4/507	Knightstone Island, WsM		£200,000	87

NSRLP Site No	RLS Ref No.	Address	Affordable Housing % Target	Negotiated Affordable Housing	Total dwellings remaining to 2011
H79	4/510	Brighton Road, WsM			14
H80	4/511	Whitecross Road, WsM			14
H81	4/512	St Saviours Church, WsM			13
H82	4/513	Bransby Way, WsM			42
H20a	4/362	West Wick, Locking Castle	10%	5 dwellings +£1.4m contribution	500
H20b	4/362a	West Acres Caravan Park	30%		100
<i>WsM sub-Total</i> 1978					
Other Areas					
H41	4/297	Land south of Sidcot Lane, Winscombe	30%		20
H43	4/342	Land to the east and west of Wemberham Lane, Yatton	30%		24
H50	4/348	Stowell Concrete site, Kenn			14
H54	4/474	Long Ashton Research Station, Long Ashton	20%	70 dwellings	258
H66	4/480	Moor Farm, Portbury	20%		35
H67	4/485	Well Park, Congresbury		13	13
H75	4/504	Smart Systems, Yatton			10
H76	4/505	Arnolds Way, Yatton	30%		24
H83	4/514	Church Road, Winford			11
H84	4/515	2-12 Long Ashton Road			20
H86	4/524	Oxford Plasma site, Yatton		30%	60
<i>Other areas sub-total</i>					489
North Somerset Total					5024
Note: Sites in bold do not have an extant planning consent as at April 2006					

8.16 The JRSP allocation of 14,900 dwellings between 1996-2011 equates to an average annual build rate of about 990 dwellings, compared with a rate of about 870 dwellings in the previous Structure Plan period (1989 – 2001). However, analysis of construction rates in North Somerset indicates that the actual build rate achieved over the former Structure Plan period, i.e. 1989 up to 2001, was only 705 dwellings a year. The Council's Residential Land Survey at April 2006 shows that 9898 dwellings (net) were completed over the first ten years of the new JRSP period (April 1996 – March 2003), giving an annual rate of about 990 dwellings a year. As a result, from the total allocation of 14,900 to North Somerset over the Structure Plan period, this leaves a residual requirement for the remaining five years up to 2011 of 5002 dwellings (net) at an average rate of 1000 dwellings per annum. Not only is this a historically high rate to be achieved, but strategic guidance dictates that there must be resolution of critical infrastructure and employment issues first.

Economic and market advice

8.17 This position was further supported by the consultative advice commissioned by the JSPTU from DTZ Pieda Consulting for the strategic UHCS. Its purpose was to highlight variations in levels of residential demand and the impacts of relative land values on the viability of residential development in the light of land values for alternative uses. Its aim was to give an independent assessment of the four councils' identified potential from urban capacity yields. In terms of the North Somerset housing market, the report concluded that demand on allocated greenfield sites close to the M5, within the existing settlement boundary of Weston-super-Mare, could not be translated into demand within the inner areas of the town, without tackling regeneration issues within the latter area, and that this was likely to be a long process. The Council recognises that the continued large supply of new housing at the eastern fringes is going to deflect the market away from residential opportunities within central and inner parts of the town. However, it considers that a start has been made with the successful SRB6 bid, which recognises the importance of housing to bring forward regeneration. It also considers that the Replacement Local Plan is now based on a much stronger commitment to deliver regeneration and redevelopment along the Weston Waterfront and Town Centre (see Locational Strategy, Chapter 3 and Policies E/1 and E/2, Chapter 7). It also encompasses a more selective appraisal of the value of the stock of tourist accommodation and facilities as identified at Policy E/8, which may also lead to new residential self-contained conversion proposals coming forward.

Unallocated threshold allowances

8.18 As part of the work to complete the Strategic Urban Housing Capacity Study and based on ongoing annual RLS monitoring work, North Somerset has re-appraised how much housing can realistically be accommodated from previously used land sources within the four main towns of Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Nailsea and Clevedon, in the

period up to 2011. To an extent, past trends informed conclusions, but other considerations such as identified regeneration opportunities, a reappraisal of potential capacity sources and likely target yields were also taken into account. As a result, arising from this work, the target allowance for both windfall and small sites has been revised. The following explains in more detail the justification and reasoning for putting forward these revised allowances.

Large Sites Unidentified Urban Windfall Allowance

8.19 In the case of 'large' windfall sites (over 10 dwellings / greater than 0.5 hectare), the Council considers it important that the contribution from this source, which cannot be identified in advance, is husbanded by a policy to assist in its continuity of supply. The Council acknowledges, in accordance with guidance in PPS3 that no allowance should be made for 'greenfield' windfall sites. For this reason, Policy H/2 supports, based on the findings of the Council's 2002 Urban Housing Capacity Study, a specific allowance of 90 dwellings per annum from 'unidentified large urban windfall sites' coming forward from within the settlement boundaries of the four main towns. In addition an allowance of 10 dwellings per annum is also made for sites coming forward from previously developed land sources within existing settlement boundaries in other villages across North Somerset in accordance with Policy H/1.

Small Sites Allowance

8.20 In the light of the findings of the Council's 2002 Urban Housing Capacity Study, the allowance rate for sites under 10 dwellings and less than 0.5 hectare has also been revised. Policy H/2 supports the completion of 161 small sites per annum over the Plan period. This takes on board the higher revised yields now expected up to 2011 from small sites, based on the urban capacity source category 8 'Intensification of Existing Housing'. However, in reviewing the small sites allowance, while the Council accepts that a large proportion of small sites will come from previously developed land sources within the four main towns, arising from development of residential curtilages, sub-division of existing dwellings and the conversion of non-residential buildings, it also considers it prudent and necessary to include within this allowance 70 dwellings per annum to come forward from small-scale infill development outside the four towns.

8.21 This approach builds into the housing supply dynamic a degree of tolerance that, in the context of North Somerset, there is likely to be limited and small-scale but nonetheless regular and ongoing development of land and buildings in many of the smaller settlements and villages. Examples include barn conversions and other agricultural holdings, as well as small-scale infill plot development, particularly of garden curtilages and other suitable land. However, the construction of dwellings against this allowance threshold will be closely monitored annually and will need to be in accordance with Policies H/1 (above), H/7 and RD/3 (Chapter 6). As a result, where monitoring shows that supply, in any

one or given threshold categories, is likely to exceed the target requirement for the current plan phase by more than 20%, planning permission may be refused unless there are overriding sustainable development, environmental or community benefits.

PDL Target

- 8.22** The Government proposes a target of 60% of all new housing to come forward from previously-developed land, or through conversions of existing buildings, by 2008. Policy HO5 of Regional Planning Guidance, whilst recognising that the distribution of such land is not even across the region, recommends that 50% of all housing be provided on such sites. The Structure Plan provides no targets, merely stating that local plans will give priority to the use of such land and buildings and that this will be taken into account in the phasing of provision in local plans.
- 8.23** Between April 1996 and March 2003, monitored against PPG3 Annex C, North Somerset achieved 39% of dwelling completions on previously developed sites. Taking into consideration existing commitments and the findings from the Council's Urban Capacity Study, it is currently forecast that up to 2011 a target of 55% of all dwelling completions in North Somerset can be achieved from previously-developed land or through conversions of existing buildings. It is recognised that this target is below the national target of 60%. Nonetheless, the Council considers that given the market advice from DTZ Pieda Consulting (see para 8.17), this target of 55% is challenging, realistic and achievable over the Plan period.
- 8.24** In terms of delivering a target of 55% the majority of sites, up to 45% will be in the Portishead area arising from the regeneration of the former power station and dockside areas. In addition, based on urban capacity findings, 20% will also be contributed from the redevelopment of existing uses. Regeneration opportunities in Clevedon and Weston are expected to contribute as much as 15% to this figure, particularly from the redevelopment of tourist accommodation and from regeneration opportunities within the Weston Waterfront and Town Centre (see Policies E/1 and E1/a, Chapter 7). Other development opportunities anticipated to come forward across North Somerset over the Plan period will make up around 5%. Finally, a further 15% of dwellings are expected to be generated from the intensification of existing housing, rear garden plots, conversions, etc. yielding less than 10 dwellings each, within the four main towns and other villages and settlements in North Somerset.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

The residual additional dwellings (net) to be constructed over the remaining Plan period largely within the main urban areas of Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Clevedon and Nailsea with only limited development outside the four towns in accordance with allowance thresholds.

Output objective:

Monitoring of dwelling construction activity and residential land supply based on the Council's agreed scheme of monitoring through the publication and review of its Urban Capacity Study and annual Residential Land Survey, with reference to employment land monitoring and labour market analysis.

Target

Over the Plan period, up to 2011 sufficient land is identified or an allowance threshold made to accommodate and phase the residual additional dwellings (net), to meet the needs of the area. Of this total, 55% of all dwellings are to be completed on previously-developed land including conversions.

Policy H/3 – Residential densities

Proposals for new housing will be expected to make efficient use of land by developing at a density of between 30 – 50 dwellings per hectare net, taking into account the character of the locality and other requirements of the Local Plan. In determining the appropriate density for a particular site, particular attention will be given to:

- i. the proximity to public transport opportunities, transport corridors, cycle routes and pedestrian linkages;
- ii. the character of the locality and neighbouring buildings;
- iii. the mix of dwellings and the development's contribution to forming balanced communities;
- iv. the proximity to community facilities;
- v. the proximity to employment opportunities.

8.25 By operating firmer density policies a double benefit can be achieved. Not only can it ensure the effective use of land but helps to build the type and mix of housing that is affordable to a greater range of people. The Plan is supportive of the need to ensure that new residential development contributes to promoting balanced communities. In preparing this Plan, consideration has been given to housing need research and statistics which indicate that for most new households the demand is for the smaller and more 'affordable' type of housing, particularly flats and terraced houses. The preferred approach would be to encourage developers to provide new housing, at densities which conform with this policy, which at the same time contribute to providing dwellings that are currently un-represented in a particular locality and meet identified need for new market housing.

8.26 It is recognised that the housing market is the context against which all housing needs of the area are set and operate. The 2001 Census and Housing Need and Affordability Model indicated strongly that across the whole of the district there is an affordability problem arising from the relationship between local incomes and the supply of stock. Linked to this, nearly 60% of respondents to the survey indicated that they

needed either flats or terraced houses. In preparing this Plan the Council is responsive to the Housing Needs Study research, which it considers to be a statistically valid sample, and which indicates that for most new households the demand is for the smaller and more 'affordable' type of housing, particularly flats and terraced houses. It is therefore considered that the application of this density policy will go a long way to ensuring that there is a mix of house types and sizes available in line with the principles of PPS3. It will also be an important policy tool, alongside Policies H/4 and H/5 on affordable housing, in addressing the imbalance between affordability and access to market housing, as well as lack of representation of 1 and 2-bedroom accommodation within the existing housing stock.

- 8.27** The Structure Plan requires that local plans will set minimum densities for new housing developments, generally not below 20-25 dwellings per hectare (dph), subject to various criteria, and provide for a range of densities in existing developed areas to allow for appropriate infill, etc. In addition, provision is to be specifically made for densities considerably higher than 20-25 dph at selected locations with good public transport accessibility and access to facilities. It is considered that proximity to significant employment areas may also justify increased densities. PPS3 advises against development that makes inefficient use of land and notes that 30 dph net should be used as a national indicative minimum to guide policy development. At suitable and appropriate locations, Local Planning Authorities may wish to set a range of densities across the plan area. In calculating housing densities the Council is guided by PPS3 and will adopt the 'net dwelling density' approach as set out there at Annex B.
- 8.28** Policy H/3 should be read in conjunction with other policies relevant to design, including GDP/3 (Chapter 4) and those in Chapter 5. Higher density development can introduce variety into the character of a settlement but it should not be permitted where the established character of the settlement would be eroded or where the proposal would not integrate well with the existing pattern of development.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

The average net density of the residual additional dwellings (net) to be constructed over the remaining Plan period should not be below 30 dwellings per hectare, with higher densities achieved at locations with good access to public transport and facilities in order to ensure the effective use of land, balanced communities and to provide more opportunities to build the type and mix of housing that is affordable to a greater range of people.

Output objective:

Monitoring of dwelling construction activity and residential land supply based on the Council's agreed scheme of monitoring through the publication and review of its Urban Capacity Study, annual Residential Land Survey and Housing Supply Bulletin.

Target

The Council will seek to ensure an average density of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare net, is achieved from the construction of the residual additional new dwellings (net), required to be built over the remaining Plan period up to 2011.

Policy H/4 – Affordable Housing

The Council will seek to negotiate with developers and/or landowners towards achieving a target of 30% affordable homes (including housing sold at discounted open market value), from all suitable sites for new housing developments of 15 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectare or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings, coming forward for planning consent over the Plan period. This will contribute to meeting an identified overall affordable housing shortfall of 965 units per annum as an average over the period 2002 to 2009.

The precise amount and type of affordable housing to be provided and mix of house types will be a matter of negotiation between the Council and the proposed developer. In determining the amount of affordable housing, the Council will adopt a flexible approach to individual site negotiations, with the overall percentage of affordable housing being subject to site conditions, the economics of provision and wider planning, economic and sustainability considerations.

On this basis, the Council will seek to negotiate with developers on those sites allocated in Policy H/2 for at least the indicated total amount of affordable housing. On sites of 15 dwellings and above (or 0.5 hectare and above), coming forward from identified windfall sources, the Council will also seek to negotiate with developers and/or landowners towards achieving 30% of the dwellings for affordable housing (subject to the housing needs of the area) and having regard to the following:

- i. the local level of identified need for affordable housing;
- ii. the proximity of local services and access to public transport; and
- iii. whether development of the site imposes exceptional costs which are demonstrated to preclude affordable housing on the basis of the financial viability of the development.

To enable both initial and subsequent occupiers to benefit from the affordable status of the dwellings, planning permission will be the subject of conditions or a planning obligation to ensure such housing is reserved for first and subsequent occupiers who need it or through the involvement of a registered social landlord. This will also include provision for specified alternative arrangements to be made if the Council's preferred form of affordable housing on-site (usually rented housing) cannot be secured by a specified date.

Assessing and defining affordable housing need

- 8.29** National guidance on affordable housing is set out in PPS3. The Government is committed to providing high quality housing for people who are unable to access or afford market housing.

- 8.30** In 2001 the Council commissioned David Couttie Associates to undertake a Housing Needs Study, (DCA HNS). This indicated a shortfall in affordable housing of 3,750 units between 2001 - 2011 and was the evidence base upon which Policy H/4 affordable housing target and threshold were identified in the Deposit drafts of the Local Plan. However, in light of the changes in the housing market since 2001 with a continuing divergence between steeply rising house prices and earnings and in response to concerns that the DCA HNS was out of date, a new study was commissioned in 2004/05.
- 8.31** Working jointly with the neighbouring authorities of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Professor Glen Bramley was commissioned to undertake a new assessment of affordable housing need and tenure at the sub-regional level broken down into 19 zones spread across the four Councils. The assessment of housing need based on the HNAM indicated that North Somerset has an annual demand of about 965 affordable units per annum as an average over the period 2002 – 2009 – an affordable housing need that cannot be satisfied during the plan period. The West of England Housing Need and Affordability Model (HNAM) of May 2005 will therefore be used to provide support for Policy H/4 and is the basis for negotiating affordable housing in the District. In accordance with national guidance the assessment of housing need and the monitoring of affordable housing delivery will be regularly updated and reviewed. Where considered appropriate and necessary the HNAM will also be supplemented by local surveys in support of individual or groups of parishes below the four zones referred to in the HNAM for North Somerset. This will be in order to determine very local needs such as to support exception sites and village affordable housing schemes.

Defining affordable housing

- 8.32** The term 'affordable' has gradually come to replace 'social' in everyday usage, to refer to a range of both subsidised (by Social Housing Grant and/or discounts by developers) and market housing designed for those who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market. In this respect, North Somerset Council defines affordable housing as 'encompassing both low cost market and subsidised housing, irrespective of tenure, ownership – whether exclusive or shared – or financial arrangements (from public-funded sources or as discounts on cost from developers, for people who are unable to resolve their housing needs in the local private sector market because of the relationship between housing and incomes'. Affordable housing that complies with this definition includes low cost market housing and housing provided with an element of actual or hidden subsidy and includes units for rent through an RSL (the main group), RSL shared ownership with subsidy or discounted market sale with occupancy controls. Low cost market housing must comply with the intermediate housing definition as set out in paragraph 8.34. Housing to help meet the needs of specific groups including key workers is included within the definition of affordable housing and it is also recognised that the re-use of empty homes can make an important contribution to meeting affordable housing need.

Discounted market sale

8.33 In more affluent areas, such as North Somerset, the private market has not created a supply of smaller, cheaper properties. In such circumstances, low cost market houses produced without subsidy or sold without discount are unlikely to meet identified needs in respect of price or type of unit, or be available to those in need. In these cases, the option is retained to negotiate other forms of intermediate housing including subsidised or discounted units. Discounted sale may also be considered as an alternative to RSL provision on sites that would otherwise provide only one or two units of housing. In instances where affordable housing is provided by discounted market sale the Council will use planning obligations to secure affordable housing provided directly by the developer for as long as the need exists as defined in local surveys, to occupiers demonstrating the need for affordable housing (usually by nomination or approval by North Somerset Council). The definition of what constitutes a local survey is to be agreed with North Somerset Council, but will generally relate to a wider area than just a specific village.

8.34 Low cost market housing Based on the above, affordable housing is considered to encompass the following:

- Social housing – Housing provided by landlords where access is on the basis of housing need including Registered Social Landlords and rents are no higher than target rents set by the government for housing association and local authority rents.
- Intermediate Housing – Sub-market housing which is above target rents, but is substantially below open market levels and is affordable by households on local incomes. This category can include shared ownership, sub-market rent provision, key worker housing and low-cost market housing where its price is equivalent to other forms of intermediate housing.
- In line with the guidance in PPS3, low cost market housing is outside the Government's definition of affordable housing, although it can play an important role in meeting housing demand.

Overall target and threshold levels

8.35 The Council considers that this policy approach gives North Somerset a fair and proper means to commence negotiations with developers on all new permissions, subject to the ability to provide defensible data to justify need, following a rigorous assessment, and the suitability of individual sites for affordable housing. Based on the findings of the 2005 HNAM there will be an annual demand of about 965 affordable units per annum as an average over the period 2002 – 2009.

8.36 Target levels The Council fully accepts that it is extremely unlikely that this scale of supply will be achievable in this timescale, as the annual scale of affordable needs based on the HNAM is nearly 6 times more than that able to be delivered from new build or conversions. It is also prepared to accept that the calculation of housing need is not an exact

science and the findings should be subject to some degree of flexibility. However, irrespective of this, there are wider issues to consider when setting targets for the delivery of affordable housing from new developments, principally to ensure the provision of balanced communities if the problems of housing in the past are not to be repeated. In this respect, the Council considers it appropriate to seek to negotiate with prospective developers towards achieving 30% affordable housing from all sites of 15 dwellings and above (or 0.5 hectares and above), as well as the existing allocations identified at Schedule to Policy H/2 – Proposed sites for new residential development, where a lower indicated total amount of affordable housing is not identified.

- 8.37** Based on the findings of the HNAM, which identified an overall affordable housing shortfall of 965 units up to 2009, the figure of 30% affordable housing from the total of all sites coming forward for planning consent over the Plan period is considered reasonable and appropriate. In setting this figure regard has been had to the total capacity of available sites, including possible windfalls, both with planning consent and still to come forward and their likelihood to deliver affordable housing over the Plan period.
- 8.38** **Site thresholds** In the light of the fact that the annual scale of affordable housing is almost six times more than that able to be delivered from new units, the Council considers that the threshold level as previously set out in Circular 6/98 of 25 units or 1 hectare, if applied in North Somerset, could have a severe impact on the delivery of affordable housing, given the percentage of large sites where the amount of affordable housing is already secured. Consequently, based on the findings of the HNAM, the Council considers that 15 units or half a hectare is a more appropriate threshold for negotiating affordable housing in North Somerset.
- 8.39** However, it is not considered appropriate to make developer contributions under Policy H/4 start at less than 15 dwellings. There is no policy precedent or justifiable reasoning, supported by quantifiable and robust local housing needs assessment data, to substantiate the requirement that developer contributions in North Somerset should start below 15 dwellings. However, the Council will seek to ensure through Policy H/3 Residential densities, existing SPG and proposed SPD that sites below 0.5 ha, but capable of providing more than 15 dwellings, do not slip below the affordable dwelling net. Similarly, the Council will actively seek to dissuade developers from breaking up sites so that they fall below the threshold, in effect allowing them to be treated as part of a more substantial adjoining development.
- 8.40** This recognises that the level of outstanding affordable demand greatly exceeds the number of units likely to be delivered from new supply or conversions, resulting in growing levels of unmet need each year. It also recognises that an increasing proportion of new development will in future take place on previously-developed land within the four towns of Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Nailsea and Clevedon. These sites are by character often smaller in scale and may fall below or just around the higher threshold. However, particularly in Weston-super-Mare, such sites are recognised as critical to making an important contribution to

meeting the strategic housing allocation over the Plan period. Moreover, as they are often well-located in relation to existing facilities and public transport services, and through the re-development of land and premises can make an important contribution to promoting balanced communities, the Council considers such sites should also be considered as potentially capable of yielding affordable housing.

Land and affordable housing delivery

8.41 The Council recognises that the allocation of land for residential use only enables the required number of dwellings to be built. It does not necessarily result in the construction of houses appropriate to meeting local needs. North Somerset is an area of relatively high house prices, which means that house purchase is beyond the means of a significant proportion of the population.

8.42 The affordable housing provision to be made on a site should be an integral part of housing developments. Involving a registered social landlord (RSL) provides an appropriate means of meeting the need identified in North Somerset for affordable rented housing. The implementation of Policy H/4 must ensure that the affordable housing is provided in such a way that it is economically viable for the RSL, is genuinely affordable to those in housing need and represents best value in the use of public funds.

8.43 The Council will take account of any abnormal site costs associated with the development that may justify a reduction in the affordable housing requirement. Developers will be expected to submit details of such costs at the earliest opportunity. Standard development costs such as demolition works, landscaping, noise bunds, archaeological and ecological surveys, drainage and flood prevention measures will not usually be considered as abnormal site costs. Only in very exceptional circumstances, where there are excessive costs associated with the development and/or other planning objectives that need to be given overriding priority, is it likely that the Council will agree that no provision for affordable housing should be made.

Priority for on-site provision

8.44 The Council will take account of the suitability of the site for affordable housing and the type of development proposed, but will generally expect the affordable housing provision to be provided on-site as part of the development in order to create balanced communities. However, where the Council considers it is preferable then a financial or other contribution towards provision on an alternative site within North Somerset may be sought in lieu of on-site, based on the following criteria:

- Where the number of general market dwellings on the site would result in the provision of only 1 or 2 affordable homes which would cause housing management problems for an RSL, and the Council is satisfied that discounted open market housing is not appropriate for this site.

- Where the type of development proposed is such that it is not considered appropriate to make on-site provision. Examples might, but not necessarily, include the conversion of Listed Buildings, elderly persons' schemes, some flatted developments or other particular developments which are likely to result in high service charges to future occupiers.

- 8.45** When considering whether or not to accept financial contributions in lieu of onsite provision, the Council will take account of any other current proposals for affordable housing provision in the same area. The level of financial contribution will be expected to be equivalent to the contribution that would have been made on-site, and hence will be recognised as contributing towards part of the target of achieving 30% subsidised affordable homes from all suitable sites for new housing developments of 15 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectare or more. All financial contributions will be calculated in the same way as on-site provision so that affordable housing can be provided on an alternative site without the need for public subsidy. If contributions are not spent or committed within a specified period, to be agreed for each individual development on its merits, then the Council will repay the developer the sum paid.
- 8.46** The guidance set out in this supporting text expands upon advice in the Council's current Affordable Housing SPG, adopted August 2001. It is the Council's intention to revise and update its current SPG in this light and to bring this forward as a new SPD in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme priorities.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home, that access to housing is genuinely affordable to a wide range of people and that suitable new housing sites address the need for more affordable housing over the Plan period.

Output objective:

- (1) Monitoring of dwelling construction activity and residential land supply based on the Council's agreed scheme of monitoring through the publication and review of its Urban Capacity Study, annual Residential Land Survey and Housing Supply Bulletin, Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)
- (2) Publication of Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

Target

The Council will seek towards achieving (including the equivalent number of dwellings provided from an off-site contribution in lieu) that, of the residual additional new dwellings (net) built over the Plan period on sites of 15 or more dwellings (or 0.5ha) a minimum of 30% come forward as affordable housing.

Policy H/5 – Circumstances and criteria for releasing affordable housing sites in rural areas

As an exception to normal planning policies, permission may be granted for affordable housing on sites within or adjoining villages, where housing would not otherwise be permitted, provided that the following criteria are met:

- i. a local housing need exists, demonstrated by a Housing Needs Study, or other satisfactory evidence such as a Parish Survey;
- ii. the proposal site should, wherever possible, be located in or adjacent to an existing settlement within which adequate social facilities and essential services are available;
- iii. the proposal site should, wherever possible, be accessible by public transport;
- iv. proposals should be modest in scale;
- v. proposals should be in keeping with the character of surrounding development and should not be intrusive in the landscape;
- vi. It can be demonstrated that there is no suitable other site to meet the local need and that the proposals would not lead to inappropriate development and would be consistent with the function the Green Belt, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or retaining the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- vii. The affordable housing, including affordable home ownership initiatives, is provided in perpetuity.

8.47 Policy H/5 acknowledges that many villages and small settlements in North Somerset face particular difficulties in securing an adequate supply of land for affordable housing for local needs. The Council considers that in accordance with the plan-led approach it has identified areas and sites for housing to provide a choice and range of housing throughout the whole of North Somerset, with the primary emphasis on bringing forward sites within the towns of Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Nailsea and Clevedon in accordance with Policy GDP/1 (Chapter 4). However, the Council also accepts that there will remain a lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, as demonstrated by the 2005 HNAM, which cannot otherwise be met by means of provision in the Plan, as set out at Policy H/2. In this instance, PPS3 advises local authorities, exceptionally, to consider the release of small sites within or adjoining existing villages, which would not otherwise be allocated for housing.

8.48 The Council considers that such circumstances are an exception to the normal policies providing for general housing need. The Council would not normally consider the release of such sites, based on Policies GDP/1 (Chapter 4), RD/1 and RD/3 (Chapter 6) and H/1 (above), because they are contrary to the established policies of restraint in the Plan relating to the management and use of land outside the settlement boundaries of the towns and villages in North Somerset. However, in the case of

exception sites, the need for affordable housing, to be provided in perpetuity, has been judged to have a higher priority.

8.49 The Council considers that such sites should not normally be identified in Local Plans and will be additional to the provision for general housing demand, as set out at Policy H/2. This is essentially to avoid excessive pressures to release such sites in order to make up the numbers to meet strategic housing allocations and because without the detailed case for looking at the need and constraints, it would be impossible to say how many were justified. The Council considers this is because a specific case for an exception has to be made and related to a specific situation and it would be on a site where housing would not normally be permitted. Likewise Policy H/5 does not alter the general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as set out at Policy RD/3, and it is also not intended to be applied widely in such areas of restraint. However, exceptionally, very limited development of affordable housing within or adjoining existing villages or other small settlements may be acceptable and consistent with the function of the Green Belt.

8.50 In addition to the circumstances where sites may be released, as detailed at paras. 8.47 – 8.48 above, Policy H/5 also sets out the criteria against which proposals will be considered. Before determining any planning applications under Policy H/5, the Council will require evidence of local housing need based on the Council's definition of 'affordable housing' as set out under Policy H/4 at para. 8.32. The Council will assess need based on the findings of the 2005 HNAM, and or detailed Local Parish Housing Needs Surveys, but in some cases evidence from the Housing Needs Register may suffice.

8.51 Where planning permission is granted for affordable housing on exception sites, the Council will need to be satisfied that adequate arrangements are in place, ideally with an RSL, to reserve the housing in question for local needs, both initially and in perpetuity. Both planning conditions and planning obligations may be used for this purpose. The inclusion of clauses in planning obligations which would enable lenders of private finance to dispose of property on the open market are unacceptable in respect of housing schemes on exception sites. It is however recognised that many lenders will not support RSL's in developing exception sites where the occupancy criteria are entirely restricted to the immediate and adjacent location. To this end an ultimate fallback for allocation to households in need in the rest of North Somerset has been introduced. This will also promote the mortgageability of low-cost or shared ownership sale units. Occupancy is therefore reserved in perpetuity for people in need of affordable housing in the following categories and order of priority:

- a) Residents of the village or same parish in shared, overcrowded or otherwise unsuitable accommodation.
- b) Residents of adjacent parishes in shared, overcrowded or otherwise unsuitable accommodation.

- c) People dependent on or giving support to a household in the village or adjacent parishes.
- d) Young, elderly, retired or disabled people who have lived or worked in the village or adjacent parishes.
- e) Households that include people who are employed or about to be employed in the village or adjacent parishes and need to live locally.
- f) Other residents of the village and adjacent parishes eligible in accordance with the published policies and procedures for allocating tenancies by the registered social landlord.
- g) In order to avoid long-term voids or re-sale periods, after a rented property has remained void for three months or an owner-occupied property been marketed for 12 months, occupancy will firstly be allowed for other residents of North Somerset and if necessary and appropriate occupancy criteria will subsequently be extended to people outside the district, eligible in accordance with the published policies and procedures for allocating tenancies by the Council or by the registered social landlord.

8.52 The Council's preferred approach would be to ensure that affordable housing in the rural areas is, where possible, located close to local facilities and/or well served by public transport. However, the Council would not necessarily preclude an exception scheme coming forward to meet identified local housing need in settlements with limited service and public transport provision, if the requirement to meet housing need is assessed to be the greater priority. Nonetheless, the Council would expect that the style and character of such housing should be in keeping with its surroundings, and particularly with local building styles. High standards of design, layout and landscaping appropriate to the village setting will be required, but in appropriate cases, car parking standards (see Policy T/6) may be relaxed.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To achieve the delivery of affordable housing on sites within or adjoining villages, where housing would not otherwise be permitted, in order to secure the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local need and to ensure that access to housing is genuinely affordable to a wide range of people over the Plan period.

Output indicator:

Evidence of local housing need established by the findings of the 2005 HNAM, also taking into consideration village appraisals which encompass assessments of housing, economic and environmental profiles of parishes and villages.

Policy H/6 – Flats, conversions and houses in multiple occupation (HMO'S)

The conversion of dwellings, including extensions, to form self contained accommodation will be permitted, provided that:

- i. the proposals will not have a harmful effect on the character and amenities of the property or adjoining properties;
- ii. a satisfactory standard of accommodation is provided that will not create an over-intensive use of the site;
- iii. the development will not have a harmful effect on the character of the wider area.

To safeguard the residential environment of Weston-super-Mare, the further clustering of additional HMO's characterised by single room, non self-contained lettings and accommodation will be resisted.

8.53 The Housing Act 1985 defines a house in multiple occupation (HMO) as "a house which is occupied by persons who do not form a single household". The definition includes buildings containing self-contained flats; guest houses; hostels and boarding houses.

8.54 Some group accommodation can be established without the need to apply for planning permission. Under the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended), the establishment of a household of not more than six persons living as a single household, who may be unrelated, occupying an existing dwelling does not constitute a change of use. Such a situation is considered, in the same way as a single family of any size, as falling within Use Class C3: Dwelling houses. Where the property has the characteristics of a hostel with shared communal facilities, permission is required and Policy H/6 will apply.

8.55 With the decline in availability and increased cost of the public and private rented sectors, many young people aged under 24, as well as those on low incomes, have turned to HMO's as the only means to gain access to the private housing market. In a town by the sea like Weston, a minority of HMO's (less than 10% of the total stock) are characterised by poor quality bedsit or hostel type accommodation and are often unauthorised, having been established without planning permission. Within this group the Council is particularly concerned about the standards of accommodation, the impact on neighbouring residential properties and the effect on the character of residential areas in the town. The Council recognises that developers and landlords will continue to seek opportunities to bring forward further bedsit and hostel type accommodation but it considers this to be driven by elastic market supply and demand conditions in response to the perceived attractiveness of Weston as a place to take up bedsit-type accommodation, by people migrating from other urban cities and conurbations, rather than meeting an existing local housing need.

8.56 For this reason, the Council is keen to manage the HMO situation involving proposals for dwelling conversions which are not considered to generate quality self-contained flats. To achieve this it will seek to

resist the further clustering of HMO's coming forward for non self-contained bedsit or hostel type accommodation, particularly in Weston, where the Council considers further concentrations of this type of accommodation would have a detrimental impact on the well-being and amenity of existing residents and would lead to an overrepresentation of a certain type and mix of dwelling.

- 8.57** However, the Council continues to recognise that there is likely to be a continuing demand for emergency short-term and permanent affordable accommodation. Recent changes in the Homelessness Act (2002) require the Council to identify accommodation for a wider range of vulnerable people. The alteration of houses to flats and self-contained bedsits can make a valuable contribution to meeting this demand. However, whilst broadly supportive of the potential that HMO's have to offer in terms of housing supply, the Council is concerned to find the right balance between making a contribution to identified housing needs, ensuring adequate standards of accommodation, protecting residential amenity and maintaining the supply of family housing. It is also keen to ensure that following the removal of the Prime Tourist Area designation and the restructuring in the hotel and guest house sector, properties may come forward for additional single room, non self-contained lettings. In addition, the Council would seek to improve the overall standard of management of properties providing temporary emergency accommodation, to have a full time on-site manager.
- 8.58** Recent work, carried out as part of the Council's efforts to regenerate inner parts of Weston-super-Mare through SRB6 funding, has revealed an acute problem in terms of concentrations of single room, non self-contained lettings where there is a tendency for social problems to be exacerbated, together with an adverse effect on efforts to regenerate and revitalise the town. Furthermore, this work also confirmed the urgent need to raise the standards of housing stock in multiple occupation through registration of such premises; for investment to remedy existing deficient stock (with the assistance of RSL's); and to ensure that new proposals requiring planning permission provide self-contained accommodation to an appropriate standard.
- 8.59** Weston-super-Mare is one of a number of towns in the UK to have been given special powers by Government to help tackle the HMO problem. A registration scheme was introduced at the end of 1999 with special control provisions to enable the Council to secure improvements to many of the poorest HMO's in Weston-super-Mare and control anti-social behaviour. Registration of the first 60 properties has resulted in improvements to around 580 units of accommodation.
- 8.60** The Council is supportive of, and will actively encourage, the redevelopment of unviable and poor quality hotel and guest house accommodation that offers good quality self-contained flat accommodation, ideally of two or more bed spaces per unit. However, additional HMO's characterised by single room, non self-contained lettings, will not be appropriate either in the Weston Waterfront and Town Centre area as defined in Policy E/1a (Chapter 7), or in other residential areas in Weston where the Council considers there will be a tendency for social problems to be exacerbated, together with an

adverse effect on efforts to regenerate and revitalise the town, unless the Council is satisfied that it would contribute to meeting a demonstrable local housing need.

- 8.61** The Council intends to undertake a further study into the concentration and supply of HMO accommodation currently available in Weston. This will help the Council to determine whether further permissions should be granted. It will also help the Council to develop strategies and programmes to better manage and regulate the location and distribution of single room, non self-contained lettings.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To achieve the conversion of larger residential properties and other buildings into smaller units of accommodation to make a valuable contribution to the supply, mix and choice of housing provision throughout North Somerset.

Output objective:

Through development control and the undertaking of further technical work into the concentration and supply of HMO accommodation currently available in Weston to assess whether further concentrations of HMO's would be likely to have a detrimental effect on the amenity and well-being of residential areas.

Policy H/7 – Residential development within settlement boundaries

Within settlement boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, residential development, including the construction of new or replacement dwellings, the sub-division or extension of existing dwellings or their curtilages, and the conversion of existing buildings to residential use, will be permitted, provided that the proposals:

- i. would not generate demand for local services on a scale that cannot be met without prejudice to other policies and proposals of the Plan;
- ii. respect the massing, scale, proportions, materials and overall design and character of the existing property (if any) and the character of the surrounding area;
- iii. would not prejudice the amenities of adjoining occupiers;
- iv. would not prejudice the retention of adequate private amenity space, and include adequate private amenity space for any new separately occupied dwelling; and
- v. would not lead to urban housing needs being met in locations outside the four main towns where employment opportunities are more limited and which would add to or contribute to creating a dormitory settlement with high levels of out-commuting.

- 8.62** The Plan's locational strategy seeks to concentrate most new housing in the towns of Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and Weston-super-Mare,

while also making allowance for appropriate infill development and redevelopment in those villages that are defined by settlement boundaries. 'Windfall' sites within settlements make a useful contribution to overall housing land supply and Policy H/7 adopts a positive approach to them. However, as these sites are located within existing communities, it is important that the new housing does not harm the street scene or the amenities of adjoining occupiers. Similar considerations apply to the extension or rebuilding of existing housing.

- 8.63** Part of the justification for the locational strategy is that new housing should be well-related to local services and facilities. Development within villages should not be on such a scale that local services cannot absorb the resultant demand. Some villages have no local services and in these cases large-scale new housing development would be unacceptable on environmental and social grounds.
- 8.64** Village settlement boundaries do not necessarily include the whole village and neither should it be assumed that all land within a settlement boundary is automatically suitable for development. There are, for example, many amenity areas, open spaces and gardens that make a significant contribution to the character of a settlement and these should remain undeveloped. Some areas of land of amenity value to the public are specifically protected by Policy ECH/1 (Chapter 5). Character is often strongly influenced by the spaces created between buildings; the protection of this character requires that some proposals for infill development should be resisted.
- 8.65** **Sub-division and extension** Sub-division is a long-established means of providing additional housing, particularly in the towns where older housing is too large for today's generally smaller households. It will be encouraged, provided that it can be achieved without harm to the character of the building or the surrounding area resulting from alterations and extensions, the amenities of adjoining occupiers are protected and the impact on parking and traffic conditions is acceptable.
- 8.66** Where an extension is potentially capable of separate occupation (e.g. residential annexes accommodating a dependent relative), but lacks an acceptable level of separate parking provision or private amenity space, it will be made clear to applicants that permission is granted for ancillary use only and does not create a presumption that subsequent sub-division will be acceptable.
- 8.67** **Green Belt** Within those villages 'washed over' by the Green Belt but for which settlement boundaries are defined, Policy H/7 needs to be read in conjunction with Policy RD/3 (Chapter 6), which imposes a further requirement, namely that there is no materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it. There are other villages inset within the Green Belt but excluded from it. Green Belt policies do not apply to these villages and they are left un-coloured on the Proposal Map, except where other policies and proposals apply. In these villages, a wider range of development and redevelopment will be acceptable, provided that it is in line with Policy H/7 and other policies and proposals of the Plan.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To achieve 'good design' in residential and householder development that respects both the character of the existing settlement and individual property in terms of the scale, overall design and materials while ensuring that the proposal makes a valuable contribution to the supply, mix and choice of housing provision throughout North Somerset.

Output objective:

Through development control, the review of existing supplementary planning guidance and, for development that generates additional residential properties, the monitoring of dwelling construction activity and residential land supply based on the Council's agreed scheme of monitoring through the publication and review of its Urban Capacity Study, annual Residential Land Survey and Housing Supply Bulletin.

Residential development in the countryside

8.68 The countryside is defined by Policy GDP/1 (Chapter 4) and includes those smaller villages and hamlets that do not have settlement boundaries. Planning policy seeks to minimise the dispersal of dwellings outside settlements in order to protect the landscape and rural character of the countryside, reduce the need to travel, and manage demands on infrastructure and public services efficiently.

8.69 Where permission is granted for new housing in the countryside, including the conversion of existing buildings to residential use, future extensions may be controlled by the removal of permitted development rights. This course of action will be particularly appropriate where enlargement would be likely to harm the character of the surrounding area.

Policy H/8 – Residential development in the countryside

Outside settlement boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, the replacement of a single permanent dwelling will be permitted, provided that:

- i. the existing dwelling is not converted from a building whose last previous lawful use was non-residential; and
- ii. the existing dwelling is incapable of retention in its current state; and
- iii. the replacement dwelling is of a similar size and scale to the existing dwelling, within the same curtilage, and of a design that will not harm the character of the surrounding area or the amenities of adjoining occupiers and, in the case of development in the Green Belt, would not prejudice the openness of the Green Belt.

The conversion of existing buildings to residential use or the subdivision or extension of a single existing dwelling will be permitted, provided that the proposals:

- iv. relate to a building or buildings of permanent construction, structurally sound, capable of conversion, sub-division or extension without major or complete reconstruction; and
- v. respect the massing, scale, proportions, materials and overall design and character of the existing property and the character of the surrounding area; and
- vi. would not prejudice the amenities of adjoining occupiers or adversely affect the operation of working farms; and
- vii. would not prejudice the retention of adequate private amenity space, and include adequate private amenity space for any new separately occupied dwelling.

The substantial rebuilding or significant extension of a converted building will not be permitted.

In the case of conversions, the proposals must also:

- viii. relate to a building or buildings well related to an existing settlement or other group of buildings and which is/are in keeping with the surrounding area in terms of character, form, bulk and overall design; and
- ix. be supported by evidence to demonstrate that all reasonable attempts have been made to secure a suitable business re-use.

The substantial rebuilding or significant extension of a converted building will not be permitted.

The extension of a residential curtilage, including the extension into the countryside of the curtilage of a dwelling located within a settlement boundary, will be permitted provided that it would not harm the character of the surrounding area or the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

8.70 Replacement dwellings In principle, the replacement of an existing permanent dwelling on a 'one for one' basis is unlikely to harm the character of the countryside. However, siting, design and materials must all be appropriate to the location. Special regard should be paid to the use of appropriate building materials. The reclamation and re-use of appropriate traditional or natural materials from the demolished property may be required by condition. The replacement of Listed Buildings will only be acceptable where the proposals accord with Policy ECH/4 (Chapter 5).

8.71 Replacement will only be regarded as 'one for one' if there is an existing residential use to be continued. Buildings that have previously been used as dwellings, but subsequently abandoned, have lost their residential use rights; in these cases, proposals to re-instate residential use of the site will be assessed as conversions.

8.72 The replacement dwelling should be sited on or close to the site of the existing dwelling in a position that is most advantageous in terms of minimising visual impact and of the relationship with adjoining uses and highway access and road safety.

- 8.73** The size of the replacement dwelling should not exceed that which would normally be permitted to extend the original building. It should also respect the predominant character of existing property in the area. Floorspace contained in ancillary buildings no longer required for their original use will only contribute towards the floorspace of the replacement dwelling if in close proximity to the original dwelling and if physical improvements or visual gains could be achieved by their removal.
- 8.74** The replacement of residential caravans or mobile homes, which do not benefit from a permanent planning permission, with permanent buildings will only be permitted in accordance with Policy H/9.
- 8.75** Conversion to residential use Policy RD/2 (Chapter 6) provides for the re-use of rural buildings for non-residential purposes. Employment-generating or community uses are generally preferable to residential conversion, which does little to help the rural economy and can also have a detrimental effect on the character and the setting of some buildings. Permanent residential conversions will therefore be resisted unless they are a subordinate part of a larger scheme for business re-use or attempts to secure suitable alternative uses have proved unsuccessful.
- 8.76** Particular care should be taken with proposals for the conversion of Listed Buildings or those in designated areas. Listed Building conversions will also be assessed against Policy ECH/4 (Chapter 5) and the advice in PPG15. Proposals to re-use buildings within the Green Belt must ensure that the openness of the Green Belt is preserved (see Policy RD/3, Chapter 6). The Council intends to produce design guidance on the conversion of rural buildings. This will be supplementary to Policies GDP/3 (Chapter 4), RD/2 and H/8.
- 8.77** The redevelopment or significant extension of a rural building, once converted, will be resisted. The purpose of allowing conversion is to bring into positive use a building that would otherwise be unused. New building in the countryside is strictly controlled: substantial rebuilding or significant extension would be incompatible with this aim.
- 8.78** **Sub-division and extension** Although the overall aim of the Plan is to restrict the number of new dwellings in the rural area, an exception may be made in the case of the sub-division of existing dwellings. This can provide smaller dwellings, which tend to be in relatively short supply in such areas. It is important that sub-division should not adversely affect the character of the building or the rural area by over-intensive development, or give rise to substantial extensions and additional buildings.
- 8.79** **Extensions to curtilages.** Policy H/8 aims to ensure that the well-defined boundaries of rural settlements are not eroded by dwellings on the edges of villages and towns extending their gardens into adjacent fields. Extensions to residential curtilages outside settlement boundaries will only be permitted where there is no harm to the character and appearance of the countryside. Any means of enclosure must respect the rural setting by the use of hedges or post and wire rather than close-

boarded fences

8.80 Green Belt Within the Green Belt, Policy H/8 needs to be read in conjunction with Policy RD/3 (Chapter 6), which imposes a further requirement, namely, that there is no materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To protect the open countryside for its own sake and as a resource for biodiversity, recreation, amenity, agriculture and forestry and to help sustain the rural economy and the character and the setting of the smaller villages and hamlets that do not have settlement boundaries.

Output objective:

Through development control, the review of existing supplementary planning guidance and, for development that generates additional net residential properties, the monitoring of dwelling construction activity and residential land supply based on the Council's agreed scheme of monitoring through the publication and review of its Urban Capacity Study, annual Residential Land Survey and Housing Supply Bulletin.

POLICY H/9 – Rural workers dwellings

The erection of dwellings in the countryside for workers in agriculture, forestry, or other appropriate rural uses associated with a diversified farm business will be permitted provided that:

- i. the dwelling is required to satisfy a clearly established existing and long-term functional need associated directly or indirectly with agricultural or forestry activity within the immediate area; and
- ii. the unit and the agricultural or forestry activity (excluding non-agricultural or non-forestry elements) have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so; and
- iii. the need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit or any other accommodation or building capable of conversion in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the worker concerned; and
- iv. the proposal is satisfactorily sited in relation to the agricultural or forestry unit and, wherever possible, is sited within a hamlet or existing group of buildings (in particular, that the need for a new vehicular access is where practical avoided); and
- v. the proposed dwelling is of a size commensurate with the functional requirement.

Where the need and location for an agricultural dwelling have been accepted under the above criteria except for the economic viability of

the unit, the Council may permit temporary accommodation for up to three years in a caravan or mobile home, provided that there is clear evidence that the enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis with a firm intention and ability to develop it.

Where permission is granted for a permanent dwelling and any other dwelling on the holding within the same ownership occupation will be limited.

The removal of an occupancy condition will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no need for the dwelling on the unit or in the locality, nor is a need likely to arise in the foreseeable future, and that there has been a genuine and unsuccessful attempt to market the property at a realistic price.

8.81 Accommodation for agricultural or forestry workers should, wherever practicable, be located within nearby towns and villages. In special circumstances, new dwellings in the countryside will be permissible where they are essential for the efficient running of a farming or forestry enterprise. It is national policy that new dwellings in the open countryside should be strictly controlled and only approved in exceptional circumstances. It must be suitably demonstrated that no suitable dwellings, or buildings suitable for conversion, exist on the unit or in the vicinity, and that it is essential that the dwelling is located on the unit.

8.82 Farmers are now encouraged to diversify their activities and supplement their income from enterprises other than normal food production. In some cases, this may lead to demand for on-site residential accommodation for non-agricultural enterprises (for example, where livestock are kept as part of a leisure or tourism-based enterprise). As with proposals for farm dwellings, both the need for such dwellings and the viability of the enterprise must be adequately demonstrated. Within the Green Belt, new dwellings (other than replacement dwellings) outside settlement boundaries will not normally be permitted except for the purposes of agriculture or forestry and it would be inappropriate to make a further **exception for other rural uses.**

8.83 Establishing need Applicants will be required to seek an appraisal justifying an exception to the general policy of restraint. To ensure a high quality and impartial assessment, appraisals are best prepared by:

- Agricultural Development Advisory Service (ADAS) Commercial Consultants;
- a Member of the British Institute of Agricultural Consultants;
- other consultants demonstrating qualifications and experience in the subject area.

Appraisals prepared by the person or practice acting as agent with regard to the planning application are not acceptable.

8.84 The appraisal should provide the following information:

- existing accommodation on the unit and how it is occupied; the

purpose of the new dwelling and how important it is for the operation of the unit;

- whether the new building is necessary rather than convenient, i.e. must it be in the countryside rather than in a nearby village;
- the justification for a particular site, when there may be others less open to planning objection;
- the recent history of the unit, including recent severance and details of any dwellings on the unit that have been sold or converted for non-agricultural occupation;
- where a new unit is to be formed, proof that the enterprise will be permanent and economically viable.

8.85 Applications are often received for dwellings associated with new enterprises, especially horticulture. In certain instances, a financial test will be applied in order that further evidence of the genuineness of stated intentions can be provided. In such circumstances, where need is established temporary planning permission will normally be granted for a residential mobile home. Such temporary planning permissions will extend to two or three years depending on the circumstances of the enterprise. In order to receive consent for a permanent dwelling then the enterprise would have to be proven viable and the requirements of Policy H/9 fully met. In appropriate circumstances, a condition may be attached restricting the occupation of a dwelling until works necessary for the establishment of the enterprise have been completed.

8.86 **Design considerations** If the need for a dwelling is established, then it is important that its scale, design, size and siting have a minimal effect on the countryside. Dwellings should therefore be well-related to existing buildings and where possible share an existing vehicular access. They should not exceed a size necessary to meet normal family requirements and accommodate minor ancillary office facilities. Any proposals above 150 square meters must be fully justified. Proposals for the size, siting and landscaping of the curtilage should also ensure that the impact on the landscape is acceptable. In such circumstances to accord with PPS7 para 10, permitted development rights may also be removed

8.87 **Occupancy conditions** When granting permission under this policy, where appropriate, an occupancy condition will be imposed not only on the dwelling itself, but also on any existing dwellings on the unit which are under control of the applicant and do not have occupancy conditions. This will help to protect the countryside against the risk of pressure for new houses.

8.88 In recent years there has been a steady number of applications to remove occupancy conditions, while at the same time applications for new agricultural dwellings are still being received. Government advice indicates that before an application for removal of an occupancy condition is approved, it must be shown that there is now no need for the dwelling on the unit, or in the locality, and that a genuine and unsuccessful attempt has been made to sell the dwelling with the condition attached.

8.89 In determining such applications regard will be had to:

- evidence of existing demand or lack of demand for agricultural workers within a radius of at least five miles from the property;
- whether there are any vacant agricultural dwellings within this area;
- the number of recent applications in the locality for agricultural dwellings;
- evidence of efforts to dispose of the dwelling, whether it has been advertised, how frequently, for how long and whether the asking price reflected the occupancy condition.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To enable full-time farm or forestry workers to live at or in the immediate vicinity of their place of work where it is essential for the efficient running of a farming or forestry enterprise.

Output objective:

Through development control and, for development that generates additional net residential properties, the monitoring of dwelling construction activity and residential land supply based on the Council's agreed scheme of monitoring through the publication and review of its Urban Capacity Study, annual Residential Land Survey and Housing Supply Bulletin, Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

Policy H/10 – Protection of existing housing stock

Proposals resulting in the loss of permanent dwellings will only be permitted where:

- i. the change of use is the only way of preserving a listed building; or
- ii. the property is unsuitable for residential occupation and this situation is unlikely to be improved at a reasonable cost; or
- iii. suitable alternative non-residential accommodation is not available and the alternative use represents a demonstrable benefit to the community that outweighs the loss of the dwelling concerned.

8.90 The need to safeguard the Green Belt and minimise the loss of countryside and open space imposes an important constraint on the amount of suitable land available to meet future needs. It is important therefore to resist the loss of existing permanent dwellings or allocated residential land, except where this would accord with other policies in the Plan.

8.91 The retention of dwellings complements the allocation of additional sites in the Plan and makes a contribution to sustainability by avoiding the waste of building materials. It can also help to maintain the character

of residential areas. The principle applies to both redevelopment and change of use proposals. However, some loss of dwellings may occur without needing planning permission, for example, when two dwellings are converted into one larger one.

- 8.92** There may be circumstances where redevelopment is acceptable as part of a comprehensive scheme to achieve a better form of development, or accommodate other desirable uses. Therefore, selective demolition and redevelopment may be acceptable where it would open up sites and realise their full potential and where the accommodation provided is of a size and form that will satisfy the needs of likely occupiers.
- 8.93** To make full use of the dwelling stock, there will be a general presumption against development, including change of use, which would result in the loss of, or prejudice the retention of, sound permanent dwellings, unless the proposals meet an overriding unmet local need. Examples of such exceptions may include the provision of small-scale social and community uses like children's playgroups or medical/dental practices, or other uses that may be seen as supporting the local community. In such circumstances, the property should be of such a nature, preferably detached, as to minimise any impact on nearby properties. In considering such proposals, care will be taken to ensure that the introduction of non-residential uses into predominantly residential areas will not result in a loss of local amenity, especially from uses generating vehicular traffic.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To ensure that new residential and related development comes forward in accordance with the Plan's locational strategy, which promotes the four towns of Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and Weston-super-Mare in order to ensure sustainable patterns of development, the preservation of the openness of the Green Belt and makes a contribution to sustainability by avoiding the inefficient use of land and buildings.

Output objective:

Through development control, and the monitoring of dwelling construction activity and residential land supply based on the Council's agreed scheme of monitoring through the publication and review of its Urban Capacity Study, annual Residential Land Survey and Housing Supply Bulletin, Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

Special needs accommodation

- 8.94** Some sections of the community have special needs that are only partly met through the private housing market. Individuals or groups who may require such accommodation will include:
- young single people
 - students
 - women at risk, including those with children

- the elderly (especially frail elderly)
- the homeless
- rough sleepers
- people with disabilities
- people with learning difficulties or mental health problems or those recovering from an addictive illness, being cared for or supported in the community
- gypsies
- travelling showpeople

Policy H/11 – Housing with care and/or support for vulnerable people

Planning permission will be granted for residential care or nursing homes within Class C2 of the Use Classes Order 1987(as amended) (including change of use of existing property) and for supported housing schemes for other vulnerable client groups provided that:

- i. the accommodation is close to existing or proposed shops, churches, a post office and a bus stop; and
- ii. the proposal of itself or in conjunction with other similar uses and proposals nearby will not harm the overall character of an area that is predominantly in residential, commercial or holiday use by changing it to an institutional one; and
- iii. the development would not harm the character or amenities of the property or adjacent properties; and
- iv. sufficient outdoor space for quiet relaxation is available either within the curtilage or within reasonable proximity; and
- v. in the case of proposals outside settlement boundaries, evidence is submitted to demonstrate that no suitable alternative exists within settlement boundaries to meet the need identified.

8.95 The Council's Housing Strategy aims to promote the development of accommodation which also meets the support needs of vulnerable people, working in association with the health authorities, housing associations and the voluntary sector.

8.96 The Plan seeks to make provision to meet these needs in the most appropriate way. On the whole, housing for vulnerable client groups is best provided at locations characterised by high standards of accessibility to local services and facilities. As these sites are limited it is essential that they are developed to meet these needs. On larger sites these types of development can be planned as part of the proposal.

8.97 Throughout North Somerset, but most notably in Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon, there has been an increase in the provision of accommodation for the elderly and for people who because of their personal circumstances or state of health need supervision or support. The age

structure of North Somerset, and Weston-super-Mare in particular, reveals a higher proportion of elderly residents than the national average. Although these percentages do not approach those of some South Coast resorts, the Council would not wish the imbalance to get more pronounced over the Plan period. The elderly will continue to form a very significant proportion of North Somerset's population as life expectancy continues to rise and the district retains its attractiveness as a retirement location. The elderly are one of the largest groups to have special housing needs.

8.98 An over-concentration of residential and care homes and supported housing can have an undesirable effect on the neighbourhood in terms of the loss of residential character, increased traffic and commercial activity. At present residential and nursing homes are often located in areas where large properties dominate and therefore some concentration is inevitable. However it must be recognised that there are factors impinging on the care home sector which have implications for the future development of such provision. Firstly the sector has reduced in recent years due to a number of socio-economic reasons, which has led to a shortage in some provision for example for the care of elderly mentally infirm people. Secondly higher physical standards have been introduced by Government for new homes which make older, period properties less suitable for conversion as care homes. These factors mean that as some homes close, there will be a need for larger purpose built provision, able to care for a range of levels of dependency to be developed. This is particularly true of Weston-super-Mare where the greatest concentration of residential homes occurs in the Ellenborough area and at Clevedon in the Jesmond Road, Victoria Road/Albert Road and Linden Road/Princess Road areas. It must also be recognised that by helping to meet the needs of the elderly and infirm, they release accommodation for use by others. The Local Plan objectives include a commitment to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the community, reduce homelessness and seek to ensure that everybody has a decent home. A sufficient supply of housing with care and/or support is essential to meet the needs of vulnerable client groups identified in para 8.94.

8.99 In making provision for these types of accommodation, the following objectives have been identified:

- to discourage major imbalances in the age structure of the local population;
- to prevent the replacement of hotels and guest houses in the Weston-super-Mare sea front area with vulnerable persons' accommodation, in order to avoid conflict between the two types of use (see para. 8.100);
- to ensure that the locations of residential or nursing homes and supported housing schemes have easy and convenient access to local services and that the site characteristics of a property are suitable for the proposed use;
- to ensure that residential or nursing homes and supported housing schemes do not have a disproportionate effect on the visual and social character of any one neighbourhood.

- 8.100** Within Weston-super-Mare, some hotels and guest houses have been converted to residential care homes and nursing homes. It is important that such homes are not located in the areas that are most strongly tourist-orientated. There is a conflict between the needs of hotels/guest houses and those of vulnerable persons' accommodation. Both are attracted to similar environments yet while residents of homes expect to enjoy peace and quiet this is not likely to exist in prime holiday areas. As referenced in 8.98 it is important to recognise that there will be changes in the pattern of care home provision and supported accommodation over the next ten years i.e. both in terms of location and more purpose built supported accommodation. This will be necessary in order to meet the needs of an increasing frail, elderly population as well as disabled people e.g. people with learning difficulties seeking more opportunities for independent living in local communities across North Somerset. In some areas in the north of the district for example there is at present a lack of certain types of accommodation e.g. care homes for elderly mentally infirm people.
- 8.101** Close consideration will be given to the suitability of properties for use as residential or nursing homes or supported housing schemes, with particular attention paid to the effect the new use will have on the architectural and historic features of the building. New uses for old buildings may often be the key to preservation but it is important that the fabric of the building is not damaged. Properties should normally have a generous garden to provide amenity space for the enjoyment of occupants and to provide car parking facilities. For this reason, terraced properties and extensions to existing properties are very often unacceptable because of the resultant small site curtilage. Amenity open space should be provided in one or two useable areas, separate from car parking and incidental open space. It should be appropriately and attractively set out and easily accessible to residents.
- 8.102** It is important that the living environment of residential care and nursing homes and supported housing schemes is designed to meet the particular requirements of residents. Some facilities of this kind are occupied by people with sufficient mobility to require access to local shops and services and who require access to public transport. Others cater for people who spend most of their time in the building. Whatever the needs of residents to be near shops and services, all facilities should be located close to adequate public transport to enable access by visitors. Such facilities are often occupied by people with relatively low mobility levels and who characteristically stay close to home.
- 8.103** It is important that the occupants of such homes are integrated into the community and therefore premises should have easy access to public transport, safe roads and pavements and amenities such as shops, post offices and churches. Locations outside settlement boundaries are therefore considered generally inappropriate.
- 8.104** Residential care homes and nursing homes fall within a general category (Class C2 of the Use Classes Order 1987, as amended) that includes different types of establishment, whilst supported housing schemes for other vulnerable client groups may fall under general residential Use Class C3 or be 'sui generis' (outside the main use classes). Because they

are often located in residential areas and require very specific control, permission for developments of this kind may be limited to the particular use described and not allowed to cover all uses within C2. The Council may therefore impose conditions to restrict the use of the site to specific uses within Use Class C2 to protect the environment and amenity of the locality.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To ensure that there is sufficient provision of accommodation for the elderly and for other vulnerable people who because of their personal circumstances or state of health need supervision, care or support.

Output objective:

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Policy H/12 – Sites for gypsies and travelling show people

Proposals for the use of land for the stationing of residential caravans occupied by gypsies or other travellers or as permanent bases for travelling show people will be permitted in the Green Belt in very special circumstances only.

Elsewhere, such proposals will be permitted having regard to a search sequence commencing with previously developed and under-utilised land within urban areas, then other suitable land within urban areas, then within and immediately adjacent to urban areas, followed by other settlements and finally only when all options in other locations have been exhausted, in the open countryside; and where:

- i. there is an identified need for the site to be located within North Somerset; and
- ii. the site is well related to local services and facilities, such as schools and health and welfare facilities; and
- iii. the site is already or capable of being adequately screened and would otherwise respect the landscape character of the locality; and
- iv. the proposal would not unacceptably prejudice the amenities of adjoining occupiers; and
- v. the site is capable of being provided with foul and surface water drainage, including appropriate infrastructure and facilities to manage wastes; and
- vi. there is adequate parking and safe access into and out of the site; and
- vii. in the case of sites for travelling showpeople, there is evidence of a previous connection with the local area and an intention to continue this connection.

Proposals for transit sites for gypsies and travellers and small-scale business-related activities will be considered in the context of the above criteria, excluding (ii) and (vii).

8.105 Sites for gypsies Government guidance on the provision of gypsy sites is set out in ODPM Circular 1/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites. This strengthens the obligation upon local planning authorities to carry out surveys and to identify sites. As part of the Council's evidence base to support its portfolio of plans to be brought forward under the new LDF planning system a review of the assessment of demand will be undertaken. This will be followed by work to carry out surveys to identify sites as necessary and appropriate.

8.106 The following authorised gypsy and travellers sites are identified in North Somerset:

Public Sites:

1. Willowmead Traveller Site, Moor Lane, Worle, Weston-super-Mare
2. Box Bush Traveller Site, Box Bush Lane, Hewish
3. The Old Highway Depot, Clevedon Road, Failand

Private Sites:

4. Travellers Rest, Maysgreen Lane, Puxton
5. Moorland Park, Hewish
6. Backwell Travellers Site, Backwell Hill Road, Backwell (planning permission does not restrict its occupation to gypsies)
7. The Paddock, Lulsgate
8. Moorbridge Caravan Park, Congresbury (planning permission not restricted to gypsies)

8.107 Circular 01/2006 states that local authorities must allocate sufficient sites for gypsies and travellers, in terms of the number of pitches required by the Regional Spatial Strategy. This should be undertaken in site allocations development plan documents. Criteria must not be used as an alternative to site allocations in development plan documents where there is an identified need for pitches. Guidance on the requirement for pitches is a matter that is expected to be addressed by a Review of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy, and the identification of sites. If required this will need to be addressed through the appropriate development plan document in the North Somerset Local Development Framework. The approach of Policy H/12 is to set out a sequential locational search together with the detailed site-related criteria relevant to the consideration of proposals for gypsy sites.

8.108 Subject to an assessment of need, preferred locations may be found within or on the edge of built-up areas, where local services, e.g. shops, hospitals and schools, are within reasonable distance and encroachment into the open countryside is minimised. However, the presumption should be that previously developed land is used before greenfield sites, following the search sequence set out in Policy H/12.

8.109 Within the search sequence approach, not all land will be suitable for

use as gypsy or travellers sites. Areas of existing public open space, including leisure spaces and Amenity Areas or other greenfield sites within settlement boundaries where a use for gypsy and travellers sites could potentially undermine the Plan's locational strategy in relation to the achievement of sustainable patterns of development, economic development and regeneration, would not usually be regarded as "other suitable land".

8.110 Gypsy sites are inappropriate development in the Green Belt. They are also unlikely to be readily accommodated within areas of high landscape value such as the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or other protected areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. However, Circular 01/2006 at para 70 advises that proposals for gypsy sites, as well as being determined in relation to land use factors and policies, should also have reference to the relevance of material considerations that can include personal and family circumstances. Such matters would therefore be the subject of very special circumstances.

8.111 Sites for travelling showpeople Travelling showpeople require permanent bases, especially during the winter. Government advice, in DoE Circular 22/91: Travelling Showpeople, suggests that locations on the outskirts of built-up areas may offer the best opportunity for such sites. There are particular site requirements associated with such uses that include residential, storage and maintenance areas, with good vehicular access on reasonably flat, serviced land, and with access to education and other facilities. Any sites permitted within North Somerset in accord with Policy H/12 should only be for the needs of travelling showpeople with a previous and on-going connection with the local area. The Council will consult the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain for advice in assessing the need for and suitability of any such proposals.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

To ensure that appropriate provision is made, if required, to meet the accommodation needs of gypsies and travelling showpeople.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Transport

Introduction

- 9.1** Ever wider access to goods and services can be a measure of people's standard of living. However, recent years have seen a growing recognition that the quality of life can be harmed by excessive reliance on certain kinds of transport. In particular, the continued growth in road traffic is damaging the environment at all levels from local to global, limiting choice for those without a car and contributing to congestion that adds to business costs.
- 9.2** North Somerset has experienced significant population growth over the past quarter-century and will continue to absorb further development. With increasing prosperity, car ownership would grow even if population did not. If the problems of traffic growth are to be tackled, new development will need to give special emphasis to promoting alternatives to car-based travel.

Aim

- 9.3** This chapter aims to enable the transport needs of all sections of the community to be met, now and in the future, while minimising the impact of transport on the environment at all levels.

Objectives

- 9.4** The Local Plan objectives in respect of transport are:
- to make the best use of existing resources and infrastructure, particularly through bringing empty properties back into use, more intensive use of under-used and vacant land, re-development of previously developed land and buildings and reclamation of derelict land, including decontamination where appropriate;
 - to locate and design development, especially mixed uses, to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and to enable cycling and walking to work, school and other facilities;
 - to improve public transport infrastructure and services, including the provision of effective interchanges;
 - to recognise the role of Bristol International Airport and Royal Portbury Dock as major gateways for North Somerset and the South West, and promote access to them by more sustainable modes of transport;
 - to ensure that proposals are well related to public transport and non-car modes of transport, community facilities and services and the availability of infrastructure;

- to develop an integrated approach to improving the main corridors of movement within North Somerset;
- to ensure that development contributes fairly to the provision of infrastructure and other needs arising from it;
- to ensure that development is of a high standard of design, both visually and functionally, having regard to its location and the efficient use of land;
- whilst recognising that the car is likely to be the preferred means of travel for the majority of residents and visitors for most journey purposes, to promote and provide opportunities for safe travel, the use of public transport and more sustainable and healthy forms of travel such as walking, cycling and horse-riding;
- to contribute to achieving national targets on reduction of greenhouse gases, reduce noise and improve air quality;
- to ensure that development proposals contribute to the provision and conservation of a clean, pleasant and safe environment, while using energy, water and other resources efficiently;
- to support the provision of high quality infrastructure as the key to attracting and retaining new investment;
- to continue to work towards an integrated transport package – rail, road/motorway, airport and dock in a sustainable approach to meeting businesses' transport needs;
- to enable people with disabilities to reach their full potential and live in their communities as independently as possible;
- to promote and increase the health, welfare, cultural and leisure opportunities of all sectors of the local population;
- to ensure the provision of a wide range of quality recreational and cultural opportunities, including rights of way and other forms of public access, parks, public open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities, which meet the needs and aspirations of residents of North Somerset;
- to support the land use requirements of broad-based regeneration programmes such as Weston Visioning and the Single Regeneration Budget to contribute to the regeneration of disadvantaged areas and to ensure equality of opportunity.

Local Plan Policies

Reducing the need to travel

- 9.5** The first priority must be to find ways of accessing jobs, goods and services while avoiding or reducing the need to travel. Greater emphasis on local production can also reduce the need to move goods and people, e.g. the sale of locally-grown food through suitably located farmers' markets, etc. (see Policies RD/1, Chapter 6 and RT/7, Chapter 10), or production for use via allotments (see Policy CF/4, Chapter 11). The Plan's locational strategy aims to place jobs and services closer to where people live (and vice versa) or where they are easily accessible by public transport or by non-motorised means of travel. Chapters 7 and 8 elaborate on this strategy.

Expanding travel choice

- 9.6** Where movement is unavoidable, the aim must be to seek ways of accommodating it that minimise harm to the environment, recognising that better ways of doing this should continually be sought. The Plan strives to make best use of all existing and proposed infrastructure, seeking where practical to favour more sustainable over less sustainable modes of travel.
- 9.7** Cycling and walking are the most energy-efficient modes, while, for longer-distance travel, well-used public transport is more energy-efficient than use of the private car. Public transport also provides an essential means of travel for those who are not able, or do not wish, to use a car, including children and elderly people. An improved and expanded system of attractive and convenient public transport will not only benefit existing users, but also encourage greater usage, helping to reduce traffic congestion and improve environmental conditions, particularly in the towns.
- 9.8** Less emphasis is placed on road-building, but it is recognised that bypasses are sometimes the only practical solution to safety and environmental problems in villages suffering the consequences of traffic growth. Whilst the overall priority is to move away from dependence on the private car, appropriate provision will need to be made for car trips, particularly where no realistic alternative exists. The Plan's emphasis on improved interchange facilities will enable the car to be used less, even where it is essential for part of a journey.
- 9.9** In making land use and transport-related decisions, in negotiating developer contributions and in implementing transportation measures, including the management of highway land and parking facilities, regard will be had to the following hierarchy of road users, designed to widen travel choice and raise awareness of the needs of vulnerable users:
- 1) pedestrians;
 - 2) people with mobility problems;
 - 3) cyclists;
 - 4) horse-riders;
 - 5) powered two-wheelers;
 - 6) local public transport and taxi users;
 - 7) commercial/business users;
 - 8) car-borne shoppers;
 - 9) coach-borne visitors;
 - 10) car-borne commuters and visitors.

Particular attention will be paid to the safety of children walking or cycling, especially where they are likely to form a significant proportion of road users, such as on routes to and from schools and leisure facilities.

- 9.10** A substantial part of the pedestrian rights of way network is alongside local roads. Highway design should have regard to the foreseeable

needs of all existing as well as future users where appropriate, for example through retention and improvement of verges or the provision of a suitable alternative.

- 9.11** In accordance with the Structure Plan, the management of road space will also have regard to the strategic importance of a route. Policy 56 of the Structure Plan requires the Local Plan and/or LTP to identify railways, roads suitable for long- and medium-distance through traffic use, roads to be developed as bus development routes, and roads where local travel is to be given priority, showing the cycle and walking networks. Map 9.1 illustrates existing and proposed railways, the Primary Route Network and the National Cycle Network in North Somerset. Proposals for improvement are shown on the Proposals Map. The details of route management are dependent on local studies and will be taken forward by the LTP.

Improving transport corridors

- 9.12** Policies 4 and 10 of the Structure Plan favour an integrated approach to transport improvements in strategic corridors. Better integration will enable the best use to be made of all transport infrastructure. Specific schemes have been developed through the LTP and related studies, including the Weston-super-Mare to Yate Railway Study, the Portishead to Bristol Corridor Study and the A38/A370 Study. Local Plan proposals for each corridor include the following:

Bristol – Weston-super-Mare Improvements focussed on public transport service enhancements (Policies T/1, T/9(i)), incorporating better interchange with other modes at existing stations (Policy T/2);

Bristol – Bristol Airport – Bridgwater Improvements to surface access to Bristol International Airport from Bristol and the M5, particularly construction of the A38/A370 link road (Policy T/9(iii)) and South Bristol Ring Road (T/9 iv)) and substantial and sustainable improvements in public transport use;

Weston-super-Mare – Wells Traffic management measures on the A371 and related roads – with the possibility of a Banwell Bypass in the longer term (Policy T/9(v));

Weston-super-Mare – Bridgwater A crossing of the River Axe for cyclists will assist completion of National Cycle Network Route 33 (Policy T/8(xxv));

Portishead – Bristol Re-introduction of passenger services on the Portishead to Bristol railway line (Policy T/1(ii)) is a high priority of the Council; provision of stations (Policy T/3) will seek to maximise potential for interchange, including park-and-ride.

- 9.13** A past scheme for a bypass of Tickenham and Wraxall was not included in the adopted North Somerset Local Plan, pending further study. Improvements to the B3130 between Clevedon and the A370 would relieve existing traffic conditions but there is some concern over potential encouragement of car-borne traffic. Opportunities for improvements to

public transport also need to be identified. No major highway works therefore are proposed in the Clevedon – Nailsea – Bristol corridor until this issue has been resolved.

Implementation

- 9.14** The policies set out below provide a planning framework for future investment in transport infrastructure. To implement the Plan's transport strategy, the Council will need to work with a wide range of other interests. The Plan concentrates on identifying opportunities for funding through the Council's capital programme and through developer contributions. However, much will also depend upon the investment programmes of other public agencies and the transport operators and upon the travel choices made by organisations and individuals. The LTP provides details of improvements complementary to those delivered through the town and country planning system.
- 9.15** Although the policies for different modes of travel are considered separately below, the inter-relationship between them is fundamental to the creation of an integrated transport system. Significant developments will be the subject of Transport Assessments and Travel Plans, which will consider the wider impacts of the development and appropriate measures to address these. PPG13 provides further advice on Transport Assessments.

Monitoring

- 9.16** The Local Transport Plan includes a wide range of targets related to transport policy. The Local Plan is focussed on land use changes and the benefits that can be associated with them. The following are proposed as targets and indicators for the purpose of monitoring the Chapter as a whole (as distinct from individual policies and proposals). In most cases, the date by which the target is to be achieved is 2011, the end of the Plan period, but, wherever possible, progress will be monitored on an annual basis.
- 9.17** A number of indicators refer to traffic growth. Ideally, traffic should be reduced but it is considered unrealistic to aim to reduce traffic absolutely, for reasons spelt out at the start of this Chapter. The targets will, however, seek to reduce the rate of traffic growth to below what would occur in the absence of restraint policies.
- i. By 2011, to limit traffic growth from 1999 to 34% in Weston-super-Mare, 40% in Clevedon, 21% in Nailsea and 69% in Portishead (as measured by traffic counts at outer cordons).
 - ii. By 2011, to limit traffic growth from 1999 across the Bristol boundary to 19% (as measured by traffic counts).
 - iii. By 2011, to reduce the number of HGV movements in North Somerset from 1999 (as measured by traffic counts at cordons for the four towns and Royal Portbury Dock Road).

- iv. By 2011, to stabilise the proportion of residents travelling to work by car at the 1991 level (as measured by the 2011 Census) (1991 figure: 69.3%).
- v. By 2011, to increase the proportion of the population resident within 3km of a railway station (as measured by the 2011 Census: best fit of enumeration districts to radii) (1991 figure: to be calculated).
- vi. By 2011, to reduce out-commuting to 35% of the economically active population (as measured by the 2011 Census) (1991 figure: 41%).
- vii. By 2011, to double (from 1991) the proportion of residents of the four towns cycling to work (as measured by the 2011 Census) (1991 figures: Weston-super-Mare: 4.9%; Clevedon: 4.8%; Nailsea: 3.5%; and Portishead and North Weston: 2.9%).

Rail services

9.18 The *Rail Strategy for the Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare Area: 2000 – 2011* was approved by the Joint Committee of the four unitary authorities in June 2000. It seeks to put into effect the requirement of the Structure Plan (at Policy 2) “*to develop and significantly improve the infrastructure and services of the road and rail based public transport systems, particularly the strategic network linking Bristol, Bath, Weston-super-Mare and Yate, and including the provision of effective interchanges.*” North Somerset Council will work in partnership with other authorities and with the rail industry to implement planned improvements. The Local Plan identifies and safeguards appropriate land requirements.

Policy T/1 – Existing and proposed railway lines

A corridor extending 10 metres either side of the existing tracks of the Taunton-Bristol railway line is safeguarded for the provision of additional tracks. Development within this corridor will only be permitted if it would not prejudice proposals for the line promoted by national rail policies or by the relevant network operator.

The following alignments, defined on the Proposals Map, are safeguarded for rail use:

- i. Weston southern chord;
- ii. Portishead – Portbury (Station Road Bridge).

Development will only be permitted if it would not prejudice the use of these alignments for rail traffic.

9.19 Taunton to Bristol railway line The main railway line from the West to Birmingham and London passes through North Somerset, with a loop line off it serving Weston-super-Mare. It also has a significant local role in catering for travel to Bristol, particularly commuter traffic, offering generally reliable travel immune from congestion on the highway network. Its potential is under-utilised but there are capacity constraints

to be overcome. Options for expanded local services require detailed assessment to ensure that optimum use is made of the track. Some require large-scale investment. The Local Plan includes only proposals that are either expected to be implemented within the Plan period or have longer-term land requirements that can be defined with reasonable certainty at this stage. The Council will in principle support other proposals that come forward where these are consistent with the Plan's locational and transport strategies and with the LTP.

- 9.20** The Proposals Map identifies a corridor 10 metres either side of the existing tracks for possible upgrading of the line to quadruple track. Within this corridor, all proposals for permanent development will need to be assessed against plans for rail use current at the time the planning application is considered. If the application would prejudice these plans, permission will not be granted. Such planning applications are also likely to require particular consideration in respect of noise and vibration (see Policy GDP/2, Chapter 4).
- 9.21** **Weston southern chord** A link between the main line and the loop line, south of Bournville, would allow a continuous service to be run between Weston-super-Mare and Bristol, whereas trains currently have to reverse direction at Weston-super-Mare. Firm proposals will need to provide satisfactory replacements for the allotments and open space lost (see Policy CF/4, Chapter 11), include alternatives to the footpath links that currently cross the route, and respect the drainage function of the Cross Rhyne.
- 9.22** **Portishead to Bristol railway line** The freight line from Ashton Gate, that formerly ran through to Portishead, has acknowledged potential for the re-introduction of passenger services. These would relieve congestion on the A369 and provide a more sustainable travel option for those living or working in the new areas being developed in east Portishead. The Portishead to Bristol Corridor Study Stage 2, commissioned by North Somerset Council from Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick (2001), recommended a heavy rail option with a passenger service frequency of two trains per hour each way, serving new stations at Portishead, Portbury and Pill (in North Somerset) and Ashton Gate (in Bristol). The station for which a site was previously reserved at Ham Green is no longer recommended, on account of potential design difficulties and its proximity to Pill.
- 9.23** The line passes close by the Royal Portbury Dock and a spur line from Pill into the docks has been constructed for freight use. This has resulted in refurbishment of much of the route, which will assist subsequent re-opening of the whole for passenger services. West of Portbury (Station Road Bridge), the railway is non-operational; the route from this point into Portishead is therefore safeguarded in the Local Plan.
- 9.24** The Portishead to Bristol line is a valuable asset for North Somerset and it is important that development is not allowed to prejudice the future implementation of improved rail transport, which is supported by Policies 4, 15 and 49 of the Structure Plan. In addition, any scheme would require car parking/passenger facilities and the Local Plan safeguards appropriate sites (see Policy T/3).

- 9.25 Dismantled railway lines** Dismantled railway lines have potential for further use as communication corridors. Increasingly, the possibility of re-use for rail purposes is raised; even where this is remote, the former routes will generally be suitable for use as strategic cycleways, footpaths and bridleways. It is important to protect the continuity of these alignments in order to safeguard the possibility of re-use for whatever mode of travel. Dismantled railway lines can also be of industrial archaeology and nature conservation interest. Safeguarding is supported by Policy 53 of the Structure Plan.
- 9.26** The land identified under Policy T/1 will safeguard the possibility of re-opening the Portishead to Bristol line throughout its length. Other alignments are included in the scope of Policy T/8. It is to be expected that former lines already re-used as footpaths/cycleways will remain in their current use. Where not in its ownership, the Council will seek to protect converted trackbeds either through dedication as statutory rights of way (protected under Policy T/7) or through permissive path agreements.
- 9.27** For the purposes of safeguarding under T/1 and T/8, 'line' includes all associated civil engineering structures that define the standard of the route, such as embankments, retaining walls and bridges. Maintaining full width and shallow gradients is important to allow for the provision of satisfactory multi-user routes, where appropriate, e.g. for pedestrians, cyclists, horse-riders and people with impaired mobility. It should be noted that demolition of built structures does not normally require planning permission from the Council, but engineering operations to remodel them usually do. Safety factors will be taken into account in determining any planning application for this purpose.
- 9.28 Future rail access** The likely growth of rail usage will require additional land to be set aside for rail-related purposes. Policy T/3 applies to land identified as suitable for stations, parking and associated landscaping. Safeguarding of existing and potential freight accesses is supported by Policy 57 of the Structure Plan; the North Somerset Waste Local Plan contains a specific proposal for land at Herluin Way, Weston-super-Mare.
- 9.29** Since 1995, there has been a 40% growth nationally in freight tonne-kilometres carried by rail, and continued growth is anticipated. There is currently a lack of rail freight facilities in North Somerset, the only facility being a disused siding at Flax Bourton. Discussions with Railtrack indicated unwillingness in the rail industry to develop a road/rail container transfer facility at Weston-super-Mare due to proposals at Avonmouth and Bridgwater; however, if market conditions change, North Somerset Council would support such a facility in principle. Siting, layout and operation would need to have regard to environmental impact, including the protection of residential amenity if relevant. The Council will also support the development of existing or new rail freight facilities generally, subject to detailed assessment of local environmental impacts, both positive and negative.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

Rail alignments protected from encroachment by other permanent development.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Target

Applications for non-railway-related permanent development approved within safeguarded areas only where rail proposals would not be prejudiced.

Passenger interchanges

- 9.30** Improved interchange facilities can help to encourage travellers to use public transport for part of their journey and enable flexible, convenient transfer between services. Opportunities for developing such facilities are to be found at railway stations, other major public transport hubs and in the form of purpose-built park-and-ride sites linked to bus and/or rail services. Footpaths and cycleways should link up with these facilities. Developer contributions towards the provision or improvement of passenger interchanges and access to them will be sought where appropriate.
- 9.31** Railway stations should be developed as first-class interchange points with other modes. In particular, secure motorcycle parking and additional/improved cycle parking should be provided at all stations. Long-stay car parking needs to be sufficient to avoid suppressing potential demand for rail travel.
- 9.32** Park-and-ride schemes can make an important contribution to reducing congestion in urban areas and their provision is supported by Policy 50 of the Structure Plan. A bus-based park-and-ride site to the east of the A370 at Long Ashton was completed in 1997 and provides 1,500 car parking spaces. Other opportunities around Bristol include rail-based park-and-ride at Portbury and a further bus-based scheme to serve the A38 corridor. There are also opportunities to extend existing railway station car parks to improve the potential for interchange.
- 9.33** With regard to Weston-super-Mare, the highest potential patronage for bus-based park-and-ride is on the A370/A371 corridor. The scale of facility required and possible locations for it need to be considered in the context of the future development of the Weston fringe. Complementary bus priority measures on the A370 would assist and stricter parking controls in the Town Centre would be essential to its successful operation. The financial viability of such a scheme remains to be demonstrated and it is therefore seen as a longer-term possibility.

Policy T/2 – Existing railway stations

Development at and around existing passenger railway stations will only be permitted if it would not prejudice the station's function, including the ability to provide for projected growth in rail traffic.

The land designated for the purposes of this policy, defined on the Proposals Map, includes land adjoining the following stations that is safeguarded for park-and-ride schemes:

- i. Worle;
- ii. Yatton;
- iii. Nailsea and Backwell.

9.34 The existing stations – at Weston-super-Mare, Weston Milton, Worle, Yatton and Nailsea and Backwell – provide important facilities that would be difficult to replace if lost. In addition to the stations themselves, these include parking and collection/dropping-off areas that contribute to their role in an integrated transport system. While there is a case for development of under-used land, it is important that the existing and potential contribution to transport strategy of land associated with stations is taken fully into account. A balance needs to be struck between the role of parking at stations in reducing total car mileage and the role of development around stations in reducing the need to make journeys by car. The Council will take a precautionary approach, not permitting development around stations where it could obstruct potential operational improvements in the longer term.

9.35 Weston-super-Mare The railway station forecourt has recently been re-modelled, to include better pedestrian links to the Town Centre and improved bus interchange and taxi facilities. Although Weston-super-Mare lacks an adequate bus or coach terminus, a Bus Focus has been introduced as part of the Town Centre Enhancement. It has been agreed that facilities at Locking Road Coach Terminal should be upgraded. This is linked to the railway station via a footpath under Hildesheim Bridge.

9.36 Weston Milton Plans to re-double the track between Weston-super-Mare and Worle Junction will require provision of a second platform at Weston Milton. Footpath access to the platform from the south should be included in its design.

9.37 Worle A new railway station with 200 car parking spaces was opened at Worle in 1990. The LTP recognises that the station needs extending to 'parkway' standards to enable it to cater for inter-city and longer local trains. This is supported by the Highways Agency as a means of reducing congestion on the M5. In conjunction with the development of Locking Castle, additional provision has been made for 500 car parking spaces to the south of the railway line. The scheme is primarily car- and train-orientated, but it is considered that bus routes as they develop should be linked to this facility. Improved pedestrian and cycle access is also needed. The site when fully operational is suitably located to serve either Weston-super-Mare or work trips to Bristol.

9.38 Yatton Yatton is the railhead for Clevedon, Congresbury and villages to the south-east. Marked parking bays exist on both sides of the line and land southwest of the station is also used informally for parking. This is proposed to be formalised. Lengths of dismantled railway to the north-west and south-west of Yatton Station offer potential for improved pedestrian/cycle access (see Policy T/8)(vii) and (xxvi).

9.39 Nailsea and Backwell A need has been identified for a car park extension (up to 200 spaces) at Nailsea and Backwell; land adjacent to the existing car park is therefore safeguarded. Pedestrian/cycle links to both Nailsea and Backwell should also be improved.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

Existing stations improved as described.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Target

100% of improvements described implemented.

Policy T/3 – Proposed railway stations

Stations and associated parking facilities in conjunction with the re-opening of the Portishead to Bristol line are proposed on the following sites, defined on the Proposals Map:

- i. Harbour Road, Portishead;
- ii. Off Royal Portbury Dock Road, Portbury (area of search);
- iii. Severn Road, Pill.

Development on, adjacent to or in the vicinity of the safeguarded sites will only be permitted if it would not prejudice the implementation and/or function of the proposed uses.

9.40 In conjunction with the potential restoration of passenger services on the Portishead to Bristol railway line there is a need to safeguard land for stations and associated parking facilities. The proposed stations are located at Portishead, Portbury and Pill (see para. 9.22 above).

9.41 Portishead A site is reserved at Harbour Road for a terminus with bus bays, taxi rank, dropping-off point and parking for cycles and a minimum of 100 cars. Some of the parking is to be provided as part of the adjacent foodstore development. The importance of the station as a principal gateway to the town – forming first impressions – should not be under-estimated. The character, quality and local distinctiveness of the town need to be reflected in the design of the station and its approaches.

9.42 Portbury An area of search is identified within which a site for Portbury Station can be defined once plans for the Portishead branch are clarified. The site could include a rail-based park-and-ride facility with a capacity of 200 car parking spaces, ideally located to intercept travellers from the M5 and those approaching Portishead on the A369, while discouraging use by those leaving Portishead on the A369. However, the viability of a park-and-ride scheme will depend on the attractiveness and cost of alternative park-and-ride sites around Bristol.

9.43 Pill Pill Station is proposed to be located on the former goods yard, to the west of the former station site. This site has the potential to provide up to 75 parking spaces.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

Proposed stations provided as described.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Target

100% of proposed stations opened.

Parking

9.44 Car journeys start and end at a parking space. Studies suggest that the availability of parking can be more influential than levels of public transport in determining mode of travel, even for locations very well served by public transport. As car ownership and road traffic have increased, so has the demand for car parking space, which takes up land, reducing densities and making alternatives to the car less attractive.

9.45 A certain level of parking provision may be necessary for a development to proceed without causing traffic or highway safety problems and it is important to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres and to enable retail and leisure uses to flourish. The needs of disabled users must also be considered. However, in order to realise the potential of locational policies and to avoid disadvantaging either urban areas, through added congestion, or people with a poorer level of car access, the provision of car parking needs to be carefully managed. The greatest potential for change lies in reducing private car journeys to work through a combination of parking restrictions and improvements to other modes of travel. In addition, some 10% of morning peak traffic is attributable to the school run. As well as implementing these measures, the amount of good quality cycle parking needs to be increased to promote more cycle use.

9.46 Parking can be categorised in various ways: on and off street; public or private; regulated and unregulated; long and short stay; free and charged. Parking management issues as such will be addressed through the LTP and related strategies, the Local Plan addressing the land use



implications. The Council's parking strategy is related to the locational strategy, so the hierarchy for applying parking measures and controls will concentrate on Weston-super-Mare and then other towns and villages.

9.47 The Council can influence the supply of parking spaces both off-street in Council-operated public car parks, and on-street by the use of Traffic Regulation Orders to regulate the length of stay. However, much of the off-street parking in town centres is private non-residential (PNR) parking attached to commercial premises. Reducing the number of PNR spaces is a long-term aim that will be relevant in considering applications for extensions, redevelopment and changes of use. In these cases, the standards set out in Policy T/6 will apply to the whole site and this may result in a requirement for the existing parking provision to be reduced and the land re-allocated for other purposes. The standards will also limit the extent to which further PNR spaces are created.

Policy T/4 – Existing public car parks

Development that would result in the reduction of publicly available off-street car parking spaces will only be permitted if:

- i. the location has good access to other means of travel than the private car; and
- ii. any resulting increase in on-street parking would not unacceptably harm the character of the area or increase traffic congestion in the vicinity.

9.48 Public car parks are available in all the town centres and, in order to sustain and encourage their commercial viability, the majority have a price charging structure.

9.49 Weston-super-Mare has by far the greatest number of public car parking spaces. In order to provide for shoppers, parking policy for central Weston favours short-stay parking only, with long-stay parking in car parks more distant from the shopping and business core. Car parks in Nailsea provide a balance of short and long stay parking.

9.50 A recent study of parking supply and demand concluded that the high rate of traffic growth in North Somerset, combined with increasing car ownership, could result in significant parking problems developing in Weston-super-Mare from 2004, Clevedon from 2005 and Nailsea from 2006. With respect to town centre vitality, the assessment indicated that long-stay commuter parking could be restricting the availability of spaces for shoppers, particularly in Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon. Experience elsewhere in the UK suggests that freeing-up these spaces for short-stay parking would increase trade. This is best achieved by relocating long-stay car parking to areas outside or on the edge of the Town Centre. Short-stay visits are mostly made outside the peak commuting hours and so do not contribute significantly to traffic problems. The demand for longer-term parking is acknowledged at transport interchanges, notably suburban and village railway stations.

- 9.51** Although national guidance encourages the release for development of under-used car parking areas, it is considered that there is limited scope to do this in any of the town centres at the present time. No car parks have been identified for redevelopment in this Plan. Any proposals that emerge subsequently, for example as a result of the introduction of park-and-ride, will need to establish that the displacement of parking places would not give rise to unacceptable problems.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

Management of the number of off-street car parking spaces to avoid displacement of parking to unsuitable on-street locations, while encouraging more sustainable travel choices.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications; parking surveys.

Target

Nil net loss of car parking over the Plan period.

Policy T/5 – New public car parks

Planning permission will be granted for the use of land for public car parking provided that:

- i. the proposal does not conflict with the implementation of the Local Transport Plan (in particular park-and-ride); and
- ii. the traffic generated can be accommodated on the local highway network.

Planning permission for privately-controlled public car parks will only be granted subject to planning conditions or a planning obligation controlling the balance between long- and short-stay parking.

- 9.52** New car parks may be needed to serve new developments but additional public parking in town centres could worsen local traffic conditions. It could undermine the transport strategy and the development of park-and-ride or other schemes, particularly if the pricing structure is inappropriate. Planning applications for new public car parks will be assessed in the light of all relevant factors including the stage reached in the implementation of public transport initiatives. Where park-and-ride is established, applications for new car parks will need to be looked at more critically.

- 9.53** PPG13, para. 56 provides that where retail and leisure developments are located in a town centre, or on an edge-of-centre site, local planning authorities should consider allowing parking additional to the relevant maximum standards provided the local authority is satisfied that the parking facilities will genuinely serve the town centre as a whole and

that agreement to this has been reached before planning permission is granted. Such provision will need to be consistent with the town centre parking strategy.

- 9.54** In the past, it has been an accepted practice to convert underused or vacant sites to temporary car parks, pending their redevelopment. This can satisfy unmet parking needs and also provide a productive use of sites. However, it is a short-term expediency; the long-term existence of such car parks in town centre locations could be contrary to conservation, environmental and traffic management objectives and will be resisted.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

Provision of new public car parking which does not conflict with Local Transport Plan objectives or give rise to a negative impact on the highway network.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications; parking surveys.

Target

Number of new off-street car parking spaces provided.

Policy T/6 – Parking standards

In assessing the provision that a development proposal makes for the parking of motor vehicles and bicycles, regard will be had to the standards in the schedule forming part of this policy and to the provisions of any Travel Plan negotiated under Policy T/11. For any use not covered by these standards, provision will be assessed according to individual circumstances, having regard to the transport objectives of this Plan.

In addition, adequate area must be provided for the parking of vehicles waiting to load or unload. The parking of these vehicles on the highway will not be acceptable.

Where a proposal involves an extension to an existing building in non-residential use, or a change of use, the standards will apply to the whole site over which the applicant has or intends to acquire control.

- 9.55** Planning policy used to require developers to provide a minimum number of car parking spaces, based on the nature and size of the development. The aim of these minimum standards was to accommodate likely demand, based on current and/or anticipated trip rates, so as to avoid problems of overspill parking in adjacent streets. It has now been realised that the availability of ample car parking can attract private car journeys even in areas well served by public transport. Policy has therefore moved away from minimum towards maximum car parking standards. Limiting the provision of car parking will encourage travel by other means.

- 9.56** Policy 59 of the Structure Plan seeks to limit car parking provision to maximum levels related to land use, environmental conditions and the availability of alternative modes. The need to review parking policies and standards across the former Avon area in the light of the 1997 Road Traffic Reduction Act and the revised PPG13 is accepted. A co-ordinated approach to parking standards is desirable, one that complements strategic land use and transportation policies. Until such time as revised policies and standards are agreed, Policy T/6 will apply. The national maximum parking standards from PPG13, and others from Regional Planning Guidance, have been incorporated into the schedule to T/6. The schedule also includes standards for bicycle and motorcycle parking.
- 9.57** PPG13, para. 53 allows local parking standards to be more rigorous than the national standards, where it is considered appropriate. In urban locations, the provision of full car parking standards would be contrary to the Local Plan's objective of reducing car dependency. Stricter standards will therefore apply in the four towns, with even tighter standards within Weston-super-Mare Town Centre. The tightest standards will apply within walking distance of Weston-super-Mare station, thus providing an incentive for high density mixed use development in this most accessible location.
- 9.58** There remain instances where under-provision could be detrimental to road safety or local amenity. It could also push housing areas down-market, undermining economic viability. Householders will usually expect to be able to park near their homes. Many residential properties put forward for sub-division are unable to provide on-site parking and increased on-street parking can create traffic hazards. However, sub-division does make a useful contribution to the supply of smaller dwelling units and ensure an efficient use of the private housing stock. Where off-street car parking is not possible or would be environmentally damaging, the Council will consider the proximity of nearby public car parks in assessing parking requirements. This subject is covered in more depth in Chapter 8 (Policies H/6 and H/7).
- 9.59** Changes of use can occur within categories of the Use Classes Order without the need for planning permission. Substantially different parking and servicing demands, beyond the capacity of the site to accommodate them, can harm the character of the surrounding area and place pressure on on-street car parking. Therefore, assessments of demand will need to have regard to any implications arising from changes of use within a use class. Assessment may indicate that a condition or legal agreement should be used to restrict permission to the specific use applied for. Some changes of use are included in the General Permitted Development Order and the Council usually has no control under planning law over the consequences of these for local parking conditions. An example is the creation of a single flat above a shop.
- 9.60** Due regard should be had to convenience, safety, vehicle/personal security and visual amenity when considering the planning and design of parking areas, including cycle parking areas.

- 9.61** Proposals for new development, major extensions or re-development for retailing or other commercial uses will also need to make provision for the manoeuvring of service vehicles. Developers' attention is drawn to the design standards for service areas drawn up by the Freight Transport Association in Designing for Deliveries (1998). It is intended that design guidance in respect of servicing arrangements be interpreted flexibly. However, proposals that would prejudice efficient rear servicing will be resisted. Facilities for service vehicles or those delivering or removing goods from premises should be segregated from parking areas as far as possible to avoid conflict and prevent their use for overflow parking.
- 9.62** For developments in use classes C1, D1, D2 and for similar purposes, adequate and safe space for pick-up/set-down requirements must be available, including, where appropriate, space for coaches. These areas must be designed and managed to discourage their use for long-stay parking.

Monitoring

Outcome Objective:

Maximum car parking standards exceeded in less than 5% of planning permissions.

Output Objective:

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Target:

Less than 5% of all developments approved to have greater than maximum standard of car parking.

Schedule to Policy T/6 – Parking standards

Cars, lorries and motorcycles general provisions (except as otherwise stated)

A. Calculation of Maximum Standards

1. For mixed use development, the gross floorspace given over to each use should be used to calculate the overall total maximum parking figure. Where a building used for commercial purposes has recreational facilities restricted to use by the incumbent workforce, the standards for the commercial use only are to be applied.
2. Within the towns, as defined by the settlement boundaries shown on the Inset Maps, maximum parking standards are tightened to the following percentages of the North Somerset standard:
 - within 400m walking distance of Weston-super-Mare railway station: 70% (this distance will be measured from the point of access to the nearest accessible platform)
 - elsewhere in Weston-super-Mare Town Centre: 80%

- Clevedon; Nailsea; Portishead; rest of Weston-super-Mare: 90%.

Sites within the Weston Regeneration Area (Policy E/1C) will be treated as being within Weston-super-Mare for these purposes.

3. All figures expressed are 'pro rata'. Provision is normally to be limited to the number of whole spaces resulting from the calculation, disregarding any additional fraction. Where the final figure is less than one, the maximum provision will be one space.

B. Calculation of Minimum Standards

4. Minimum standards of provision are required for parking for the disabled and for motorcycle parking, except in C3 residential developments and those where no on-site car parking provision is proposed. In the case of retail and leisure developments a proportion of bays should be marked out for the use of people with young children; the proportion applicable will be negotiated separately for each development.
5. Parking for the disabled is not additional to general parking and is included in the calculation of maximum permissible parking.
6. Parking for the disabled is required as a proportion of the relevant local maximum for cars (see 2 above) as follows:
 - educational and employment uses: where maximum for cars is:
 - under 20 spaces, there is no requirement for designated spaces but a minimum of 1 space must be provided to disabled bay dimensions (4.8m x 3.6m)
 - 20 – 200 spaces, disabled provision is a minimum of 5%, with a minimum of 1 space
 - over 200 spaces, disabled provision is a minimum of 4%
 - retail, health and leisure uses: where maximum for cars is:
 - under 20 spaces, there is no requirement for designated spaces but a minimum of 1 space must be provided to disabled bay dimensions (4.8m x 3.6m)
 - 20 – 200 spaces, disabled provision is a minimum of 6%, with a minimum of 3 spaces
 - over 200 spaces, disabled provision is a minimum of 7%.
7. Where development is to take place without on-site parking the availability of parking for the disabled in public/shared car parking will need to be re-assessed and additional provision funded by the development if appropriate. The availability of on-street parking for the disabled may also be taken into consideration.
8. Motorcycle parking is required at a minimum of 3% of the relevant local maximum for cars (see 2 above). The term 'motorcycle' refers to all powered two-wheelers, including scooters and mopeds.



C. Provision above Maximum Standards

9. Other than for motorcycle parking and parking for the disabled, all standards apply as a maximum, unless the applicant has:
 - demonstrated (where appropriate through a Transport Assessment) that a higher level of parking is needed;
 - proposed measures (for instance in the location, design and implementation of the scheme) to minimise the need for parking; and
 - demonstrated that these measures are practical and likely to be effective in the long-term (for instance through incorporation into a legally-binding Travel Plan).
10. In the case of employment or retail development, or other key town centre uses, provision above the relevant local maximum standard may be acceptable where an existing lack of parking is demonstrably harming the vitality and economic viability of the area and alternatives to additional parking provision have been explored unsuccessfully. Where such developments exceed the floorspace thresholds set out in PPG13, Annex D, the national standards specified there should not be exceeded. In the case of smaller developments, a greater relaxation of standards will be permitted where the above tests are met.
11. In the case of phased development, provision above the maximum standard may be acceptable as a temporary measure, regulated by a legal agreement.
12. In the case of non-residential development, public access (managed or unmanaged as appropriate) outside business hours may be required, particularly where residential on-street parking problems exist in the vicinity.

D. Provision below Maximum Standards

13. Provision below the maximum standard is encouraged. However, if provision 10% or more below the relevant local maximum is proposed, the developer will normally need to:
 - demonstrate that there will be no unacceptable impact on on-street parking in the surrounding area; or
 - pay for on-street parking controls to be introduced; or
 - propose acceptable alternative measures enforceable through a Travel Plan.
 - Where provision proposed is so low as to be likely to cause insurmountable highway safety or access problems, planning permission will be refused.
14. The Council may require a lower standard where:
 - environmental conditions (e.g. air quality, surface water run-off or exposure to flood risk) would otherwise be unacceptably worsened; or

- the development has good access to means of travel other than by car, including good walking and cycling links; or
 - adequate public off-street parking and/or shared parking is available nearby; or
 - lower provision would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a Conservation Area or the setting of a Listed Building.
15. Where a development consists of more than one retail, employment or assembly/leisure unit (or a mix of such uses), an element of shared parking will be expected.
16. Where adjoining commercial uses with largely different operating hours (e.g. employment and leisure) can share parking provision, a lower standard will apply based on the higher of the two individual standards.

Bicycles general provisions (except as otherwise stated)

1. The standards are for minimum provision.
2. The minimum requirement is four spaces.
3. All figures expressed are part thereof. The calculated requirement should be rounded up to the nearest even number (a single 'Sheffield' stand provides two spaces).
4. For mixed use development, the gross floorspace given over to each use should be used to calculate the overall total minimum parking figure. Where a building used for commercial purposes has recreational facilities restricted to use by the incumbent workforce, the standards for the commercial use only are to be applied.
5. Where on-site provision is not possible, payment in lieu to the Council will be required for the provision of cycle parking in an alternative location plus 10% for maintenance. In such cases, the Council will then provide a cycle parking facility in the vicinity of the development.
6. Long-stay cycle parking is intended principally for staff employed within an establishment, where parking would be in excess of one hour. Long-stay parking shall be convenient, secure and covered. Internal facilities such as changing rooms, lockers, showers, etc. will be sought. Applicants may consider providing traditional covered and locked cycle sheds outside the main building or may wish to consider a designated space within the building, which will be subject to a planning condition requiring that it remains so designated.
7. Short-stay cycle parking is intended principally for visitors to an establishment. It shall be convenient, secure and in a prominent location.

Standards for specific uses

Use Type	Description of Use (with use class where appropriate – see Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended)	Parking Standard (GFA – Gross Floor Area)	Notes (notes in italic relate to cycle parking requirements)
		Except as otherwise stated, 'space' refers to a parking space for a car (usually 4.8m x 2.4m but all spaces must be large enough to enable comfortable access and egress for the driver).	
Retailing and servicing	A1 – Shops (including cash and carry)	1 space per 20m ² GFA	1. The maximum standard may be relaxed where, in the opinion of the local planning authority, the development provides an anchor facility for a shopping centre.
	Retail warehouse clubs	<i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	
	(for funeral parlours, see below: non-residential institutions)	<i>Short-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 100m² GFA or 2 no.</i>	2. <i>Shopping malls will be assessed on the basis of each individual unit.</i>
	Garden centres	1 space per 25m ² open and covered display area	
		<i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	
		<i>Short-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 100m² GFA or 2 no.</i>	

Retailing and servicing	Open air markets and car boot sales	6 car spaces per vendor	
	Petrol filling stations with a shop	1 space per 20m ² GFA <i>Long-stay cycles:</i> 1 space per 3 staff	1. Petrol pump spaces each count as one space. Standard applies only where floorspace calculation would permit additional spaces. 2. Workshop and other uses assessed as below.
	Car washes	5 queueing spaces	
	Vehicle repair garages, tyre and exhaust centres, other similar uses	3 spaces per repair/service bay 4 spaces per MOT bay 2 lorry spaces per lorry repair bay <i>Long-stay cycles:</i> 1 space per 3 staff	
	Motor vehicle showrooms and sales lots	1 space per 50m ² of sales display area (including open area) <i>Long-stay cycles:</i> 1 space per 3 staff	Staff and visitor parking spaces must be clearly distinguished.
	Car auctions	1 space per 20m ² of sales display area	
Financial and professional services	A2 – Banks, betting offices, building societies, estate agents, other financial and professional offices open to the general public	1 space per 20m ² GFA <i>Long-stay cycles:</i> greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. <i>Short-stay cycles:</i> greater of 1 space per 100m ² GFA or 2 no.	



Catering	A3/A4 – Cafés, function rooms, licensed social clubs, public houses, restaurants, wine bars	1 space per 5m ² public area <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 8 seats or 2 no.</i>	Dwelling accommodation assessed separately as C3.
	A5 – Hot food takeaways and drive-through restaurants	Maximum of 5 spaces <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	
	Motorway service areas	1 space per 5m ² public area	Retail element assessed separately as A1.
	Transport cafés	1 lorry space per 3m ² dining area	
Employment	B1 – Offices, light industrial units, research and development sites, laboratories, studios	1 space per 50m ² GFA, or 1 space per 30m ² GFA where restricted by condition or legal agreement to office use only <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 100m² GFA or 2 no.</i>	
	B2 – General industrial units	1 space per 50m ² GFA <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 500m² GFA or 2 no.</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 500m² GFA or 2 no.</i>	Where office content exceeds 10% the office floorspace will be assessed as B1.

Employment	B8 – Storage and distribution units	1 space per 200m ² (including open storage areas) <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 1000m² GFA or 2 no.</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 1000m² GFA or 2 no.</i>	1 Where office content exceeds 10% the office floorspace will be assessed as B1. 2. Restricted by condition/agreement to 'Wholesale Distribution' only. Any element of cash and carry – retail standards apply.
Hotels and hostels	C1 – Hotels, boarding and guest houses, motels	0.9 space per bedroom plus 1 per 3 staff plus 1 coach space per 30 bedrooms <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 1 per 10 bed spaces</i>	1. Dwelling accommodation assessed separately as C3. 2. Where conference/function and drinking/dining areas are available to non-residents, additional provision permitted as A3/A4. 3. Standard may be tightened where occupants are restricted by legal agreement to those requiring a high degree of care. 4. Where conference/ function and drinking/dining areas are available to non-residents, additional provision required as A3/A4.
H C	Hostels (including youth hostels)	1 space per 3 bedspaces <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 1 per 10 bed spaces</i>	

Residential institutions	C2 – Children's homes and residential units for adults with learning or physical disabilities (for 7 or more residents)	1 space per residential staff, 1 space per 2 non-residential staff, 1 space per 4 client places (visitor parking)	1. Non-residential staff figure derived from number on duty at busiest time. 2. Client places figure derived from maximum licensed capacity of the facility or, failing this, physical capacity. 3. Minimum of 20% of spaces to be suitable for disabled parking.
	C2 – Hospitals	1 space per 4 staff, plus 1 space per 3 daily visitors <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 1 per 10 bed spaces</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10 bedspaces or 2 no.</i>	Casualty and outpatient departments assessed as D1: medical/ health centres
	C2 – Convalescent, nursing and residential care homes	1 space per 6 bedspaces plus 1 space per 4 staff <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 1 per 10 bed spaces</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10 bedspaces or 2 no.</i>	1. Minimum of 20% of spaces to be suitable for disabled parking. 2. Suitable ambulance bay may be required.
	C2 – Boarding schools	2 spaces per classroom <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 1 per 10 bed spaces</i>	Hard play areas should be accessible for parking use on open days and for evening activities, etc.

Residential institutions	C2 – Residential colleges and training centres	2 spaces per 5 bedspaces <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 1 per 10 bed spaces</i>	1. Where any day attendance at courses is involved, additional provision permitted as D1. 2. Hard play areas should be accessible for parking use on open days and for evening activities, etc.
Housing	C3 – Houses, flats, maisonettes (except elderly persons' dwellings) Bedsits/houses in multiple occupation/ student accommodation Mobile homes/residential caravans	(i) For 1 bedspace/ bedroom: 0.5 space per dwelling, with an additional 1 space per 4 dwellings for communal parking (ii) For 2 bedrooms: 1 space per dwelling, with an additional 1 space per 4 dwellings for communal parking (iii) For 3 bedrooms: 2 spaces per dwelling (iv) For 4 bedrooms and over: 3 spaces per dwelling <i>Long-stay cycles: 1 secure space per unit of accommodation</i>	1. Off-street spaces include garages (integral or detached), carports, driveways and spaces with lockable bollards. 2. Consideration will be given to withdrawal of permitted development rights for the conversion of integral garages into habitable rooms and for the formation of hardstandings within the curtilage. 3. In the case of housing in multiple occupation, the calculation refers to the accommodation occupied by each household. 4. Standard may be tightened where public car parking is adequate for visitors. 5. Standard may be tightened for affordable housing schemes where alternatives to the car are readily available. 6. <i>Minimum standard of 4 spaces does not apply.</i>

Housing			7. Spaces should not impinge upon normal domestic space (not counting external storage). A garage is an acceptable secure space if large enough to accommodate both a car and a cycle.
	C3 – Elderly persons' dwellings	<p>Sheltered housing (Category 1): 1 space per dwelling plus 1 space per 5 dwellings for visiting vehicles.</p> <p>Sheltered housing (Category 2): 1 space per 3 dwellings plus 1 space per 10 dwellings for visiting vehicles.</p> <p><i>Cycles: to be negotiated</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warden accommodation assessed as C3 above. 2. Minimum of 20% of spaces to be suitable for disabled parking. 3. Suitable ambulance bay may be required.
Non-residential institutions	D1 – Clinics, dentists'/ doctors' surgeries, medical/health centres, veterinary surgeries	<p>3 spaces per consulting/treatment room plus 1 space per duty doctor, nurse or other professional staff, 1 space per 2 admin/clerical staff on duty at any one time</p> <p><i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i></p> <p><i>Short-stay cycles: 1 space per consulting room</i></p>	Account to be taken of the particular services provided and accessibility by other modes.

Non-residential institutions	D1 – Crèches, day centres, day nurseries	1 space per 2 staff plus 1 space per 2 clients (visitor parking) <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	1. Non-residential staff figure derived from number on duty at busiest time. 2. Client places figure derived from maximum licensed capacity of the facility or, failing this, physical capacity.
	D1 – Nursery /infant/ junior/ primary schools	1 space per classroom <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 1 space per 10 pupils.</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: 1 space per classroom.</i>	1. Standard may be relaxed where facilities are used for community or adult educational purposes. 2. Hard play areas should be accessible for parking use on open days and for evening activities, etc. 3. School Travel Plans will be required to further determine quantity, quality and location of cycle parking and lockers.
	D1 – Secondary schools	1 space per 2 staff <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 1 space per 5 pupils.</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: 1 space per classroom</i>	1. Standard may be relaxed where facilities are used for community or adult educational purposes. 2. Hard play areas should be accessible for parking use on open days and for evening activities, etc. 3. School Travel Plans will be required to further determine quantity, quality and location of cycle parking and lockers.

Non-residential institutions	D1 – Sixth form colleges/colleges of further education, training centres, universities	1 space per 2 staff plus 1 space per 15 students <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 1 space per 10 pupils.</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: 1 space per classroom</i>	1. Standard for students relates to total number attending an establishment rather than full-time equivalent figures. 2. Standard may be relaxed where facilities are used for community or adult educational purposes. 3. Residential accommodation assessed as C2/C3. 4. Colleges/universities will develop <i>Travel Plans</i> to further determine quantity, quality and location of cycle parking and lockers.
	D1 – Art galleries, exhibition halls, libraries, museums Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Tourist Information Centres	1 space per 35m ² (visitors) plus 1 space per 150m ² (staff) <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: 1 space per 50m²</i>	
	D1 – Church halls, community halls, cultural centres, places of worship, Scout huts, youth clubs	1 space per 10 seats <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: 1 space per 25 fixed seats or 1 space per 50m²</i>	
	A1 – Funeral parlours with a chapel Crematoria	1 space per 2 seats	

Assembly and leisure	D2 – Bingo halls, cinemas, conference facilities, concert halls Theatres	Below 1000m ² : 1 space per 3 seats Above 1000m ² : 1 space per 5 seats <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	
	D2 – Casinos, dance halls, discotheques Nightclubs	Below 1000m ² : 1 space per 5m ² public area Above 1000m ² : 1 space per 25m ² GFA <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	
	Snooker halls	1 space per table <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	
	D2 – Ten-pin bowling centres	3 spaces per bowling lane <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	1. Conference/function and drinking/dining areas assessed as A3/A4.
	D2 – Sports centres/halls, leisure centres	1 space per 5 seats plus 1 space per 30m ² playing area <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: 1 space per 50m²</i>	1. Conference/function and drinking/dining areas assessed as A3/A4. 2. Leisure facilities will be required to develop Travel Plans to further determine the quantity, quality and location of cycle parking and encourage sustainable access.

Assembly and leisure	D2 – Gymnasia/health clubs, skating rinks, swimming baths	1 space per 5 seats plus 1 space per 10m ² open hall/pool area <i>Long-stay cycles:</i> greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. <i>Short-stay cycles:</i> 1 space per 50m ²	1. Conference/ function and drinking/dining areas assessed as A3/A4. 2. Leisure facilities will be required to develop Travel Plans to further determine the quantity, quality and location of cycle parking and encourage sustainable access.
	Badminton and tennis courts	3 spaces per court <i>Long-stay cycles:</i> greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. <i>Short-stay cycles:</i> 1 space per 50m ²	Leisure facilities will be required to develop Travel Plans to further determine the quantity, quality and location of cycle parking and encourage sustainable access.
	Squash courts	2 spaces per court <i>Long-stay cycles:</i> greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. <i>Short-stay cycles:</i> 1 space per 50m ²	Leisure facilities will be required to develop Travel Plans to further determine the quantity, quality and location of cycle parking and encourage sustainable access.
	Playing fields	12 spaces per hectare pitch area <i>Short-stay cycles:</i> 2 spaces per hectare pitch area	

Assembly and leisure	Sports stadia	Below 1500 seats: as for sports centres	1. Conference/ function and drinking/dining areas assessed as A3/A4.
		Above 1500 seats: 1 space per 15 seats <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: 1 space per 50 seats</i>	2. <i>Leisure facilities will be required to develop Travel Plans to further determine the quantity, quality and location of cycle parking and encourage sustainable access.</i>
	Golf courses	3 spaces per hole, plus 1 space per 2 staff, plus 1 space per 5 spectator seats <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	Other facilities, e.g. club house, assessed separately.
	Golf driving ranges	1.5 spaces per tee/bay <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	
	Equestrian centres	1 space per stable <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	
	Marinas	1 space per 1.5 berths plus 1 space per 2 staff <i>Long-stay cycles: greater of 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no.</i>	
	Fishing lakes	1 space per peg	
	Allotments	10 spaces per hectare	
	Parks	<i>Short-stay cycles: 1 space per hectare</i>	

Assembly and leisure	Children's play areas	<i>Short-stay cycles: 2 spaces per play area</i>	<i>Minimum standard of 4 spaces does not apply.</i>
	Caravan/camping sites	<i>1 space per 2 staff, plus 1 space per pitch (users), plus 1 space per 10 pitches (visitors)</i> <i>Long-stay cycles: 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 1 space per 5 pitches.</i>	<i>Camping sites will be required to develop Travel Plans to encourage sustainable tourism.</i>
	Kennels and catteries	<i>1 space per 4 pens</i>	
Transport	Railway stations, bus/coach stations, park-and-ride sites	<i>Railway stations:</i> <i>Long-stay cycles: 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 3 spaces per stopped train carriage during the peak period (0730-0930)</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: 2 per booking office window.</i> <i>Bus/coach stations:</i> <i>Long-stay cycles: 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 5 per bus/coach parking bay</i> <i>Short-stay cycles: 2 per booking office window.</i> <i>Park-and-ride sites:</i> <i>Long-stay cycles: 1 space per 10% of staff or 2 no. plus 1 per 20 car parking spaces.</i>	<i>New/improved railway stations, bus/coach stations, and park-and-ride sites will be required to detail plans that will determine the quantity, quality and location of cycle parking and encourage sustainable access.</i>

Walking, cycling and horse-riding

- 9.63** The LTP includes Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies that provide a wider context for the Local Plan. The Local Plan sets out the Council's aims for walking, cycling and horse-riding in relation to land use, while those within the bounds of the public highway are now to be found in the LTP. The development and improvement of the access network within and related to a development may be the subject of developer contributions to be negotiated under Policies T/10 and CF/1 (also ECH/9 in relation to the Forest of Avon area). Provision for development, improvement and long-term maintenance will be an important element of negotiations. Design considerations will focus on achieving maximum accessibility and permeability and the widest public use.
- 9.64** The Pedestrian Strategy sets a number of targets for encouraging walking and sets out the Council's vision of how 'Local Pedestrian Strategies' will develop. Since 1994 there has been a wealth of national and local guidance published on pedestrian provision. The overarching theme of the North Somerset Pedestrian Strategy is that all new traffic management schemes and highway works can benefit people walking. Equally, it is recognised that cycle schemes do not exclusively benefit the cyclist, but can, and must, also benefit people walking.
- 9.65** The Cycling Strategy sets a number of targets for increasing cycle usage and sets out the Council's vision of how the cycling network within North Somerset will develop. The Strategy reflects the development of national and local guidance available over the last decade. In that time the National Cycle Forum has formed and has issued various guidance notes; the overarching document *Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone* has been published; and specific Traffic Advisory Leaflets have been issued on cyclist safety and cycle facility provision. Cycling can deliver economic and environmental benefits to society alongside health and lifestyle benefits for individuals.
- 9.66** The Council does not currently have a specific strategy for **horse-riding** but the need for improvements to the bridleway network is recognised and will be addressed through production of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Commercial riding and private stables are discussed in Chapter 11 (see paras. 11 – 11).

Policy T/7 – Protection, development and improvement of the Rights of Way Network and other forms of public access

Development that would reduce, sever, or adversely affect the use, amenity or safety of public rights of way and other forms of public access, or prejudice the planned development of the network will only be permitted if acceptable provision is made to mitigate those effects, or divert or replace the right of way or other form of access, before the development commences.

- 9.67** The access network of public rights of way supplemented by other forms of public access provides opportunities for sustainable travel and



recreation, playing a vital role in integrated transport systems. In the towns and villages, footpath and other links are an important means of direct access to work, local shops, schools and other facilities. Routes can address accessibility and safety issues and provide valuable access to the countryside. Well-designed access provision can enhance the character and interest as well as the permeability of an area. It also contributes to the achievement of economic and social objectives, such as thriving leisure and tourism industries, social inclusion and healthier ways of living.

- 9.68** Where development is proposed affecting a statutory right of way or other access of public value, the Council will expect that route to be retained, either on its defined route or on an acceptable alternative alignment (subject to the Council's approval and applicable legal criteria). Proposed changes to the access network must have due consideration for the social, cultural, environmental and amenity value of any affected routes.
- 9.69** The Council will pursue a programme for the protection, extension, improvement and maintenance of opportunities for access by sustainable modes, including public footpaths, bridleways, byways and cycle routes, together with associated services and facilities. Key priorities within this programme are to provide and promote:
- i) urban fringe multi-user rides and trail routes around all towns and villages together with green corridors and gateway sites connecting urban areas with the countryside and wider access network beyond;
 - ii) strategic multi-user routes connecting all towns, villages and appropriate tourist attractions and open space;
 - iii) a continuous coastal footpath, broadly following the River Avon and the coast of North Somerset, diverting inland where necessary to avoid undue conflict with biodiversity interests or for reasons of safety and security;
 - iv) public access to support the objectives of the Forest of Avon; and
 - v) a series of Safe Routes to School schemes and other links to local services and facilities.
- 9.70** A continuous coastal footpath along the River Avon to Weston-super-Mare could provide a new long-distance route, but is hindered by the lack of a continuous path between Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare and the River Avon and Portishead. Any route the coastal path takes must have regard to the international biodiversity importance of the adjacent Severn Estuary and other biodiversity interests. Safety and security issues at Royal Portbury Dock require that the route passes inland at this point. As part of the Community Forest programme a Community Forest footpath will be promoted. Policy T/8(xii) addresses the issue of a crossing of the Congresbury Yeo for the Clevedon-Weston path.
- 9.71** At this stage, the precise routes these paths might take and their legal status in terms of which categories of use are appropriate are the subject

of further development and negotiation with interested parties. It is therefore not possible to depict them on the Proposals Map. It is the Council's intention to develop – through the Rights of Way Improvement Plan – the details needed to produce supplementary planning guidance that will enable the agreed routes to be safeguarded. Some of the cycle routes proposed under Policy T/8 will be developed for shared use where appropriate.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

No loss of continuity or quality of safeguarded routes.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications and Local Transport Plan monitoring.

Target

No loss of continuity or quality of safeguarded routes.

Policy T/8 – Strategic cycle routes

Proposed strategic cycle routes are identified in the schedule forming part of this policy and defined on the Proposals Map. Development will only be permitted if it would not prejudice the implementation of these routes.

9.72 The proposed core cycle network, defined in the Cycling Strategy within the LTP, is illustrated on Map 9.2. It consists largely of quiet lanes, traffic-calmed streets, existing cyclepaths and disused railways. There are, however, key sections of paths away from the public highway that are needed to link sections of on-highway facilities into a coherent network. These are listed in Policy T/8 and are indicated on the Proposals Map. It should be noted that all routes are indicative at this stage; the precise alignment and construction standard for these proposals may be subject to further consultation at the appropriate time (see also para. 9.71, above and Policy GDP/3, Chapter 4, especially para. 4.38).

9.73 The Council supports the implementation of the National Cycle Network, promoted by Sustrans. The routes within North Somerset are shown on Map 9.1. National Cycle Network Route 33, linking Bristol to Taunton, passes through North Somerset and largely follows a coastal route. Route 41 between Bristol and South Wales also passes through North Somerset and is now fully in place. The Cheddar Valley Railway Route could potentially be added to the National Cycle Network in the long term. Strategic cycle routes can also be of value to walkers and horse-riders; filling gaps in the network could link together National Trails such as the South West Coastal Path, the Offa's Dyke Path and the Cotswold Way, with consequent potential for the development of sustainable tourism.

9.74 The demand for leisure cycling is growing nationally and locally. In

1989 the former County Council signposted a circular route, formed mainly of quiet lanes and segregated paths to form the Avon Cycleway, about 130 km long. A considerable length, from Chew Stoke (in Bath and North East Somerset) to Clevedon to the Avon Bridge, runs through North Somerset. There are a variety of opportunities to provide more routes in the area, in particular across the levels between the urban centres of Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon.

9.75 There is a variety of situations and places where cycle routes are needed, but have not been defined on the Proposals Map because feasibility studies to establish precise routes have not been carried out. During the Plan period, further studies will be undertaken and opportunities for integrating proposed development with new routes will also be investigated. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan will highlight further details. Feasibility studies will be undertaken for cycle routes in the following areas:

- Weston-super-Mare: Between Uphill and Coronation Estate.
- Clevedon/Portishead: Between Clevedon and Portishead; Between Clevedon and Yatton.
- Nailsea Area: Between Nailsea/Backwell and Yatton; Between Nailsea and Clevedon.

9.76 Cycle routes are unlikely to be used unless cycles can be left safely and securely at either end of a journey. Policy T/6 provides for minimum cycle parking standards in new developments.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

No loss of continuity or quality of safeguarded routes.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications and Local Transport Plan monitoring.

Target

No loss of continuity or quality of safeguarded routes.

Schedule to policy T/8 – Strategic cycle routes

Ref.	Parish	Proposal
i)	Backwell/Flax Bourton/ Long Ashton	Route parallel to railway and Long Ashton Bypass (avoiding A370);
ii)	Clevedon	parallel to Blind Yeo within amenity area;
iii)	Clevedon	parallel to Middle Yeo, Marshalls Field to Strode Road; Strode Road to Hill Moor;

iv)	Clevedon	parallel to Valley Road between Walton Road and Woodland Glade;
v)	Clevedon	seaward side of Marshalls Field;
vi)	Clevedon	Tweed Road to Fosseway;
vii)	Clevedon/Kenn/Yatton	route of former railway line (path avoiding B3133);
viii)	Congresbury/Churchill/Wrington/ Burrington/ Blagdon	route of former railway line (path avoiding B3133/A368);
ix)	Easton-in-Gordano	Ham Green Hospital site and St Katherine's School;
x)	Easton-in-Gordano	parallel to disused railway, beneath M5 motorway;
xi)	Easton-in-Gordano/ Portbury	Marsh Lane to A369 (Motorway Service Area) (paths from villages) (including sections at The Breaches and Lodway Close);
xii)	Kingston Seymour/ Wick St. Lawrence	route of former light railway line, including crossing of the Congresbury Yeo at Tutshill Ear Sluice (National Cycle Network Route 33);
xiii)	Nailsea	off Mizzy mead Road (rear of Porlock Gardens/Ash Hayes Drive);
xiv)	Nailsea	through Scotch Horn Centre, across playing field to Nailsea Park;
xv)	Portbury	East Portishead (Ashlands);
xvi)	Weston-super-Mare	Aisecome Way to Charlton Road;
xvii)	Weston-super-Mare	along promenade between Marine Lake and Quantock Road;
xviii)	Weston-super-Mare	St Georges (various);
xix)	Weston-super-Mare	Summer Lane (various);
xx)	Weston-super-Mare	Uphill: Bridgwater Road to Canberra Road;
xxi)	Weston-super-Mare	West Wick (various);
xxii)	Weston-super-Mare	within Weston Airfield (Laneys Drove to Winterstoke Road; Moor Lane around edge of development to Hutton Moor Lane; Hutton Moor Lane to A371);
xxiii)	Weston-super-Mare	Worle: High Street to Station Road;

xxiv)	Weston-super-Mare	Weston Woods to South Weston;
xxv)	Weston-super-Mare/	Uphill towards Brean, including crossing of the River Axe at sluice near Diamond Farm (National Cycle Network Route 33);
xxvi)	Yatton/Congresbury/Churchill/Winscombe and Sandford	route of former railway line (Cheddar Valley Railway Route).

Traffic management

- 9.77** PPG12: *Development Plans* (1999), para. 5.15 advised that policies directly related to the management of traffic should be included in Local Plans where there are direct or indirect implications for land use. Examples from this Chapter include the policies and proposals relating to walking, cycling, horse-riding, parking, servicing, developer contributions and Travel Plans. Current guidance in PPS12 notes the implications of the Local Transport Plan. Many aspects are now more appropriately dealt with through the LTP, since in many cases improvements are located wholly within the highway boundary and do not require planning permission. Policy 7 of the Structure Plan supports the use of traffic management measures in Weston-super-Mare, including traffic calming, to achieve a range of objectives. Policy 55 of the Structure Plan also sets out priorities for traffic management generally.
- 9.78** Traffic management objectives will be relevant to the design of new development, which should pay particular regard to the road space hierarchy (at para. 9.9) and its aim of protecting vulnerable road users.
- 9.79** A need may arise from residential or other development for traffic management measures in the vicinity of schools or on routes to and from them, also other places used by children, such as play areas, local shops, swimming pools and libraries. In such cases, a developer contribution will be sought in accordance with Policy T/10.

Highway schemes

- 9.80** Although funds are being directed away from new road-building, there are many locations within North Somerset where highway improvements can lead to significant environmental and safety benefits. For example, a bypass to a village can have a dramatic effect, while modest expenditure on a dangerous road junction can reduce accidents.
- 9.81** The role of the Local Plan is to show detailed alignments or safeguarding areas where these are known. Each highway scheme will have to take account of environmental impacts as well as the benefits arising.
- 9.82** Providing excess capacity encourages further traffic growth. The design of new roads planned to address existing problems should not build in excess capacity except where this Plan proposes additional development

or safeguards land for development beyond the Plan period. Where future growth is uncertain, wide verges can allow for expansion at a later date.

Policy T/9 – Highway schemes

Major highway schemes, defined on the Proposals Map, are proposed as follows:

- i. Herluin Way to Locking Road Link, Weston-super-Mare;
- ii. Cross – Airfield Link, Weston-super-Mare;
- iii. A38 – A370 Link Road;
- iv. South Bristol Ring Road;
- v. Banwell Bypass (subject to implementation, monitoring and evaluation of traffic management measures and outcome of hydrogeological studies).

Development will only be permitted if it would not prejudice the implementation of these schemes.

9.83 Herluin Way to Locking Road Link, Weston-super-Mare The remaining stage (Stage VII) of the Weston-super-Mare to M5 Link Road is the link to Locking Road, involving a road bridge over the loop railway line. This will provide more direct and convenient access from the A370 than the existing small bridges at Hutton Moor Road and Locking Moor Road, which are to be replaced by footbridges. The scheme's main benefit lies in facilitating the redoubling of the Weston loop, allowing more intensive use of the Weston-Bristol rail route.

9.84 Cross-Airfield Link, Weston-super-Mare Policy E/1C makes provision for a Cross-Airfield Link at Weston-super-Mare. Policy T/9 safeguards the alignment for this road, a key piece of infrastructure serving the Weston Regeneration Area.

9.85 A38/A370 Two routes are safeguarded between these major roads, a link to the east of Barrow Gurney (the A38-A370 Link Road, known as the 'orange route') and the South Bristol Ring Road (known as the 'red' route). Phase 1 of the Ring Road is a link from the A370 to the A38; Phase 2 continues from the A38 into Bristol; both phases are safeguarded by the Local Plan. The lack of a modern road link between the A38 and A370 has led to increasing traffic problems on the B3130 through Barrow Gurney. As well as relieving the village, the new roads will improve access to Bristol International Airport, re-inforcing its status as a regional facility and major local employer.

9.86 Banwell Bypass The A371 through Banwell forms part of the national Primary Route Network. A bypass would provide considerable relief to the severe environmental intrusion caused by through traffic, as well as improving the accessibility of Worle station from the south-east, but there is no route without some disadvantage. Options were assessed by the Banwell Area Transport Study, carried out by JMP Consultants during

2000/01. The Council's preferred option is to implement and monitor a range of traffic management measures, affecting several villages along the A371, A368, A38, B3133 and side roads. Only if these do not provide an acceptable and lasting solution will road-building be pursued. In addition, the wider implications of alternative options, including further road building, on surrounding villages will be assessed. Regard will need to be had at this time to strategic development and transport issues, including the outcome of the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study.

- 9.87** The role of the Local Plan is to ensure that land is reserved for a bypass should this prove necessary in the longer term. As a result of the Banwell Area Transport Study's conclusions, the Council has revoked the line formerly reserved for the bypass – which ran close to the village on its north side – and has reserved instead a line running further to the north, with a separate link to the east accommodating north-south movements. This eastern link is subject to further hydrogeological studies required by the Environment Agency. A full desk-based archaeological assessment and appropriate evaluation work are also necessary. The hydrogeological studies should be planned to provide suitable opportunities for archaeological observation if these are judged worthwhile.
- 9.88 Minor highway works** In addition to the major highway schemes identified above, the Council has a programme of minor improvements to eliminate hazards, such as poor visibility or absence of pavements. The adopted North Somerset Local Plan listed 39 such schemes but many more could usefully be identified. The Local Transport Plan now provides a Prioritisation Framework for Integrated Transport Schemes. As new schemes are identified, they can be inserted into the overall programme according to their ability to meet both the Government's core policy objectives and those of the North Somerset LTP. The new framework removes the need for the Local Plan to set priorities many years in advance.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

Proposed schemes constructed (excluding Banwell Bypass) and future strategy for the Banwell area resolved.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications and Local Transport Plan monitoring.

Target

Schemes (i) – (iv): all schemes open to traffic; (v): air quality standards in Banwell not breached.

Developer responsibilities

Policy T/10 – Safety, traffic and the provision of infrastructure, etc. associated with development

Development will only be permitted if it would not prejudice highway safety or emergency vehicle access. Development giving rise to a significant number of travel movements will only be permitted if it:

- i. is not likely to lead to an unacceptable degree of traffic congestion or to generate traffic that cannot be accommodated without seriously affecting the character of the surrounding area; and
- ii. can readily be integrated with public transport, cycleway and footpath links, and bridleways where appropriate.

Where a proposal would be acceptable apart from deficiencies in transport infrastructure and services, planning permission may, in accordance with Policy GDP/5, be granted subject to the applicant entering into an appropriate legal agreement to fund the improvements sought.

9.89 The Local Plan transport strategy, in conjunction with the LTP, seeks to bring about substantial changes in the pattern of travel in North Somerset. The locational strategy is complementary to this, aiming to reduce the need to travel, while increasing opportunities to choose alternatives to the private car. Much investment in new and improved infrastructure requires funding by the public sector and by transport operators. However, there is also a significant role for developer contributions.

9.90 Policy GDP/5 (Chapter 4) provides for developers to contribute, in whole or in part, for all related infrastructure and services that are fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development proposed. The Council expects such developments to provide for and promote the creation of more sustainable transport patterns through design and contributions where appropriate (see GDP/3, ECH/9, T/7 and CF/1). Although the range of facilities sought is likely to be wider than developers have provided in the past, the additional costs will often be offset by reduced requirements for car parking within the development site.

9.91 Annex B to ODPM Circular 05/2005, Planning Obligations, provides examples of what is likely to be sought, but these are not exhaustive:

- to secure the inclusion of an element of affordable housing;
- to secure contributions towards a new access road or provision of a bus service;
- to secure contributions towards community infrastructure, eg. a new school classroom;
- to offset, though substitution, replacement or regeneration the loss or damage to e.g. a feature of biodiversity value.

Developers should be aware that there may be requirements for such infrastructure – which may be off-site – and should discuss their plans with the Council at an early stage. PPG13, para. 83 advises that the development plan should indicate the likely nature and scope of contributions to be sought in particular areas or on key sites. Development on windfall sites well related to any of the proposals in this Chapter, or to schemes identified in the LTP, may be required to fund part or all of an improvement if it can be regarded as serving that development.

- 9.92** Although developers will not generally be expected to pay for resolving existing transport problems, planning permission should not be granted for a development that would worsen an already unsatisfactory situation. In such cases, a developer contribution would enable the timing of improvements to be brought forward, e.g. Safe Routes to Schools (and other community facilities). To accommodate the road traffic it unavoidably generates, a development may be required to fund improvements to boost the attractiveness of walking, cycling and public transport, or traffic management measures, in the relevant corridor(s) sufficient to maintain overall road traffic at the otherwise expected level. A development may be required to contribute to funding the improvement of rail freight facilities, even where of no direct benefit to itself, if the resultant reduction in goods vehicles on the highway network would overcome traffic objections.
- 9.93** In determining whether the likely consequences of development for traffic congestion are unacceptable, account will be taken of the overall impact. For example, proposals that reduce out-commuting from North Somerset, especially Weston-super-Mare, will have a beneficial effect on the overall level of congestion by reducing traffic on the M5, which will need to be balanced against any detrimental local effect.
- 9.94** The LTP seeks a 200% increase in cycle use in Weston-super-Mare by 2012 from the period 1995 – 1999 and a 100% increase in Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead by 2012 from the period 1999 – 2003. To encourage a shift of travel mode from the car to the bicycle for shorter trips, the Council will, where appropriate, seek the provision of cycle purchase vouchers with each new dwelling.
- 9.95** All infrastructure provision will need to be made in tandem with the development. In addition to capital works, it will be appropriate in some circumstances to seek revenue support for the provision of a bus service for an agreed period during initial phases of development. This will enable the first tranche of occupiers to base their travel patterns around public transport before the development as a whole reaches the critical mass needed for a viable commercial service.
- 9.96** In the interests of road safety, all development needs to have a means of access from a highway that is suitable for the traffic generated. Sometimes this can only be achieved with an environmental loss, e.g. of hedgerows or attractive stone walls. The Council will wish to ensure that every effort is made to reduce any harmful environmental impact and, where some is unavoidable, will generally require compensatory provision to be made (see Policy GDP/5). In North Somerset many remnants of historic highway features are retained in the network of

country lanes forming part of the maintainable highway. Where planning permission is sought for their alteration, including as part of adjacent development, their historic interest (see Policy ECH/6, Chapter 5) and character (see ECH/7) need to be taken into account.

- 9.97** In addition to the immediate impact, the effect of additional traffic on the surrounding road system needs to be considered. For example, developments that would introduce traffic of excessive volume, size or weight into a network of country lanes, or into a residential area, may have such a detrimental impact that a refusal of planning permission is warranted because no acceptable counter-measures are possible.
- 9.98** PPG13, para. 23, recommends the preparation of Transport Assessments for developments with significant transport implications. These can include details of proposed measures to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling, to reduce the need for parking and to mitigate transport impacts. Proposals for developments with a significant impact on travel patterns will therefore need to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment covering the issues referred to in Policy T/10. The Highways Agency will be consulted on Transport Assessments for proposals with a significant impact on the Trunk Road Network, including the M5.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

All development approved to comply with highway safety and traffic management requirements and contribute fairly to the provision of infrastructure and other needs arising from it.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Target

- (A) All heads of terms under S106 agreements delivered on developments that proceed to construction;
- (B) Value of provision made through planning obligations.

Policy T/11 – Travel plans

This policy applies to developments likely to have significant transport implications, including:

- i. major residential, commercial, service and educational developments;
- ii. smaller developments that would generate significant amounts of travel;
- iii. new, or significantly extended, schools;
- iv. development comprising or involving a significant increase in existing car parking provision at employment, retail or leisure sites, schools, colleges, hospitals or health centres; and



- v. development proposals in locations where traffic conditions have been identified as a matter of concern by the local highway authority.

Travel Plans will be required for all such developments; these will have as their objective the reduction of car use to and from the development site and the delivery of other sustainable transport objectives, related in scale and kind to the development.

Planning conditions will be attached, or a planning obligation sought, to require adoption of the Travel Plan prior to occupation. Except in the case of residential development, these provisions will aim to ensure that the Travel Plan:

- a) is legally enforceable against the initial and subsequent occupiers; and
- b) is monitored and regularly reviewed and that updates to it are submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.

Planning conditions or planning obligations may provide for the reimbursement of costs reasonably incurred by the Council in monitoring compliance with the Travel Plan.

9.99 A Travel Plan is a general term for a package of measures tailored to the needs of individual sites, aimed at delivering sustainable transport objectives, including:

- reductions in car usage (particularly single occupancy journeys) and increased use of walking, cycling and public transport;
- reduced traffic speeds and improved road safety and personal security, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists; and
- more environmentally-friendly delivery and freight movements, including home delivery services.

9.100 The Council will promote the use of Travel Plans by encouraging existing users of premises to voluntarily adopt such plans. Where new development is proposed (including changes of use) the Council will consider, in appropriate circumstances, the use of planning conditions or seek planning obligations to make some or all of a Travel Plan binding (see Policy GDP/5, Chapter 4). The Council intends to produce detailed guidance on the content and monitoring of Travel Plans. The Highways Agency will be consulted on draft Travel Plans for proposals with a significant impact on the Trunk Road Network, including the M5.

9.101 Travel Plans will be negotiated for all planning applications which are likely to have significant transport implications, including those:

- for all major developments, as defined in Table 4.1 (see Policy GDP/1);
- for smaller developments comprising jobs, shopping, leisure and services which would generate significant amounts of travel in, or near to, Air Quality Management Areas, and in other locations where there are local initiatives or targets set out in the development plan or LTP

for the reduction of road traffic, or the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport. This particularly applies to offices, industry, health and education uses.

- for all new schools, and extensions to existing schools likely to have a material impact on traffic movements (this may be referred to as a 'school travel plan', which promotes safe walking and cycling routes, restricts parking and car access at and around schools, and makes provision for, amongst other things, on-site changing and cycle storage facilities);
- comprising or involving a significant increase in existing car parking provision at employment, retail or leisure sites, schools, colleges, hospitals or health centres;
- where the Travel Plan will help address a particular local traffic problem associated with a planning application, which otherwise would be likely to be refused on local traffic grounds. (This category may include smaller residential, commercial, service or educational developments below the relevant thresholds).

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

Increased share of travel by non-car modes, compared to conditions expected in the absence of Travel Plans.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications and Local Transport Plan monitoring.

Target

Travel Plans adopted for 100% of applications above the thresholds indicated in Table 4.1.

Air transport

Policy T/12 – Bristol International Airport

Development within the Green Belt inset at Lulsgate, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be permitted provided that:

- i. it is required in connection with the movement or maintenance of aircraft, or with the embarking, disembarking, loading, discharge or transport of passengers, livestock or goods;
- ii. environmental impacts such as emissions are minimised, and noise is not an unacceptable problem for local residents and communities;
- iii. it is suitably sited, designed and landscaped so as not to harm the surrounding landscape; and

- iv. appropriate provision is made for surface access to the airport, including highway improvements and/or traffic management schemes to mitigate the adverse impact of airport traffic on local communities, together with improvements to public transport services.

Car parking for the airport will not be permitted except in the following locations:

- a) within the Green Belt inset at Lulsgate, subject to iii) above;
- b) in association with overnight accommodation, provided that the number of parking spaces on site does not exceed three times the number of bedrooms;
- c) within the settlement boundary of Weston-super-Mare or within the Weston Regeneration Area, where the provision is planned as part of an integrated transport strategy for the town and its links with the airport that contributes to the creation of more sustainable travel patterns.

9.102 Development Needs Bristol International Airport (BIA) is the largest civil airport serving the South West, playing an important role in meeting the needs of the local area and more widely for both leisure and business air travel. Since its opening in 1957 the development pattern of the airport has been one of natural growth to meet the increased demand for air travel. Recent years have seen substantial growth, with passenger throughput nearly doubling between 2000 and 2003. In 2005 the Airport handled 5.25 million passengers with 5.5 million anticipated in 2006.

9.103 There is a balance to be struck between the benefits of aviation to trade, leisure and employment and its costs in terms of noise, pollution, climate change and the depletion of natural resources. The framework for this is provided by higher-level documents. Government Policy as expressed in the White Paper: The Future of Air Transport (December 2003) is to support the development of the Airport up to a capacity for a throughput of 10-12 million passengers per year by 2030 subject to minimising adverse impacts. Support for the development of the Airport to improve and maintain its regional role is also given in the approved Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG10) and in Policy 61 of the Joint Replacement Structure Plan subject to meeting certain environmental requirements. The White Paper considered that the operational area north of the runway could cater for some 8 million passengers per year, but that development beyond that level would require a second terminal south of the runway and extension of the runway to the east with a new parallel taxiway to the south. However, Bristol International Airport Ltd, the airport operator, indicates that the operational area on the north side of the runway should be capable of accommodating terminal facilities for 9 million passengers per year. It has detailed its proposals to achieve this capacity in its Airport Master Plan. This plan, production of which is recommended in the White Paper, does not have development plan status but the level of detail contained within earlier drafts of the Master Plan has been used to inform this Local Plan and subsequent revisions will inform the content of the replacement Local Development Framework.

- 9.104** Possible means of increasing terminal capacity to achieve a throughput beyond 9 million passengers per year are only dealt with in the Master Plan in outline and that document indicates that BIA sees no requirement for a runway extension in the foreseeable future. Current BIA forecasts anticipate a throughput of 8 million passengers per year in 2015 and only reaching 9 million per year in 2019. As the plan period is only until 2011, RPG10 runs only to 2016 and the emerging RSS Review still only to 2026, this Local Plan only considers the development implications of extending terminal capacity on the north side of the runway. This will be more than sufficient to cater for the implications of the White Paper throughout the plan periods of both this plan and current RSS and for the greater part of the period of the emerging RSS. No provision is made in this plan for any runway extension on the basis of lack of need for the foreseeable future in the light of the traffic forecasts and the views of the operator.
- 9.105** Much of the development at the airport that will be required to provide for the capacity envisaged can be undertaken using the 'permitted development' powers granted under part 18 of the General Permitted Development Order 1995 including surface car-parking and many of the developments required to replace ancillary airside activities that will have to be replaced in order to extend the apron to provide sufficient aircraft stands north of the northern taxiway. Although consultation is required with the Council on almost all such proposals, it is not possible to address the full range of environmental issues that are considered in relation to an application for planning permission. However, the major extension of terminal facilities required, multi-storey car parking, any hotel and other built development not constituting an 'operational building' will require planning permission. In consideration of such proposals the full range of potential impacts on the environment and residential amenity will be assessed, including those arising from the ground running of aircraft engines and APUs, highway and landscape issues. The latter would include any impact on views from the Mendip Hills AONB and would enable improved landscaping and bunding to be sought. Moreover, the terminal extensions and any related package of proposals would constitute EIA development within the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 as amended and require submission of an Environmental Statement. This statement will provide baseline environmental data against which to secure continuation of local monitoring to effect minimisation of impacts wherever possible or their mitigation and, if appropriate, compensation as envisaged in the White Paper.
- 9.106** In addition, noise impacts will be statutorily controlled on an ongoing basis under the provisions of Section 78 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 as amended and relevant Regulations that apply the provisions of EU Directives 2002/30/EC and 2002/49/EC. Air Quality requirements will be able to be enforced under the provisions of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 as amended and the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000/2002 and the Air Quality Limit Values Regulations 2003 that apply the provisions of the EU Directive 96/62/EC and daughter directives.

- 9.107** A Green Belt inset is defined on the Proposals Map to exclude the northern side of the operational area of the airport from the Green Belt. It is expected that the greater part if not all of the development that will require express planning permission to raise the capacity of the Airport to 9 million passengers per year will be located within this inset where any effect on the visual amenities of the Green Belt and the wider landscape would be minimised. Should additional development be required at Lulsgate to achieve this capacity outside this inset that does require express planning permission and would constitute inappropriate development within the terms of PPG2, the promoter would have to demonstrate the existence of very special circumstances that would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm.
- 9.108** Transport Strategic surface access links to BIA are not as good as at many other airports of a similar size in the UK. Links to the motorway network, which is some distance away, are via 'A' and 'B' roads that pass through villages and other built-up areas. Bus services currently only carry about 5% of passengers to/from the airport and the provision of a direct rail service is not a realistic prospect. However, the Bristol International Flyer express bus service from Bristol Temple Meads Rail Station and Marlborough Street Bus and Coach Station has the potential to become very successful.
- 9.109** The development of high quality transport links to the airport will be fundamental to the successful realisation of its regional role. The Airport Surface Access Strategy (ASAS) is published by BIA. It is important that the impact of trips to/from the airport on local communities is acceptable; hence, any adverse impacts need to be identified and mitigated. To this end the Local Plan proposes improvements to relieve unsuitable roads (see Policy T/9(iii)), whilst the ASAS seeks to promote public transport. By 2011 it would be expected that the Bristol International Flyer will secure a 9% modal share and that improved bus services to/from Weston will also be in place. By that date it is also assumed that taxis will carry some 15% of passengers. There is very little air freight traffic through the airport and no significant change is expected. Nevertheless, the contribution of HGV or other goods traffic servicing the airport in overall traffic flows will be taken into account in planning for surface access and mitigation. Policies T/10 and GDP/5 make provision for securing financial contributions to overcome infrastructure deficiencies. It would be expected that BIA will make appropriate contributions to measures that would be directly related to accommodating the traffic consequences of the increased airport capacity. The contributions sought would be commensurate to the extent to which the proportion of the traffic using the improvements would be related to that increase in capacity.
- 9.110** The provision of off-airport parking could undermine the ASAS and needs to be tightly regulated. It is also desirable in terms of minimising impact on the openness of the Green Belt that airport-related development should be accommodated within the Lulsgate Inset and not on other Green Belt sites. Policy T/12 recognises that there are only limited opportunities for off-airport parking that are compatible with these objectives. There may be opportunities associated with the regeneration of Weston-super-Mare that contribute towards improved public transport between the town and the airport.

9.111 General Aviation PPG13, Annex B recognises that, as demand for commercial air transport grows, access for General Aviation (GA) requirements at larger airports may become increasingly restricted. GA operators, serving business, recreational, training and emergency services needs, may require new facilities. Any proposals that come forward over the Plan period will be assessed against the Plan's general policies, particularly those in Chapters 4 and 6, in addition to Policies T/10 and T/13 in this Chapter.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

Air travel needs met while minimising environmental impacts including impacts from surface access arrangements, and ensuring that noise is not an unacceptable problem for local residents and communities.

Output objective

Establishing monitoring programmes through the development control process utilising the baseline information provided in the Master Plan and any Environmental Statements, Transport Assessments and similar documentation submitted to accompany planning applications.

Target

Increase Flyer passengers annually by 10% more than air passenger growth.

Policy T/13 – Air safety

Planning permission will only be granted for development that would not prejudice the safe operation of Bristol International Airport and other safeguarded aerodromes.

Specifically, within the Public Safety Zones (1-in-100,000 individual risk contours) at Bristol International Airport, shown on the Proposals Map, development will only be permitted in the following cases:

- i. an extension or alteration to a dwelling house which is for the purpose of enlarging or improving the living accommodation for the benefit of the people living in it, such people forming a single household, or which is for the purpose of a 'granny annex';
- ii. an extension or alteration to a property (not being a single dwellinghouse or other residential building) which could not reasonably be expected to increase the number of people working or congregating in or at the property beyond the current level or, if greater, the number authorised by any extant planning permission;
- iii. a change of use of a building or of land which could not reasonably be expected to increase the numbers of people living, working or congregating in or at the property or land beyond the current level or, if greater, the number authorised by any extant planning permission;
- iv. long-stay and employee car parking (where the minimum stay is expected to be in excess of six hours);



- v. open storage and warehouse development (excluding distribution centres, sorting depots and retail warehouses);
 - vi. development of a kind likely to introduce very few or no people on to a site on a regular basis;
 - vii. public open space (excluding children's playgrounds, playing fields or sports grounds), in cases where there is a reasonable expectation of low-intensity use;
 - viii. golf courses (excluding clubhouses);
 - ix. allotments;
 - x. other forms of development of which, in the opinion of the local planning authority, there is a reasonable expectation of low-density occupation.
- Within the 1-in-10,000 individual risk contours shown on the Proposals Map, development will only be permitted in the following cases:
- xi. long-stay and employee car parking (where the minimum stay is expected to be in excess of six hours);
 - xii. built development for the purpose of housing plant or machinery, and which would entail no people on site on a regular basis;
 - xiii. golf courses (excluding clubhouses).

9.112 Development that would prejudice the safe operation of Bristol International Airport (BIA) or other aerodromes will not be acceptable. Two planning tools are employed to ensure this: aerodrome safeguarding areas and Public Safety Zones (PSZ's).

9.113 Aerodrome safeguarding areas Officially safeguarded areas have been established nationally to ensure that consultation takes place on proposals for tall structures and other development (e.g. that attracting large numbers of birds) that could affect the safety of aircraft in flight. A separate set of maps has been issued specifically concerning wind turbine development near to aerodromes. ODPM Circular 01/03: *Safeguarding Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas: The Town and Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas) Direction 2002* provides the relevant background. Certain planning applications will need to be the subject of consultation with BIA and as a result there may be restrictions on the height or detailed design of buildings or on development which might create a bird hazard. PPG13, Annex B emphasises the need to avoid development at or close to an airport or airfield which is incompatible with any existing or potential aviation operations. However, a development will not necessarily be unacceptable simply because it needs to be the subject of consultation.

9.114 The outer boundary of the safeguarded area for BIA is indicated on the Proposals Map, this notation is neither the responsibility nor the proposal of North Somerset Council. The separate safeguarding map for wind turbine development has a radius of 30km centred on BIA and therefore the whole of North Somerset is included.

9.115 Not all aerodromes are officially safeguarded. Operators of other aerodromes are advised to agree unofficial safeguarding arrangements with the local planning authority and this has been done for the Helicopter Museum at Weston. The advice in Circular 01/03 is relevant to both kinds of safeguarding, though the legal requirements of the Direction do not apply to unofficial safeguarding. Policy T/13 applies both to officially and unofficially safeguarded aerodromes.

9.116 Public Safety Zones PSZ's have been defined at the end of the main runways at BIA to minimise risk on the ground in the event of a crash. Particular attention is to be paid to proposals that would significantly increase the numbers of people living, working or congregating within these areas.

9.117 Department for Transport Circular 1/2002: *Control of Development in Airport Public Safety Zones* introduces a general presumption against development within PSZ's. The permissible exceptions are listed in Policy T/13. The areas of the PSZ's correspond essentially to the 1-in-100,000 individual risk contours calculated for the airport, simplified for representation on a map. Within each zone is a smaller area, based on 1-in-10,000 individual risk contours, where the level of risk is such that development should only be acceptable if it involves a very low density of people coming and going.

9.118 Because the PSZ's are situated entirely within the Green Belt, any application within them will also be assessed against Policy RD/3 (Chapter 6).

9.119 Circular 1/2002 advises that the extent of each PSZ, and the associated 1-in-10,000 individual risk contours where applicable, should be indicated on the Proposals Map.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

Development within PSZ's limited to that within the categories specified in Policy T/13.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Target

Nil development in PSZ's (distinguishing 1-in-100,000/1-in-10,000 individual risk contours) outside the categories specified in Policy T/13.

Retailing and Town Centres

Introduction

10.1 This Chapter sets out how Weston-super-Mare is to be maintained and strengthened as a sub-regional centre and how the other town and district centres of North Somerset are to be enhanced and promoted as the focus for development for new retail, leisure and other travel-intensive activities. It shows how better use is to be made of these centres and the improvements to be secured to their environment and accessibility. Policies to strengthen the role of local centres and village and neighbourhood shops are also set out. Finally, a restrictive approach is put forward towards proposals for major out-of-centre retail development that would harm the well-being of the town centres or attract investment that otherwise could be accommodated by town centre sites.

Aim

10.2 The policies for retailing and the town centres seek to enhance the role of the town and district centres and secure attractive shopping facilities that are easily accessed by all communities within North Somerset, serving to minimise the need for travel, especially by car, and for greenfield development.

Objectives

10.3 The Local Plan objectives in respect of retailing and town centres are:

- to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town, district, local and village centres and to encourage the provision of a competitive and efficient retail sector;
- to safeguard and promote the role of the town and district centres and establish them as the priority location for investment in major retail, leisure, office and community facilities;
- to meet the needs of the local population for shopping facilities in ways which maximise convenience and accessibility and minimise travel by car.

Policy RT/1 – Strategy for revitalising the town and district centres

Retail, leisure, community, office and other 'trip-intensive' development will be permitted within the town centres of Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon (The Triangle), Nailsea and Portishead, and the district centres of Clevedon Hill Road, Yatton, Winscombe, Worle High Street and Queensway (North Worle) as shown on the proposals map, provided that it would:

- i. be consistent with the sequential approach to site selection and the key consideration of promoting the vitality and viability of the centre;
- ii. reflect the scale and role of the centre;
- iii. not result in unacceptable harm to environmental, amenity, traffic, parking and access considerations;
- iv. reduce the need to travel by car

New development, regardless of its function, shall be of an appropriate form, scale and high quality inclusive design and accessibility that would improve the character and quality of the area.

Development proposals at out-of-centre locations that could be accommodated within town and district centres and be consistent with their scale and role, or would undermine their vitality and viability, will be refused.

10.4 Policy RT/1 acknowledges the principles and priorities of the national, regional and strategic planning background to the Local Plan. It therefore identifies the existing hierarchy of town and district centres in North Somerset and indicates that it is the strategy of the Council to maintain and promote the well-being of these centres. They are to be treated as the priority location for major retail, leisure and other developments that attract large numbers of people with first priority given to locations in the town centres, followed by locations on the edge of these centres and then the district centres as required by PPS6. Development in the town and district centres, however, is to be of a scale and type that is consistent with their role and position in the hierarchy of centres and hence the needs of their catchment populations. New facilities within particular centres must not lead to excessive travel or lead to the erosion of the access of local communities to shopping and other services. Edge-of-centre developments must be well related to the primary shopping areas and reinforce the overall well-being of the centres. The location and extent of these centres is shown on the Proposals Map.

10.5 Policy RT/1, while indicating the Council's commitment to reinforcing the retail role of the town and district centres, acknowledges the intention to encourage a greater diversity of uses. Increased competition from out-of-centre retail developments and from locations beyond North Somerset is eroding the role of many of the town and district centres of the district in meeting the requirements of their surrounding communities. At the same time, rising incomes are generating demand for an increasing range of services appropriate to town centre locations. The Council will therefore realise opportunities in these centres to accommodate a wider

range of uses that attract visitors from their catchments and reinforce their vitality and viability. It will also realise opportunities to accommodate higher density office and residential developments in the town and district centres. These uses will normally be restricted to upper floors or the edges of the centres and to circumstances that would not lead to the loss of 'active' uses, accessible to the general public. Furthermore, in providing for a wider range of uses, the Council will continue to reinforce the key retail role of these centres, especially concentrations of shopping frontages, safeguard local character and the well-being and amenity of neighbouring uses, in particular, residents. In this respect, a cautious approach will be exercised in considering proposals for the sale of food and drink (Use Classes A3, A4 and A5) that relate to the leisure and evening role of centres.

- 10.6** Opportunities will be realised to enhance the environment, amenity and convenience to visitors of the town and district centres. New development of an appropriate type, design and scale in relation to its surroundings will be promoted that is well-integrated with the centres and easily accessed by pedestrians. In addition, opportunities for environmental and access improvements will be identified in the context of the preparation and review of town centre strategies. Such opportunities will be realised through development contributions and other funding sources available to the Council.
- 10.7** The Council's strategy for the existing town and district centres is expanded upon by Policies RT/2 and RT/3 below. It will be pursued through development control, the Local Transport Plan and clarified by the preparation and review of town centre strategies. Supplementary Planning Documents will offer further advice about the Council's requirements in respect of design issues and major town centre developments where this is necessary and appropriate. In addition, Policy RT/4 acknowledges proposals for a new district centre at Locking Castle and the requirements to be met in order to secure a centre of a character that is consistent with PPS6 and appropriate for inclusion within the hierarchy of town centres identified by Policy RT/1.
- 10.8** Policy RT/1 also highlights the intention of the Council to resist out-of-centre development otherwise appropriate to a town or district centre location, or the emerging district centre at Locking Castle. Out-of-centre development in the Bristol area attracts considerable expenditure from North Somerset residents, especially in the north of the district. Furthermore, virtually all of the considerable retail development undertaken at Weston-super-Mare over recent years has been out-of-centre, eroding prospects for attracting retail development to the Town Centre. The North Somerset Retail and Leisure Study (Donaldsons 2006) confirms previous retail reports in that there is further capacity for retail development within Weston for both convenience and comparison goods up to 2011. It emphasises that in order to retain market share against competitor centres such as Bristol, Cribbs Causeway and Taunton, and maintain and enhance the long term vitality and viability of Weston town centre, future retail development, within the plan period, should be focused on locations within and on the edge of the centre. This could be in the form of new development or, redevelopment of existing sites.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

To ensure that the vitality and viability of the town centres of Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon (The Triangle), Nailsea and Portishead, and the district centres of Clevedon Hill Road, Yatton, Winscombe, Worle High Street and Queensway (North Worle) are maintained and enhanced.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications and the regular assessments of the 'health' of the town and district centres. Particular attention will be given to indicators of the scale and diversity of uses in the centres, vacancy rates, trends in commercial wellbeing, retailer representation and demand, opportunities for new development and progress with development proposals, access issues and environmental quality.

Target

90% of new retail floorspace delivered over the Plan period to be achieved from within the identified town and district centres as defined on the Proposals Map.

Policy RT/2 – Rejuvenating Weston-super-Mare town centre

The Council is committed to rejuvenating Weston-super-Mare Town Centre as a shopping, business, leisure and tourist centre by implementing traffic management schemes, improvements to the environment, public transport access and car parking and agreed strategies and plans for the enhancement of the centre.

Within the primary shopping frontages shown on the Proposals Map and listed in the schedule of shopping frontages below, the Council will only permit proposals that would result in the loss of shops (Use Class A1) at ground floor level where there is clear evidence to demonstrate that:

- i. the premises could not be retained in a viable retail use; and
- ii. there would be clear benefits arising from the proposal for the vitality and viability of the Town Centre as a whole; and there would be no significant adverse consequences for the viability of nearby businesses.

Within the remainder of the Town Centre, proposals that would result in the loss of shops (Use Class A1) at ground floor level will be permitted unless:

- iii. it would result in the loss of an otherwise viable retail unit that makes a significant contribution to the well-being of adjacent retail uses; or
- iv. there would be no clear, additional benefits arising from the proposal for the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.

10.9 The Council attaches high priority to maintaining and enhancing the role of Weston-super-Mare Town Centre as a major sub-regional centre and matching the strong competition offered by Cribbs Causeway and Bristol

City Centre. Proposals for the expansion and up-grading of Bristol City Centre will intensify this competition. Furthermore, Hillier Parker advise that the prospect of the national multiples concentrating their investment in the larger centres, from where a wider catchment can be served, threatens to erode the catchment and role of Weston-super-Mare Town Centre if it does not succeed in enhancing its competitive position through the attraction of a greater amount and wider range of shopping, particularly of a high quality nature. This view has been confirmed through a more recent study by Donaldson's on retail and leisure prospects in North Somerset up to 2021.

- 10.10** The three retail studies commissioned by North Somerset Council; Hillier Parker (1998), GL Hearn (2001) and, Donaldson's (2006), have all indicated interest from important multiple retail operators in expanding the offer of the town centre. The Hillier Parker report identified the conundrum facing future retail development in Weston town centre when it advised that, "...we consider that if a good quality development in a prime retail area could be provided, there would be sufficient retailer demand to support it.." This was qualified by stating that this demand, "...would not take up shop units in the secondary retail areas" (para. 2.4)
- 10.11** The Weston Area Development Framework confirms that new retail development, apart from local provision to support the proposed new neighbourhoods envisaged in the longer term, should be focused on the town centre. The document advocates economic revitalisation of the centre through a comprehensive 'facelift' and upgrading of public and private spaces in order to change the perception of the town, attract further national high-street franchises and extend the town centre experience including linking it more clearly with the seafront. An important issue of future retail development is the need to raise the quality of the provision in the town centre and widen the range of retail and retail related goods and services on offer.
- 10.12** The Council is committed to the rejuvenation of the town centre of Weston-super-Mare. This will be achieved through the provision of land for major retail development within and adjacent to the primary shopping area. This may include other uses that are appropriate and compatible with town centre activities and which will assist in the enhancement of the centre and the range of shops, services and facilities it has to offer. The renaissance of the town centre as an important commercial and tourist location will also be achieved through the regeneration of those parts of the centre adjacent to the seafront by promotion of incremental refurbishments and redevelopments with a greater range and mix of uses, including office and residential, where these will enhance the role of the respective neighbourhoods and the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole. An important objective of the regeneration process will be the improvement of the pedestrian linkages between the primary area of the town centre and the seafront. Development, re-development and refurbishment proposals within and adjoining the town centre would need to be consistent with the requirements of policies RT/1, GDP/1, E/1A and T/10.

Schedule to Policy RT/2 – Primary shopping frontages in Weston-super-Mare

NSRLP Address	Total frontage (metres)	Total A1 frontage (metres)	% A1 frontage	Frontage in non-A1 use (metres)	% Frontage in non-A1 use
Weston-super-Mare Town Centre					
2–32 Waterloo Street Evens (South Side)	127.0	89.0	70.1%	38.0	29.9%
2 Walliscote Road	10.5	10.5	100.0%	0.0	0.0%
26–34 Regent Street Evens (South Side)	24.0	0.0	0.0%	24.0	100.0%
3–19 Meadow Street Odds (North Side)	74.0	55.0	74.3%	19.0	25.7%
3–91 High Street Odds (West Side)	358.5	323.5	90.2%	35.0	98.0%
4–100 High Street Evens (East Side)	375.5	313.5	83.5%	62.0	16.5%
40–88 Regent Street Evens (South Side)	160.5	121.0	75.4%	39.5	24.6%
Sovereign Centre	454.5	372.5	82.0%	82.0	18.0%
31–39 Regent Street	59.5	59.5	100.0%	0.0	0.0%
Primary Frontage Weston-super-Mare TC	1644.0	1344.5	81.8%	299.5	18.2%

10.13 Since 2002, the Council has reassessed its approach to regeneration and revitalisation of Weston Town centre. As well as continuing to promote, (as set out in Policy E/1A (see Chapter 7)), the potential of approximately 4 ha of development land between the Town Hall/Council Offices and Oxford Street for new mixed use development incorporating retail it is also now considered that this development, while helping to extend the high street experience and strengthen Weston's role as a sub-regional centre is not, over the Plan period, going to provide a sufficiently attractive and suitable development opportunity for retailers seeking a prime town retail location.

10.14 It is therefore considered that if Weston is going to expand the range and type of shops and increase the overall town centre retail offer, it needs to work with all partners. The objective is to bring forward the retail development that will genuinely contribute to town centre revitalisation in the current primary shopping area of Weston, better connect the shopping area with the seafront and provide a step change

in the quality of the retail experience offered by the town centre. As part of this, the benefits of adding a well-designed landmark department store are recognised, alongside the potential to upgrade and connect a number of existing premises, and groups of buildings, within the High Street and Royal Parade.

10.15 Representations have been received that have drawn attention to the attractiveness of Town Square to retail development and the prospect of early progress with enhancing the retail role of the Town Centre. The Council recognises that while this would potentially be attractive to retailers, it is currently a valued and appreciated open space in the heart of the Town Centre. However, the Council is concerned that without additional comparison retail investment and development, Weston Town Centre in real terms, will continue to decline in the face of competition from other sub-regional, regional and out of centre retail developments.

10.16 The Council's preferred approach is to consider the potential offered for investment in the primary area of the Town Centre as part of a broader regeneration strategy and not a single focus. New retail development needs to make a positive contribution to the physical regeneration of underutilised land between the rear of the Winter Gardens and the rear of the Sovereign Centre and pedestrian routes to the seafront, as part of any retail expansion, as well as improve the physical integration of the existing Town Centre area with the buildings and spaces fronting Royal Parade. For the purposes of Policy RT/2 investigations regarding the scope of any development need to include a package of supporting measures to help deliver community improvements within the Town Centre, as well as environmental investment into the Italian Gardens and remaining open space associated with South Parade.

10.17 North Somerset Council is supportive of working in partnership to realise the development potential, within and around the prime shopping area of the Town Centre to accommodate the scale of retail development and Town Centre revitalisation that has been identified as required over the Plan period. However, it would also wish to be assured that a comprehensive approach to Town Centre revitalisation and investment is pursued. To achieve this as identified at Para 10.16, an area search approach is preferred. This should take into consideration the regeneration opportunity of all land and buildings around the Sovereign Centre, Winter Gardens and Royal Parade frontages. It would also need to take account of the impact of any redevelopment expected and to compensate for the loss of existing public open space. The Council considers that the Plan should exclude from the main 'area of search' for redevelopment at Policy RT/2, the Town Square including Italian Gardens due to:

- a) It is located within a designated Conservation Area,
- b) It is surrounded by Grade II listed buildings,
- c) It forms an important and valuable area of strategic open space within the town centre,
- d) Development on the site would establish an unwelcome precedent, and,

- e) It would reduce the potential to regenerate other sites in and around the town centre (e.g. land in the High Street opposite TJ Hughes, Dolphin Square, Carlton Street car park, land at rear of the Sovereign Centre.)
- 10.18** Within the prime shopping area of the Town Centre, the Council will seek to retain and enhance retail activities and resist proposals for other uses. Exceptions to this general stance will only be made at the ground floor level where retail use is no longer viable and where proposals would offer clear benefits to the well-being of the centre without leading to the effective separation of adjacent retail businesses from the remaining primary shopping area. Evidence about the viability of a property for retail use may include:
- length of time for which the property has been vacant;
 - number of vacancies in the vicinity;
 - evidence of the property having been actively and widely marketed.
- 10.19** Evidence about the potential benefits of proposals for alternative uses to the vitality and viability of the centre may include:
- expectations that the proposals would increase the diversity and attractiveness of the Town Centre, the amount and quality of floorspace to which the public have access and hence the overall numbers of visitors;
 - expectations of considerable environmental benefits without any significant reductions in retail floorspace.
- 10.20** In the remainder of the Town Centre, the Council will promote a greater diversity of uses subject to securing complementary mixes of activity that serve to maintain and enhance the character of the neighbourhood and its role in meeting the needs of the wider catchment (see also para. 10.21). This will include appropriate opportunities for accommodating new office and residential development, particularly above ground floor level or towards the edge of the Town Centre. In promoting greater diversity however, the Council will also safeguard the environment and amenity of neighbouring uses, in particular, residents, in accord with Policy RT/1. In this respect, a cautious approach will be followed when considering proposals for amusement arcades, where particular regard will be given to preventing the over-concentration of such uses.
- 10.21** Parts of the remainder of the Town Centre offer buildings of a low quality and poor physical condition. Vacancy levels are significantly higher as compared with the primary area, partly as a result of the relocation of retailers to other parts of the Town Centre. Such vacancies, it appears, are not attractive to retailers or shoppers. Whilst a little detached from the main town centre activities, the proposed redevelopment of the Tropicana for leisure, hotel and A3, A4 and A5 retail uses (from the amended 1987 Use Classes Order) is an example of the mixed-use developments that, along with traditional retail activities are expected to contribute towards the regeneration of the Town Centre in the more peripheral locations.

- 10.22** Circumstances may arise however, where proposals involving the loss of an established and viable retail use will not be permitted. These will occur where such proposals would disrupt street frontages and complementary mixes of retail uses through the insertion of unrelated activity, leading to the potential for harm to the viability of adjacent retail uses. In such circumstances, proposals that would lead to the loss of shops will only be allowed where the benefits to the wider Town Centre in terms of its overall attractiveness and potential to attract visitors clearly outweigh the potential harm to the shopping role of the locality.
- 10.23** Considerable progress is being made towards improving the environment, amenity, traffic management, pedestrian linkages and accessibility of the Town Centre. The Council will seek to maintain this progress in ways consistent with the evolving strategy for the Town Centre, as funding comes available through the Local Transport Plan, from developer contributions and other sources. Important outcomes from these improvements will be improved linkages between the primary and secondary areas of the Town Centre and between the Town Centre and the seafront, upgrading the environment of the secondary areas.
- 10.24** Prospects for implementing the actions set out by Policy RT/2 and revitalising the Town Centre are much dependent on the Council resisting all proposals for out-of-centre retail and commercial leisure development that could be accommodated in the centre. Since 1992 and the completion of the Sovereign Centre, there has been virtually no retail investment in the Town Centre. Instead, investment has been directed to out-of-centre locations with the expansion of retail park developments. As indicated above (para. 10.8), such requirements need to be redirected to the benefit of the Town Centre.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

To rejuvenate Weston-super-Mare Town Centre as a sub-regional shopping, business and leisure centre in order to change the perception of the town, attract further national high-street franchises and extend the town centre experience.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications and the regular assessments of the 'health' of the Town Centre, with particular attention to the attraction of new development and progress with improving the quality of the centre both in terms of its shopping and other facilities, environment and public realm.

Target

To attract further national high-street franchises and extend the town centre experience while ensuring that the proportion of primary retail frontage in non-retail use is not more than 20% and vacant town centre units do not exceed 10%.

Policy RT/3 – The other town and district centres

The extension of the convenience shopping at Queensway (North Worle) and at Portishead Town Centre, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be permitted, provided that the development would be integrated with the existing centres. In addition, non-food and/or business employment uses on land at Wyndham Way, Portishead as shown on the Proposals Map, will be permitted provided that it is consistent with the sequential approach. Redevelopments, refurbishments and changes of use that would serve to reinforce the role of these centres having regard to their catchments will also be permitted.

Within the primary shopping frontages shown on the Proposals Map and listed in the schedule of shopping frontages below, proposals that would result in the loss of shops (Use Class A1) at ground floor level will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that the premises could not be retained in a viable retail use or there would be clear, additional benefits arising from the proposal to the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.

Within the remainder of these centres, proposals that would result in the loss of shops (Use Class A1) at ground floor level will be permitted where consistent with Policy RT/1.

10.25 The Council will seek to enhance the role of the town and district centres in meeting the convenience and other 'day to day' shopping and service requirements of the populations of their surrounding catchments. It will promote a scale and mix of shopping and services in these centres that is consistent with their position in the hierarchy shown by Policy RT/1 and the needs of their catchment populations, and thereby secure progress towards reductions in travel and more sustainable settlements. For these reasons, the Council has permitted major foodstore developments on the edges of Nailsea and Portishead town centres. These have now been incorporated within the designated town centre areas as shown on the Proposals Map. It will seek to ensure that the locations for these new stores are fully integrated with the adjacent town centres and serve to enhance their well-being.

Schedule to Policy RT/3 – Primary shopping frontages in Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead

NSRLP Address	Total frontage (metres)	Total A1 frontage (metres)	% A1 frontage	Frontage in non-A1 use (metres)	% Frontage in non-A1 use
Clevedon					
1-13 Triangle Centre	127.0	127.0	100.0%	0.0	0.0%
1-23 Old Street Odds (South Side)	74.0	74.0	100.0%	0.0	0.0%

1-8 Station Road	57.0	41.0	71.9%	16.0	28.1%
11-15 Station Road	30.0	24.0	80.0%	6.0	20.0%
2-26 Old Church Road Evens (South Side)	123.0	84.0	68.3%	39.0	31.7%
2-26 The Triangle Evens (East Side)	76.0	47.0	61.8%	29.0	38.2%
9-19 The Triangle Odds (West Side)	54.0	46.0	85.2%	8.0	14.8%
Primary Frontage Clevedon TC	541.0	443.0	81.9%	98.0	18.1%
Nailsea					
1-20 Colliers Walk	121.0	108.0	89.3%	13.0	10.7%
1-5 Somerset Square (South Side)	70.0	70.0	100.0%	0.0	0.0%
21-30 Somerset Square (North Side)	97.0	73.0	74.2%	25.0	25.8%
6-10 Clevedon Walk	43.0	43.0	100.0%	0.0	0.0%
79-89 High Street (South Side)	81.0	81.0	100.0%	0.0	0.0%
136-138 High Street (North Side)	20.0	20.0	100.0%	0.0	0.0%
Primary Frontage Nailsea TC	432.0	394.0	91.2%	38.0	8.8%
Portishead					
1-12 The Precinct	112.0	103.0	92.0%	9.0	8.0%
17-47 High Street Odds (East Side)	147.5	109.0	73.9%	38.5	26.1%
2-100 High Street Evens (West Side)	348.0	200.0	57.5%	148.0	42.5%
Primary Frontage Portishead TC	607.5	412.0	67.8%	195.5	32.2%

10.26 The Donaldson's study indicates that for the town centres of Clevedon, Nailsea and, Portishead, it is estimated that they are well provided for in terms of the amount of food retail floorspace required to meet existing and future settlement growth up to 2011 and beyond. In the case of Clevedon and Nailsea this is due to the limited amount of residential development that has been allocated and is due to come forward within the plan period. For Portishead, the recent completion of the Waitrose

development has absorbed the forecast floorspace requirement for the town taking into account the quantum of projected residential development that has been allocated and/or approved for the remainder of the period up to 2011. All three centres are identified through the study as having modest non-food retail development capacity for the remainder of the plan period. Provision will not be made therefore for further major foodstore developments. Instead, priority will be given to schemes of a modest scale that offer improvements to the range, quality and accessibility of local convenience shopping in the town and, especially, district centres.

- 10.27** The Council will support further provision for comparison shopping in the town centres of Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead of a form and scale appropriate to their role. Proposals will need to demonstrate that this is consistent with the retail floorspace forecasts contained in the North Somerset retail and Leisure Study (2006) or, subsequent studies of a similar type commissioned by the Authority. The form and character of this floorspace should be related to the requirements of their catchments and should not seek to attract expenditure and hence shoppers from a wider area. Emphasis should therefore be given to the provision of shopping for a range of 'day to day' durable goods rather than the retailing of specific product lines to an extensive catchment. The normal process of redevelopment, refurbishment and change of use provides opportunity through intensification for this additional floorspace.
- 10.28** The Council will support proposals for diversifying the role of the town and district centres in meeting the needs of their surrounding catchments in accord with Policy RT/1. Attracting a wider range of uses, in particular increasing provision for local services, offers a way of sustaining these centres and enhancing their role in meeting the needs of the surrounding communities. Higher density residential and employment uses of an appropriate mix and form will also be supported. However, proposals involving the loss of a viable retail unit on the primary frontages will only be allowed when there would be clear additional benefits for the vitality and viability of the centre. Furthermore, throughout these centres, a cautious approach will be shown towards proposals that would lead to the loss of 'active' ground floor uses and the erosion of the key role of a centre in meeting the 'day to day' convenience shopping and service requirements of its catchment and hence its vitality and viability.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

To seek to enhance the role of the town centres of Clevedon (The Triangle), Nailsea and Portishead, and the district centres of Clevedon Hill Road, Yatton, Winscombe, Worle High Street and Queensway (North Worle), in meeting the convenience, comparison shopping and service requirements of their catchment populations.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications and the regular assessments of the 'health' of the town and district centres, with particular attention to progressing the integration of

commitments for major foodstore developments on the fringes of Nailsea and Portishead with the remainder of these centres and the effects of their implementation on these centres and Clevedon Town Centre.

Target:

Provision for convenience and comparison shopping in the town and district centres of a form and scale appropriate to their role, while ensuring that the proportion of primary retail frontage in non-retail use in the town centres of Portishead, Nailsea and Clevedon is not more than 20% and that vacancy rates in both town and district centres do not exceed 10%.

Policy RT/4 – District Centre at Locking Castle

Proposals for development at Locking Castle District Centre, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be permitted where:

- i. a mix of local shopping and services is included that is consistent with the 'sequential approach' and the enhancement of the role of the centre in meeting the needs of the surrounding community and hence its vitality and viability; and
- ii. they are fully integrated with other components of the District Centre and the adjacent residential areas in terms of layout, design and access with particular consideration given to the requirements of pedestrians, cyclists and the disabled, and appropriate provision is made for car parking and servicing.

Offices and/or residential uses will be permitted where appropriate to a district centre location.

10.29 The Council will support the development of the new District Centre at Locking Castle to support a broader range of facilities appropriate to the requirements of the expanding population of the adjacent area. Provision will be made for a mix of community services and smaller local shops and services that meet the 'day to day' needs of the surrounding community, on the land which has been allocated through planning agreements. Proposals for larger units (with a gross floor-space in excess of 200 sq. m.) designed to attract car- borne shoppers from a wider catchment, of a form normally associated with retail park locations, will not be permitted. The centre will then be of a character that is consistent with the PPS6 definition of a 'district centre' and will be treated as part of the hierarchy of centres identified by Policy RT/1.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To seek to support the evolution of the new District Centre at Locking Castle, encompassing a broader range of facilities appropriate to and integrated with the requirements of the expanding population of the adjacent residential area.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications and the regular assessment of the type and form of new development undertaken at Locking Castle District Centre consistent with its role of a district centre, the needs of the catchment population of Locking Castle and its implications for travel.

Target:

Inclusion of Locking Castle District Centre as part of the hierarchy of town centres identified at Policy RT/1 that is consistent with the 'sequential approach' and the enhancement of the role of the centre in meeting the needs of the surrounding community consistent with the PPS6 definition of a 'district centre'.

Policy RT/5 – Local Shopping

Proposals for the development, redevelopment or change of use of local shops to other uses outside the town and district centres will be permitted where:

- i. there would not be unacceptable consequences for traffic conditions and local environmental and amenity considerations; and
- ii. it is demonstrated that the premises are incapable of supporting a retail use; or
- iii. alternative local shopping is available within the locality, the retail function of a local or village centre would not be harmed and there would not be an increase in travel.

Provision is made for new local centres at Ebdon Grounds and St Georges (Central Brimbleworth), Weston-super-Mare, as shown on the Proposals Map, to meet the requirements of nearby expanding residential developments.

Other proposals for new local shops and services, including facilities required to meet needs arising from new residential and commercial development, outside the town and district centres, will be permitted within town and village settlement boundaries, provided there are no adverse consequences for the vitality and viability of these centres and for:

- iv. the character of the locality by reason of the size, scale and design of the proposal;
- v. car use, traffic conditions, car parking and for pedestrians; and
- vi. the amenity of adjoining residents.

- 10.30** The Council will resist the loss of small-scale shops, including neighbourhood and village stores, outside the town and district centres that meet the requirements of local communities. They fulfil a vital role in providing local opportunities for 'top-up' shopping, minimising travel and meeting the requirements of people without the use of a car. However, the Council recognises that the expansion of major foodstore

developments over recent years and widespread car ownership has eroded the role of local shops and local centres. Circumstances will arise therefore, where retail use is no longer viable or where the availability of a similar facility within walking distance allows the loss of a local shop to be permitted.

- 10.31** As well as resisting the loss of local shops, the Council will support in principle proposals for new local shops and other local services outside the town and district centres. Such proposals may involve new buildings or diversifying the mix of functions offered by existing facilities, for example, local pubs. Support will also be given to initiatives to establish volunteer-run shops in village communities where this would help to sustain local shopping facilities. Proposals for improved local shopping will be welcomed when in response to apparent 'gaps' in current provision, especially with the restriction on major out-of-centre developments. Development proposals in out-of-centre locations and/or adjoining local centres will be assessed against the requirements of Policies GDP/1 and GDP/2 for their potential impact on the local environment and amenity and, Policy T/10 in respect of traffic safety. Local shopping provision of an appropriate scale and character will be expected to accompany and be integrated with major residential and commercial development schemes. This requirement will be clarified where relevant by supplementary planning documents.
- 10.32** The Council will, however, resist proposals for local shopping and service facilities of an excessive scale that are likely to lead to an overall rise in car use and, perhaps, the loss of existing and smaller local facilities. Proposals which, taken with committed developments, threaten the well-being of the town and district centres identified under Policy RT/1 will be assessed against Policy RT/6.
- 10.33** The Council will also resist proposals that seek to facilitate car-based shopping in order to gain competitive advantage over nearby local shops more dependent on walk-in trade and as a result at risk of closure. Shops associated with petrol filling stations may create this threat.
- 10.34** The Council recognises that rising expenditure on a range of local services frequently leads to proposals for the re-use of redundant shops and other buildings as well as for new development for such uses. These proposals in turn offer the potential to reduce travel and reinforce the role of local centres. This potential will be realised subject to traffic, environment and amenity considerations.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

To resist the loss of small-scale shops outside the town and district centres that meet the requirements of local communities where they fulfil a vital role in providing local opportunities for 'top-up' shopping, minimising travel and meeting the requirements of persons without the use of a car.

Output objective

Through development control, monitoring of planning applications and

the review of planning decisions affecting local retail units to identify trends in their number, distribution, form and scale and the implications for travel behaviour and the hierarchy of town centres identified under Policy RT/1.

Policy RT/6 – Out-of-centre shopping

Proposals for major out-of-centre retail development and other town centre uses, including extensions to existing developments, will only be permitted where:

- i. it is demonstrated that there is a need for the development;
- ii. it is demonstrated that the need for the development of an appropriate scale could not be met within the town centres, followed by edge of these centres, district centres, and then at the existing retail park at Marchfields Way/Winterstoke Road;
- iii. there are no unacceptable implications, when considered with any recent or committed developments, for the vitality and viability of the town and district centres and proposals for their enhancement, as well as securing the District Centre at Locking Castle;
- iv. there are no adverse consequences for meeting requirements for business, residential or other uses;
- v. the site is easily accessible from its catchment area by walking, cycling, public transport and by those persons with special needs, and it would reduce the need to travel, especially by car;
- vi. there are no unacceptable consequences for environmental, local amenity, highways and traffic considerations; and
- vii. opportunities are realised, where appropriate, for meeting requirements for residential, business and community uses on upper floors.

Proposals for retail development at the retail park locations at Marchfields Way/Winterstoke Road shown on the Proposals Map, including the refurbishment or redevelopment of existing units, will only be permitted where:

- viii. improvements to the physical integration, environmental quality and pedestrian circulation between individual units and components of the area would be realised;
- ix. an appropriate contribution is made towards improving traffic circulation and car parking

10.35 Other than in the circumstances included above, proposals for further major out-of-centre retail developments will be resisted. Allowing such development that would attract shoppers from beyond the immediate locality and a continuation of recent patterns of investment would threaten prospects for enhancing the town and district centres, especially Weston-super-Mare Town Centre. It would also contribute to further unacceptable increases in traffic congestion and raise issues of road safety that would be inconsistent with Policy T/10. These outcomes would be in conflict

with the clear priority given by Policies RT/1-RT/4 and Policy E/1A and the wider national, regional and strategic planning framework to focusing investment in retail and other travel-intensive developments in town centres. The impact of proposed developments on environmental and amenity issues will have to be considered against the relevant requirements of Policy GDP/1 and GDP/2.

- 10.36** Policy RT/6 therefore reflects the priority being given to the town and district centres, by setting out a restrictive approach to proposals for major retail and travel-intensive leisure developments outside these centres. It indicates a series of 'tests' or criteria that such proposals will need to meet in order to gain planning permission. These reflect PPS6 and Policy 40 of the Structure Plan. The Policy will be applied to extensions to existing out-of-centre developments as well as free standing proposals that, because of their location and scale, would be likely to have implications for the town and district centres. This will include all internal and external alterations that would result in an increase in the gross floor area by 200 sq. m. or more. A similar approach will also be applied to other key town centre uses which attract large numbers of visitors such as major leisure and entertainment facilities (see Policy C F/2, Chapter 11), offices and public services.
- 10.37** In assessing the need for an out-of-centre development, the Council will take account of information submitted by applicants about estimates and forecasts of shopping expenditure and about opportunities to widen the choice or quality of shopping. The Council will also consider the potential benefits arising from out-of-centre development for other planning considerations. These may include making better use of the existing retail park at Marchfields Way/Winterstoke Road in accord with Policy RT/6, and meeting requirements for residential, business and community uses. In considering requirements for additional retail floorspace to meet rising expenditure, regard will be had to current assessments of need and expenditure in North Somerset and/or the relevant local area.
- 10.38** In applying the sequential test, the Council will expect applicants to have regard to any town or district centres within the catchment of the proposed development. Retail proposals will need to provide a clear justification as to the need for the development in the intended location and that it is of an appropriate size and scale in relation to surrounding existing and proposed development. Evidence will also be required to show how the development will make a positive contribution to the physical regeneration of the local area, where appropriate, and provide benefits to the local community and the wider area through net additional employment, economic growth and greater social inclusion. Applicants will also be expected to demonstrate that they have considered the scope for dis-aggregating or sub-dividing proposed developments and thereby meeting development requirements on sequentially preferable sites.
- 10.39** Safeguarding the vitality and viability of the town and district centres is a major priority of the Council. In considering the implications of development proposals for vitality and viability, the Council will have regard to the role and health of centres within the catchment of a proposal, and the consequences for the investment required to safeguard their future well-being, including the consequences for progress with

regeneration and enhancement strategies. A cautious approach will be followed where evidence suggests that the well-being of a centre is vulnerable to competitive pressures from an out-of-centre proposal. Development proposals which rely for their justification on assumptions about the ways in which they would change current shopping patterns, in particular leading to the 'clawback' of expenditure currently being undertaken outside their catchment, will need to offer clear evidence in support of these assumptions.

10.40 Proposals for new retail development at the retail park area that straddles Marchfields Way and Winterstoke Road will be assessed against Policy RT/6 and in particular the requirement to demonstrate need, consistency with the sequential approach and safeguarding the well-being of the town centres. It is expected therefore that only proposals for the retailing of bulky goods (primarily DIY materials, furniture and carpets and 'white' electrical goods) could be considered appropriate for the retail park. In addition, such proposals will need to offer the potential for improving the operation of the retail park. The units at Marchfields Way and Winterstoke Road have been developed incrementally and the area as a whole offers the potential for improvement in terms of accessibility, parking, pedestrian circulation and environmental quality. This would increase the potential for linked shopping trips and reductions in car use and create a more attractive environment for shoppers. Proposals for redevelopments, re-furbishments or extensions at Marchfields Way/Winterstoke Road therefore will be expected to contribute towards the implementation of these improvements and those related to traffic safety as required through Policy T/10.

Monitoring

Outcome objective:

To resist proposals for further major out-of-centre retail developments and to give a clear priority to focusing retail investment in town centres.

To achieve a successful and physically integrated retail park for bulky goods (primarily DIY materials, furniture and carpets and, 'white' electrical goods) which is consistent with the PPS6 sequential approach and the well being of Weston-super-Mare Town Centre.

Output objective

Through Development Control, the monitoring of planning applications and the assessments of planning decisions on proposals for major retail and leisure developments both in town centres and out of centre, and the 'health' of the town centres. It will also require assessments of retail need or capacity in North Somerset from time to time, with particular attention given to any evidence of shortfalls in retail and leisure provision and the availability of opportunities for meeting needs in the town and district centres.

Policy RT/7 – Garden centres, nurseries and farm shops in the open countryside

Proposals for the sale of goods from farm shops, garden centres and nurseries, including extensions to existing developments, will only be permitted in the open countryside where:

- i. the majority of the sales area relates to the sale of the produce of the site;
- ii. the sale of any other goods relates either to the sale of produce grown elsewhere or garden related ancillary goods;
- iii. there are no unacceptable implications for nearby village shops; and
- iv. there are no unacceptable consequences for environmental, local amenity, countryside, landscape, highways, traffic and car parking considerations and where relevant, the openness of the Green Belt.

Proposals for garden centres outside the centres defined in Policy RT/1 will be determined against Policy RT/6.

10.41 There has been a considerable increase over recent years in the amount of retail floorspace provided by farm shops, garden centres and nurseries. In some cases, retailing has become far more important than horticulture with the large scale of such 'garden centre' operations undoubtedly attracting significant amounts of trade from the town and district centres. This conflicts with the retail strategy of the Plan. Furthermore, the development resulting from the growth of garden centres threatens to harm both the local amenity and countryside character as well as highway safety. Above all, the encouragement given to car use and the diversion of business from the town centres, conflicts with sustainable development principles.

10.42 The Council will therefore resist further retail development in the countryside associated with farm shops, garden centres and nurseries unless of a modest scale and related primarily to the sale of home grown produce. Acceptable proposals will need to show a close link between sales and plant nurturing. Farm shops and plant nurseries do not normally require planning permission to sell produce grown on the premises. However, permission is normally required where goods brought in would exceed 10% of the total stock value. Development proposals should minimise any adverse effects on travel and the character of the countryside. The sale of goods not grown on the site should relate to produce grown elsewhere or garden-related products and where there would be clear benefits to the vitality of an agricultural or horticultural business, or where the proposal would secure the use of an existing agricultural building and/or improve the appearance of the site. Proposals for garden centre developments where the purpose of the associated business relates primarily to the retailing of plants with little or no nurturing, will not be allowed in the open countryside. Proposals for such developments within settlement boundaries normally will be determined against policy RT/6.

Monitoring**Outcome Objective**

To encourage the operation of garden centres and nurseries that relate primarily to the sale of home grown produce and goods which support farming and horticultural businesses, the wider rural economy and the consumer and which do not conflict with the priority being given to focusing retailing in town and district centres.

Output Objective:

Through Development Control and monitoring of planning applications.

(10)

P A H C

Cultural and Community Facilities

Introduction

- 11.1** This Chapter sets out the Council's land use policies for the provision of cultural and community facilities likely to be needed over the Plan period and beyond. A 'community use' is defined as a cultural or community leisure facility, whether or not provided on a commercial basis. Its scope is very broad, encompassing those uses within use classes D1 and D2, such as libraries, arts and entertainment facilities such as museums and cinemas, public and private open space and other outdoor or indoor sports facilities, youth centres, places of worship, schools, health care facilities, cemeteries, and allotments. It also includes pubs, which fall within use class A4, but excludes other A4 uses. The Chapter is also concerned with the requirements of the utilities, including telecommunications infrastructure. Policies within this Chapter apply to all forms of cultural and community facilities.
- 11.2** Provision for culture and community leisure is increasingly recognised as a significant factor in enhancing quality of life. An important function of the planning system is therefore to make adequate provision for both organised sport and more informal recreation whether provided by the local authority, voluntary agencies or the private sector. Similarly, cultural and community leisure facilities contribute to the economic and social vitality of towns and villages. They help to promote better opportunities in education, health and employment and generate an improved sense of place and community.

Aim

- 11.3** The aim of the Council is to meet the needs of North Somerset residents and visitors, specifically up to 2011, in terms of cultural and community leisure facilities, in a manner consistent with the concept of sustainable development.
- 11.4** Consequently, the role of this Chapter is to address existing and predicted future shortfalls in the provision of cultural and community leisure facilities. It is important that the necessary land is reserved where service providers have identified a future need and suitable sites exist. The Local Plan is concerned with identifying and reserving sites. The timing of actual provision depends on the availability of resources. Particularly where restricted public resources are required, there may be a delay in provision, unless developer contributions can be negotiated to bring forward investment. The Council will either impose planning conditions or enter into planning obligations with developers in order to secure provision of cultural and community facilities that are related to a new development (see Policy GDP/5, Chapter 4).

Objectives

- 11.5** The Local Plan objectives in respect of cultural and community facilities are:
- to promote and increase the health, welfare, cultural and leisure opportunities of all sectors of the local population.
 - to ensure the provision of a wide range of quality recreational and cultural opportunities, including rights of way and other forms of public access, parks, public open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities, which meet the needs and aspirations of residents of North Somerset.
 - to ensure that appropriate provision is made for school sites where necessary, responsive to the needs of childcare generally and the opportunities presented by dual use of facilities.
 - to support the land use requirements of broad-based regeneration programmes such as Weston Visioning and the Single Regeneration Budget to contribute to the regeneration of disadvantaged areas and to ensure equality of opportunity.

CF/1 – Provision of Cultural and Community Facilities (Developer Contributions)

Where the local provision of cultural and community facilities would be inadequate to serve the projected needs arising from new residential development and where appropriate having regard to the scale of need, the scale and type of development and other local circumstances, additional provision will be sought in scale and kind to meet the shortfall. This may be either in the form of on-site provision and/or contributions to suitable provision in the vicinity, the enhancement of existing facilities and/or improved access to facilities that arises from the development. In this regard:

- i. Open space provision will be calculated on the basis of the Council's minimum standards set out in Table 11.1.
- ii. Residential development that generates a need for a new school or classrooms and associated servicing and supporting facilities should:
 - a) Provide a site and construct a school to meet those needs, or contribute to its construction if a larger school is proposed, in a location that would facilitate safe routes to school from the new residential area, not be located off a cul-de-sac, have safe local cycle access and that would ensure its presence as a focal point to the community, or
 - b) Provide additional classroom and associated accommodation or financial contributions to meet the educational needs of the development;
- iii. the need for the provision of other facilities e.g. youth, library, etc will be assessed with reference to the existing provision in the locality and the nature and location of the new development.

- 11.6 Developer contributions** The Local Plan seeks to ensure that there is adequate access to open space and recreational facilities and that other community needs are met. The provision of these facilities in areas of new development contributes significantly to the quality of life of residents and visitors. Justifiable criticism is received from the public if adequate community facilities are not secured and made available as development proceeds. PPG17 indicates that the functions of a local plan include assessment of local recreational needs, identification of deficiencies, and ensuring that provision is properly co-ordinated with other forms of development and other land use policies.
- 11.7** Many existing facilities are at or near capacity and in some cases the need for new or improved facilities is triggered by new development. It is considered reasonable for developers to contribute towards appropriate improvements to infrastructure, e.g. schools, leisure centres, community halls and outdoor playing space, in order to cater for the additional demand created by new development and its occupants. Depending on the particular needs for provision in the area this may be in the form of on-site provision and/or contributions to provision within the vicinity, the enhancement of existing facilities, and/or improved access to facilities. Policy CF/1 should be read with reference to Policy GDP/5 (Chapter 4), which provides a general framework for planning obligations.
- 11.8** Where facilities or infrastructure works are directly related to an allocated housing site they may be included in the Schedule to Policy CF/4, which lists the detailed requirements of a particular site, e.g. open space or school sites. This approach is supported by Annex B to ODPM circular 5/2005. Circumstances may change during the life of the Plan and the requirements listed in the schedule may be subject to change.
- 11.9** The Council intends to produce a supplementary planning document (SPD) to facilitate the operation of Policy CF/1. This is likely to cover matters such as the means of calculating contributions, on different types and scales of development and for different facilities. Additionally, the Council may guide the development of some sites by the use of planning briefs or informal site guidance.
- 11.10 Appropriate provision/exceptions** The Council recognises that certain types of housing, such as specialist housing for the elderly, will not generate a need for pupil places and therefore seeking contributions towards educational provision within the statutory school age range will not always be appropriate. In such situations open space will still be required in order to enable flexibility in the future use of buildings and meet the needs of residents, but the layout and equipment of open space areas may be varied. For example, with sheltered housing, provision may more appropriately be in the form of general 'sitting out' areas rather than outdoor playing spaces.
- 11.11** The application of any standard for the size and distribution of open space must have regard to local circumstances, particularly the provision that is already in place. Where shortfalls exist, development will be expected to provide at least the minimum standard to meet demand arising from it. A greater contribution may be sought where the

characteristics of the development justify this. Standards for open space associated with residential development are set out in Table 11.1 and further described below. Where provision displaces existing facilities, Policy CF/4 will also apply.

11.12 Open space requirements Until such a time as a revised open space strategy has been completed, the Council will continue to use open space standards based on the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) definition and standards for outdoor playing space. The NPFA recommends a minimum of 2.43 hectares (c. 6 acres) of outdoor playing space per 1000 population. This equates to a standard of 60 sq.m. per dwelling for the purposes of calculating developer contributions. Within this total standard it is recommended that the aggregation of outdoor playing spaces should be as set out in Table 11.1. The NPFA standards for outdoor playing space are supplemented by a local standard for informal amenity open space. The standards allow for a certain amount of flexibility within categories to enable development to react to the particular needs of the locality, although the overall amount should reflect the NPFA standard.

Table 11.1 North Somerset Council standards for open space

(based on The NPFA "Six Acre Standard", National Playing Fields Association, 1989)

Part 1 Type of provision for outdoor playing space

A minimum standard for the provision of outdoor playing space of 2.43 hectares (c. 6 acres) per 1000 population

'Outdoor playing space' can be defined as an area open to the public or members of sporting organisations, which is suitable for organised sports or casual play. It does not include the following:

- i) outdoor sports facilities which are not as a matter of practice and policy available for public use, i.e. professional football stadia/grounds;
- ii) grounds of Her Majesty's Services;
- iii) verges, woodlands, commons, ornamental parks and gardens, except for defined sports, games, practice and play areas;
- iv) full-length nine and eighteen hole golf courses;
- v) water used for recreation, except where it forms a play feature of an outdoor play area; vi) indoor sports or leisure centres;
- vii) commercial entertainment complexes and theme parks;
- viii) car parks.

A minimum standard for the provision of informal amenity open space of 0.7 ha per 1000 population including woodland and ornamental parks, street corner plots, communal gardens, strategically located squares, etc.

Part 2 Standards and distribution of outdoor playing space and informal open space

Category	Standard	Description/distribution
Playing space for youth/adult use, i.e. pitches,	1.6 – 1.8 ha (c. 4 – 4.5 acres) per 1000 population Minimum of 1.2ha/3 acres to be used for sports pitches	<p>Facilities for organised pitches, courts, athletic tracks, putting greens and training areas, which are courts. either in public or private ownership and are available to the public or members of sporting organisations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These areas should be located within three quarters of a mile of homes and be located towards the centre of a site rather than the periphery. 2. Where a new housing site adjoins existing development, the general siting should also be readily accessible to the existing development, especially if this adjoining area is deficient in open space. 3. Sites should be well-related to the footpath / cycleway network. 4. As playing pitches are to be provided, irregular boundaries and severe slopes should be avoided.
Playing space for children's use, i.e. equipped playgrounds and casual play areas	0.6 – 0.8 ha (c. 1.5 – 2 acres) per 1000 population 0.2 – 0.3 ha (c. 0.5 – 0.75 acres) 0.4 – 0.5 ha (c. 1 – 1.25 acres)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor equipped playgrounds for children of whatever age. • Casual or informal play space. Non-equipped play spaces within housing areas. These sites should be within a maximum safe walking distance, no further from the home than 200 metres for pre-school children and 400 metres for areas intended for older children.

Category	Standard	Description/distribution
Informal open open space	<p>0.7 ha (c. 1.75 acres) per 1000 population (this standard is additional to casual playspace though provision may be adjacent or integrated where appropriate)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each area should be closely related to the pedestrian system, looking particularly at the routes taken by school children. They should be sited so that children do not have to cross busy roads. 2. Although sites need to be associated with areas of family housing their design and location should not create a nuisance to nearby residents. 3. Areas should be suitably landscaped and not 'hidden away', as this may attract anti-social behaviour and does not allow the playspace to become an integral part of the housing development. Dog-proof fencing will be required. 4. A large number of very small areas are to be avoided as this creates maintenance problems and pressure at a later date for such areas to be incorporated into private gardens. <p>Public open space for informal use can vary in form from street corner plots or communal garden areas to strategically located squares and similar spaces. Woodlands and ornamental parks accessible to the public can also serve as informal open space. Careful consideration should be given to location and design so that spaces add to townscape value, have a greening effect and act as focal points for social activity and informal recreation. Badly-designed open space has the potential to become dead space, derelict or even a magnet for criminal activity.</p>

Table 11.2 Guidelines for play areas

Under fives	Very local small items of equipment aimed at the very young. The provision aim is to have a local under 5's area within 5 minute walking distance in urban areas. In rural or more remote areas the aim to develop a quality provision in a central well-located site to meet the NPFA standards.
5-12 year olds	Equipped play areas or designed into the development – an area for creative play/adventure play. The aim is to have a 5-12 year olds play area within 7 minutes walk of residents in urban areas. In rural or more remote areas aim to develop a quality provision in a central well-located site to meet the NPFA standards.
12-16 year olds	There is a need for well-sited areas for 12-16 year olds to provide a challenging play and 'hang about' area for both boys and girls. This could range from teen shelters, skateboard parks, BMX tracks, basketball areas, multi-use games areas (muga's) and similar. In urban areas these should be located within 10 minutes walking distance of homes. In rural or more remote areas aim to develop a quality provision in a central well-located site to meet the NPFA standards.
The requirements for each development will be assessed individually and depending upon the size of the development there may be a range of local provision within the development or an improvement to an identified strategic site to meet the increased demand from the development. This refers to towns as well as more rural areas.	

11.13 The standards include an element for children's playspace. In consultation with the local Play Forum, planners and representative developers, the aim is to review the standard requirement for these facilities regularly – every five years – and how they can best be incorporated into the design of residential developments. From the consultation, detailed guidance will emerge for each category. Interim guidance is provided in Table 11.2.

11.14 New developments will need to ensure that sufficient open space is provided not only to accommodate adequate sports and play areas but also informal amenity areas. These should be of a nature and distribution relevant to the design and scale of the development, having regard to sound urban design principles. The Council wishes to maintain the visual quality and character of North Somerset. In addition to the NPFA standards for the provision of active outdoor play, the Council will expect a minimum area of 0.7 ha open space for informal use per 1000 population to add visual quality to new residential development. Areas designed primarily for other purposes, such as nature conservation sites or attenuation ponds, will be viewed separately.

- 11.15** Open space should be provided on-site, although where site characteristics dictate, e.g. steep locations or town centre sites, or where it would be prudent to pool contributions from a number of sites, a contribution to the improvement or provision of nearby open space will be more appropriate. The location and distribution of open space should allow for easy access by the occupants of a development on foot and by bicycle (see Policies CF/2 and CF/3).
- 11.16** This Local Plan identifies substantial areas for new residential development, most notably at Weston-super-Mare, Nailsea and Portishead. Because of the scale of these developments it is possible to identify the general location of the major open spaces and these are listed in the Schedule to Policy CF/4. For smaller housing sites that may come forward during the life of this Plan the location of open spaces will be subject to detailed negotiation based on the availability of suitable nearby open space.
- 11.17** In order to ensure that there is a balance at all times between assessed open space needs and actual availability, the Council will require that open space provision proceeds together with the development. Developers must either maintain such areas permanently, and permit occupants of the development free and unrestricted access to them, or dedicate such areas to be operated and maintained by the Council. If the latter option is chosen, developers must pay a commuted capital contribution to cover agreed maintenance costs. Outdoor playing spaces shall be suitably laid out, drained, levelled and planted before being dedicated to the Council. Proposals will also be expected to either include funding for play area equipment or to transfer an appropriately equipped site to the Council free of charge, as the Council considers appropriate.
- 11.18** Wherever it is feasible, existing or new play areas, sport facilities, parks and gardens, works of art and landscape features should be linked via off-road cycle/walkways which themselves will provide a valuable recreational amenity.
- 11.19 Educational requirements** New housing developments, including conversions, can increase the number of children in an area and have the potential to place greater demand for pupil places on local schools. The availability of pupil places in existing schools may be inadequate and a need may arise for improvements to education provision. This may be in the form of the provision of classroom(s) and associated servicing and supporting facilities such as toilets, circulation space, storage areas, playspace, dining areas etc. Deficiencies within the 'affected locality' will be interpreted as a deficiency in school places within a two-mile radius for pre-school and primary school places and/or a three-mile radius for secondary school places; or in the relevant area school where this is in line with LEA policy. In such cases the Council will seek developer contributions to meet the educational costs of the new development. Depending on the extent of the shortfall and the scale of development proposed, this could involve provision of an additional primary school, as well as contributions towards secondary school places, or additional accommodation to be added to existing school(s),



or the adaptation of existing accommodation, or to enable the additional pupils to access the new or existing accommodation. This may be by means of a contribution towards the cost of home-to-school transport or towards schemes to provide safe routes to school.

11.20 Schools and colleges are often focal points for communities. School buildings and playing fields can provide a valuable community resource outside of school hours. They can act as a venue for clubs, societies and community groups to pursue social and cultural activities as well as for more active recreation and sport. The availability of play space outside school hours could provide safer places for children to play away from areas used by motor vehicles. The National Playing Fields Association recognises the contribution that school facilities can make to outdoor playing space standards, where dual use has been secured. There may also be benefits in some circumstances from school use of private or public playing fields where this is feasible.

11.21 It is desirable therefore that the design and layout of new or extended schools, whilst concentrating on educational requirements and pupil safety, should, wherever practical, incorporate features aimed at facilitating community use. However, potential problems of security should also be addressed.

11.22 Other community requirements e.g. libraries, places of worship, youth provision, healthcare, arts and entertainment, etc. Policy CF/1 requires that development contributes to other cultural and community facilities, having regard to local needs and standards of provision set out in this chapter.

11.23 There may also be a need for facilities which address more specialist needs as part of a network of facilities over an area wider than the immediate locality, for example, facilities for people with disabilities.

11.24 Encouragement will also be given to offers of additional contributions to 'informal infrastructure', such as provision of land or buildings for local groups such as Scouts/Guides or other special interest groups, but this should not be a substitute for facilities which provide for the more general needs of the resident community.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

To ensure that appropriate cultural and community facilities are provided to meet the needs of new development.

Output objective

- (1) Through development control and monitoring of planning applications;
- (2) Publication of supplementary planning guidance on developer contributions;
- (3) Open space – revised survey of needs and provision.

Policy CF/2 – Cultural and Community Facilities within settlement boundaries

Planning permission will be granted for cultural and community facilities within settlement boundaries, provided that the following criteria are met.

- i. The possibility of sharing the use of existing facilities has been considered and shown to be impractical.
- ii. The site is in a sustainable location, well-related to the community it is intended to serve.
- iii. The proposed facilities will be genuinely accessible by a choice of transport modes and to those with impaired mobility.
- iv. The layout and design include features to facilitate combining other community needs within the same site, unless this is agreed to be inappropriate.

Additionally, in the case of proposals for major developments that will attract a large number of users, applicants must demonstrate that a sequential test has been applied, giving priority to sites within town or district centres, or, failing this, sites at the edge of these centres. Proposals for out-of-centre sites will only be acceptable where:

- v. there is a need for the proposed development; and
- vi. there are no alternative sites within or adjacent to the relevant centres; and
- vii. there is no adverse effect on the vitality and viability of the relevant centres.

11.25 Policy CF/2 should be read with reference to Policy GDP/1 (Chapter 4). Towns and villages are generally suitable locations for most cultural and community facilities but it is important that the best use is made of the limited supply of land. Applicants should therefore demonstrate that they have considered the possibilities for site-sharing, including investment to enable intensification of use, and that accessibility has been considered from the sustainability point of view.

11.26 In many cases it may be possible to successfully combine two or more compatible uses within one facility, achieving cost savings to the provider as well as a more effective use of facilities. Service providers should therefore ascertain whether provision could be combined with other agencies' needs, notably schools (see Policy CF/1).

11.27 Proposals for additional facilities should be well-related to proposed users and accessible by a choice of transport modes. PPS6 states that a sequential approach should be taken to finding sites for leisure purposes in order to protect the role of the town centres. For facilities which attract a large number of visitors the priority will be for a location within town or district centres, followed by sites on the edge of these centres and only then in out-of-centre locations which are well-related to the public transport network, provided there is no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the town or district centre. Developers will need to demonstrate that there is a need for the development and that there are



no alternative sites available within or adjacent to town or district centres before an out-of-centre site will be considered. Proposals for the flood-lighting of facilities will be assessed against Policy GDP/2 (Chapter 4).

11.28 The emergency services (fire, police, ambulance, coast guard etc) are required to undertake integrated risk management planning and to meet strict standards of operational performance to respond to the needs of the community. New or expanded facilities will be considered against the criteria set out in policy CF/2. Where such development complies with the terms of the policy, the demonstrated operational needs will be important material considerations that would normally outweigh other safeguarding policies in the plan.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

Cultural and community facilities should be provided in accordance with Policy CF/2.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Policy CF/3 – Cultural and Community Facilities in the countryside

Planning permission will be granted for cultural and community facilities outside settlement boundaries if the following criteria are met.

- i. The need for the proposal cannot be met within a settlement;
- ii. The site is adjacent to a settlement boundary;
- iii. The facility is well-related to the community it is intended to serve;
- iv. The facility will be genuinely accessible by a choice of transport modes and to those with impaired mobility;
- v. The proposal does not conflict with other pre-existing outdoor activities;
- vi. The layout and design include features to facilitate combining other community needs within the same site, unless this is agreed to be inappropriate;

In the case of proposals for major developments that will attract a large number of users, applicants must demonstrate that there is a need for the proposed development and that a sequential test has been applied, giving priority to sites within town or district centres, or, failing this, sites at the edge of these centres. Proposals for out-of-centre sites will only be acceptable where the above criteria are met and there is no adverse effect on the vitality and viability of the relevant centres.

11.29 National planning policy is designed to restrict built development in the countryside. Sports and leisure facilities that require substantial buildings or are for major developments that will attract large numbers of users are better concentrated in urban areas or on their fringes and proposals

for indoor facilities are more appropriately located within settlement boundaries.

- 11.30** In some circumstances, although a clear local need for a cultural or community facility may be established, it may not be possible to accommodate it within an existing settlement boundary. Favourable consideration will be given in such cases to allowing the facility to be located adjacent to the settlement boundary. However, where a 'package' of facilities is proposed, developers should demonstrate that it would not be feasible for some elements of the package to be located within a settlement. Within the Green Belt, such exceptions will be restricted to development within the categories specified in Policies RD/3 and RD/4 (Chapter 6). Development proposed to be located in the open countryside will require special justification unless it involves proposals for farm diversification and is in accordance with Policy RD/2.
- 11.31** PPG17 (para. 26) advises that sport and recreation activities in the countryside should be designed and sited with great care and sensitivity to its rural location.
- 11.32** Existing buildings should be used where possible; otherwise, the siting, scale, design and materials of new buildings must have regard to their rural settings and should not result in an unacceptable proliferation of buildings in one locality. Where appropriate, reference should be made to village character statements.
- 11.33** The Council wishes to encourage responsible use of the countryside for such activities, which enable its appreciation by a wide range of users and present opportunities to diversify and support the local economy. New facilities should be appropriate to the rural area and designed so as to minimise the impact on the rural environment, including the impact of accessing the facility and the effect on the rural highway network (see Policy T/10, Chapter 9). Proposals should be located so as to minimise the need to travel by private car.
- 11.34** The open countryside provides many opportunities for informal outdoor recreation through country parks and local nature reserves together with picnic areas, car parking, footpaths and bridleways as means of increasing opportunities to enjoy the countryside. At the same time it is recognised that the demand for such activities should be consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the countryside and the needs of agriculture and forestry. Some sports will be noisy and can cause disturbance and damage. Where appropriate, it may be possible for any nature conservation objections to be overcome by an ecological management plan submitted as part of the planning application.
- 11.35** Development proposals within the Mendip Hills AONB will also need to accord with Policy ECH/8 (Chapter 5).
- 11.36** Proposals which affect a protected species, a Site of International Importance or a SSSI will also be assessed against other appropriate policies within the Plan.

- 11.37** Within the Green Belt, proposals will be restricted to outdoor recreational use, and development will be limited to essential associated facilities i.e. changing areas and will not include indoor uses. Where sports-related buildings such as changing rooms are required, they should be small in scale and must also have an acceptable impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it (see Policy RD/3, Chapter 6).
- 11.38** Where appropriate, new or refurbished facilities shall be constructed in such a way that they can be made available for other community uses. Proposals for floodlighting of facilities will be assessed against Policy GDP/2 (Chapter 4).
- 11.39 Golf courses and driving ranges** Golfing facilities can have very wide-ranging environmental impacts and due to their scale these will often be over a large area. There are implications for visual and landscape impact of both the course and the associated clubhouse and other built facilities, as well as potential implications for water resources (see Policy GDP/4, Chapter 4), archaeology (ECH/6, Chapter 5), ecology (ECH/10) and public rights of way (T/7, Chapter 9). Particular consideration also needs to be given to transport issues to avoid harmful effects on local roads (T/10).
- 11.40** Safeguards are needed against the eventuality of a developer constructing a clubhouse and associated facilities and being unable to construct the golf course due to financial difficulties, for example. The result would be a freestanding leisure complex in the countryside unrelated to golf and therefore contrary to planning policy. To avoid this, the Council will consider imposing a condition requiring that at least nine holes of a course are formed and in use prior to the construction and occupation of a clubhouse.
- 11.41 Commercial riding and private stables** Although riding stables are an accepted land use in the countryside, badly located or designed buildings, or a proliferation in one area, can have an adverse effect on the landscape. This is particularly true in the sensitive Levels and Moors area where a proliferation of stables would be particularly obtrusive. Particular care must also be taken with the choice of materials for new stables. Construction should be of wood wherever possible, which has the advantage of being easily dismantled when the building is no longer required (see Policy GDP/3, Chapter 4).
- 11.42** Problems can be experienced particularly where horse riders do not keep to designated bridleways, and this can lead to conflict with other users of footpaths, highways and recreational land and erosion of ground surfaces. The Council has limited control over the establishment of private stabling or the use of horses, but it is considered that if further commercial riding establishments are proposed, they should be located where such problems are unlikely to arise. Where bridleways do not exist, it may be possible to overcome this by the creation of horse-riding routes on adjacent land. The permission of the adjacent landowners and a legal agreement would be required to ensure access at all times. Proposals for horse-related development such as stables, riding schools and arenas should provide adequate facilities for the exercising of horses within the

curtilage of the property or have safe and convenient access to facilities suitable for the exercising of horses.

11.43 It is reasonable that new commercial horse-riding establishments make contributions to new bridleway provision through S106 agreements and/or planning obligations. Where the development of new commercial premises would be a strain on the capacity of existing routes and networks then contributions will be sought towards the maintenance of these.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

Cultural and community facilities should be provided in accordance with Policy CF/3.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Policy CF/4 – Safeguarding of existing and proposed sites and buildings

This policy applies as follows:

- i. to safeguard for its existing use the land and buildings shown on the Proposals Map as existing cultural and community facilities;
- ii. to safeguard for the purpose identified in the schedule forming part of this policy the land shown on the Proposals Map as proposed cultural and community facilities;
- iii. to safeguard for community use other land or buildings used or last used for cultural or community facilities (unless the site is allocated for another purpose in this Plan).

The development of these sites/buildings for other uses will be permitted only if one of the following circumstances applies:

- iv. where acceptable alternative provision of at least equivalent community benefit is made available in the same vicinity and capable of serving the same catchment area. In such cases, all of the following criteria must be met:
 - a) the new site is at least as accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles;
 - b) the replacement facility is at least equivalent in terms of size, usefulness, attractiveness and quality to the facility it replaces; and
 - c) in the case of a replacement for an existing facility, the replacement will be available for use before use of the existing facility is lost.
- v. where the site or building is genuinely redundant/surplus to requirements for cultural/community uses and does not comprise open space or undeveloped land with recreational or amenity value.



A site will be deemed genuinely redundant/surplus for community uses if any of the following circumstances apply:

- a. the site is in an unsuitable location for alternative community use by reason of its distance from the local population or poor accessibility for non-car users;
- b. the space is unsuitable for appropriate alternative community use, bearing in mind the possibilities for subdividing vertically and horizontally and opportunities for shared and mixed uses, and it is not feasible or appropriate to redevelop the site for community use;
- c. evidence is submitted that demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the local planning authority, that attempts to rent/dispose of the property for community uses have failed (attempts being for at least 6 months, at normal market value for such uses). In addition, if the local planning authority considers it appropriate, a business plan shall be produced identifying the extent and combination of usage and charges necessary to make the facility profitable.
- d. the local planning authority, through consultation with relevant Council departments, town/parish councils, service providers and voluntary groups, etc. is satisfied that there is no demand for any form of community facility in the vicinity.
- vi. where the development of a small area will secure the retention and improvement of the remainder of the site for community use;
- vii. where proposals relate to the intensification of community use;
- viii. in the case of school playing fields, where the development is for education purposes or the Department for Education and Skills is satisfied that the land is no longer required for school use and its loss would not result in a continuing shortfall in recreational open space for the local community.

11.44 Safeguarding The Council recognises the importance of retaining existing sites for community facilities. The Structure Plan advises that local plans should make provision for safeguarding and enhancing existing open spaces for their recreational, amenity and nature conservation value. They should include proposals for resolving any shortfalls or securing enhancements.

11.45 The Council will seek a reasonable balance between the need to make adequate provision for development and the need to protect open spaces and other cultural and community facilities. This includes identifying suitable sites for additional facilities and protecting valuable existing facilities.

11.46 The Proposals Map identifies all areas of existing and proposed open space above 0.2 hectare (0.5 acre) within settlement boundaries. These sites, also sites below 0.2 hectare and sites outside settlement boundaries, are protected by Policy CF/4. In addition, many outdoor playing spaces have a high amenity value and are also afforded greater protection by Policy ECH/1 (Chapter 5). The protection CF/4 gives is based upon use, rather than appearance; development will not always

be precluded, provided that the policy tests are met. Policy ECH/1 is more concerned with location and the contribution that land makes to amenity, factors that do not so readily lend themselves to substitution. An assessment of needs will be undertaken to ascertain current shortfalls in open space provision (see para. 11.6 above).

11.47 Additional sites that the Council has identified for community development, or that are included within other agencies' plans, are to be protected and not developed for other purposes. Otherwise, less suitable, alternative sites may have to be identified to the disadvantage of some sections of the local population, or facilities not provided at all.

11.48 The site allocations shown on the Proposals Map and in the Schedule to Policy CF/4 are carried forward from the adopted North Somerset Local Plan. Requirements for service provision may change over the Plan period and, as a result, additional or alternative sites may be required. When assessing such 'windfall sites', particular reference should be made to Policies CF/2 and CF/3. The Council will encourage the provision of new or improved community facilities, provided the proposals are in conformity with other Local Plan policies.

11.49 Acceptability of loss It is necessary to ensure that appropriate levels of provision of cultural and community facilities are not prejudiced by the loss of existing or proposed facilities. Although North Somerset has not lost a significant amount of outdoor playing space to development, many parts of North Somerset, especially the urban areas, are lacking in outdoor playing space where there is little opportunity to improve provision. It is therefore imperative to retain existing outdoor playing spaces not only for their recreational value but for their contribution to the quality of the environment. As the loss of playing fields to built development is usually irrevocable, the Council considers that no further reduction of outdoor playing space (public or private) is justified except in the most over-riding of cases. The justification for this approach is that: (i) many areas of North Somerset do not meet the required NPFA standard; (ii) even if replacement facilities are offered these are usually on the fringes of the built-up area where they are not so accessible for existing users and will increase dependence on the car for access; (iii) the loss of outdoor playing spaces reduces the contribution to general amenity which such areas provide; (iv) even in the case of private playing fields that are underused, they should be retained for use by the public and other sports clubs.

11.50 There will be exceptional circumstances where the loss of open space or other facilities may be acceptable. These are listed in Policy CF/4 and the main considerations are described below:

Replacement facilities Replacement facilities are sometimes offered in compensation and these will generally be acceptable if the alternative is at least as good as what it replaces. For such an arrangement to be satisfactory the new facilities should be of an equivalent standard and be provided in the same vicinity. A key task in determining whether a replacement site is 'in the same vicinity' will be its accessibility to users on foot or by bicycle, as well as by motor vehicle.

Redundant/surplus to requirements The loss of a facility will be acceptable where it can be demonstrated to be surplus to the community's requirements. Where land or buildings are no longer required for one community use, they might be appropriate for another. Once the use has been allowed to change, however, land values will generally prohibit the site's reversion to a community use. The Council will therefore need to be satisfied, through internal and external consultation, that where an existing community use is proposed to be lost without suitable replacement elsewhere, the site is not required for an alternative community use.

Intensification The provision of all-weather pitches capable of intensive use can compensate for the loss of outdoor playing space, provided there is no adverse effect on the environment or residents' amenity (proposals for floodlighting will be assessed against Policy GDP/2, Chapter 4).

Partial redevelopment to secure/enhance community uses

Because of land scarcity and the need for a central and easily accessible location, outdoor playing space is often a preferred location for community buildings, for example, village halls. Such buildings will only be acceptable if they are available for general community use, the amount of outdoor playing space lost is minimised by careful design and siting, and the remainder is still capable of functioning as open space as intended. Small-scale structures which support the community use of the site or would provide facilities for new community uses will be acceptable i.e. in the case of outdoor playing space, buildings associated with outdoor recreation on the site, for example, changing rooms, pavilions and indoor recreation facilities will be acceptable provided outdoor recreational use remains the predominant use of the site. Green Belt policy does not permit new buildings for indoor recreation in the Green Belt (see Policy RD/3, Chapter 6).

Schedule to Policy CF/4 – Safeguarded sites for proposed cultural and community facilities

Site Ref.	Site Address	Grid ref.	Type of Facility	Ha.
Open space				
POP1	Bleadon, west of Bridge Road provision in Bleadon	339567	Outdoor playing space incorporating playing pitches and children's play area to meet identified under-provision in Claverham	2.5
POP21	Claverham, Stream Cross	443662	Outdoor playing space incorporating playing pitches and children's play area to meet identified under-	2.4

POP2	Clevedon, Brookfield Walk	419712	Open space incorporating children's play area, to North east and north of meet identified under provision in Clevedon	12.2
POP53	Flax Bourton	519697	Outdoor playing space	1.58
POP44	Long Ashton Research Station	534698	Open space incorporating children's play area to be implemented as part of the redevelopment of the former agricultural research station (see Housing site H54)	1.1
POP47	Long Ashton Research Station	534703	Outdoor playing space to be implemented as part of the redevelopment of the former agricultural research station (see Housing site H54)	2.2
POP52	Long Ashton, South of Long Ashton Road	543701	Open space incorporating children's play area to be implemented as part of the housing development south of Long Ashton Road (see Housing site H48)	3.4
POP4	Nailsea, north of Woodland Road	474714	Outdoor playing space incorporating playing pitches and children's play area to meet identified under-provision in Nailsea	2.6
POP3	Nailsea, north of Greenfield Crescent	471713	Outdoor playing space incorporating playing pitches and children's play area to meet identified under-provision in Nailsea	2.3
POP5	Nailsea, south west of Lodge Lane	487702	Open space to meet identified under-provision in west of Nailsea	3.4
POP29	Nailsea, Lodge Lane	484712	Open space to meet need associated with residential development at Lodge Lane	8.3
POP33	Portishead, Pill Park, Port Marine	470767	Open space to be implemented as part of the redevelopment of former Powerstation site, incorporating boating centre (see Housing site H7)	0.5

POP43	Portishead Quayside	473770	Open space and walkway around dockside	2.4
POP45	Portishead, Port Marine / Portishead Quays	474773	Open space to be implemented as part of the redevelopment of former Powerstation and Dockside sites (see Housing sites H7 and H8)	0.5
POP7	Portishead, Portbury Ditch Linear Park, Portishead Quays	475769	Open space to be implemented as part of the redevelopment of former Dockside area (see Housing site H9)	5.6
POP8	Portishead, Ashlands	482762	Open space, to be implemented as part of the Ashlands housing development (see Housing site H9)	5.5
POP41	Portishead, Ashlands Various	474763	Various areas of open space to be implemented as part of the Ashlands mixed development (see Housing site H9)	
POP50	Portishead, Ashlands, adjacent proposed primary school	477763	Open space to be implemented as part of the Ashlands development (see Housing site H9)	0.3
POP40	Portishead, Ashlands, East Portishead Linear Open Space	482768	Open space to be implemented as part of the Ashlands housing development (see Housing site H9)	6.6
POP34	Portishead, Clapton Lane Playing fields	470050	Playing pitches with changing facilities to meet identified under-provision arising from Ashlands housing development (see Housing site H9)	3.5
POP9	Tickenham, south of B3130 Tickenham	444718	Outdoor playing space incorporating playing pitches and children's play area to meet identified under-provision in	1.6

POP14	Weston-s-Mare, St Georges, Grumplepill Rhyne	370635	Open space incorporating children's play area and wetland feature to be implemented as part of the St Georges housing development (see Housing site H21)	7.4
POP38	Weston-s-Mare, St Georges	369631	Open space to be implemented as part of the St Georges housing development (see Housing site H21)	12.8
POP17	Weston-s-Mare, St Georges Village	377627	Open space, incorporating multi use games area (muga), to be implemented as part of the St Georges Village housing development (see Housing site H22)	0.3
POP39	Weston-s-Mare, St Georges, Linear Open Space	73635	Open space to be implemented as part of the St Georges housing development (see Housing site H21)	0.7
POP36	Weston-s-Mare, St Georges	378628	Open space to be implemented as part of the St Georges development (see Housing Site H21)	
POP27	Weston-s-Mare, Railway Triangle, Locking Castle	354617	Open space to be implemented as part of the Locking Castle Railway Triangle housing development (see Housing site H16)	0.4
POP18	Weston-s-Mare, West of Moor Lane Bridge, Locking Castle	358618	Open space to be implemented as part of the Locking Castle Moor Lane housing development (see Housing site H18)	5.6
POP54	Weston-s-Mare, Moor Lane, Locking Castle	356617	Open space to serve the Locking Castle area	1.3
POP28	Weston-s-Mare, west of District Centre / Summer Lane, Locking Castle	363617	Open space to be implemented as part of the development of Locking Castle Summer Lane housing development (see Housing site H17)	3.2

POP37	Weston-s-Mare, West of Summer Lane, Locking Castle	361619	Open space including strategic footpath and cycleway to be implemented as part of the Locking Castle Summer Lane housing development (see Housing site H18)	2.4
POP35	Weston-s-Mare, Locking Castle. Summer Lane Park	362618	Open space to be implemented as part of the development of Locking Castle Summer Lane housing development (see Housing site H17)	0.66
POP15	Weston-s-Mare west of Business Park, Locking Castle	371619	Open space incorporating wetland area, to be implemented as part of the Locking Castle West wick development (see Housing site H20 and employment site E22)	3.7
POP51	Weston-s-Mare, North Worle, Lynch Farm, Queensway	354635	Open space associated with Queensway redevelopment	1.1
POP49	Weston-s-Mare, Winterstoke Road	334595	Playing fields to compensate for loss of Weston-super-Mare Football Club (see Housing site H40)	2.7
POP10	Winford, Grounds of Primary School	538650	Outdoor playing space incorporating playing pitches to meet identified under-provision in Winford	0.7
POP11	Wrington, south of Rickford Road	473625	Outdoor playing space incorporating playing pitches and children's play area to meet identified under provision in Wrington	3.8
POP12	Yatton, west of Mendip Road	425655	Outdoor playing space incorporating playing pitches and children's play area to meet identified under-provision in Yatton	1.5

POP13	Yatton, west of Wemberham Lane	423660	Open space to meet identified under-provision in Yatton	0.4
Primary schools				
SFC1	Backwell, South of Church Lane	489682	Playing fields for Backwell CE VC Junior School	1.3
SFC16	Kewstoke, next to village hall	331635	Replacement of existing inadequate premises	1.5
SFC17	Long Ashton, west of Yanley Lane	549703	Replacement of Primary School within Long Ashton	1.1
SFC7	Portishead, East Portishead	476468	New 420-place primary school to meet needs of new development at Ashlands	1.8
SFC6	Portishead, Hightown Infant and Junior School	455757	Extension providing playing fields and recreation space	2.5
SFC12	Weston-s-Mare Wolvershill Rd West Wick	375619	New 210 place primary school	1.1
SFC13	Weston-s-Mare, Brimbleworth Lane South, St Georges	373630	Primary school	1.1
SFC22	Wrington, north of School Road	470629	Replacement of Wrington CE VC Primary School	1.3
SFC9	Yatton, rear of The Batch	426654	Replacement primary school and additional basic need provision	1.9
Secondary school				
SSC1	Easton-in-Gordano	532748	Extension to improve playing facilities St Katherines	1.3
SSC2	Weston-s-Mare,	367616	Seven-form secondary school Locking Castle	13.2

Social services and health				
HCR1	Clevedon, Hospital, Old Street	412713	Redevelopment to expand existing facilities	0.5
HCR2	Portishead, Wyndham Way	469762	Provision of Healthcare facilities	0.6
HCR4	Portishead, Town Centre Extension	468765	Site reserved for health centre to serve new development within new town centre extension	0.3
HCR6	Weston-s-Mare, Elham Way, Locking Castle District Centre	365621	Site reserved for adult mental health re- habilitation unit	0.2
HCR7	Weston-s-Mare Weston general Hospital	321887	Older mental health in- patient unit	0.9
HCR8	Diamond Batch	367623	Adult and older mental health resource centre (03/P/0852/RM)	0.5
HCR9	Diamond Batch, Weston- super-Mare	366624	Care home for the elderly including day care centre (03/O/1644/F)	1.6
Major recreational projects				
MRP1	Weston-s-Mare, Hutton Moor	338608	Multi-purpose sporting facility incorporating athletics track	18.3
MRP4	Weston-s-Mare, St Georges, Priory School	368630	Improved indoor sports facilities and artificial sports pitch	1.3
Places of worship				
POW2	Weston-s-Mare, Brimbleworth Lane, St Georges	365621	Place of worship	0.1

Places of worship				
POW2	Weston-s-Mare, Brimbleworth Lane, St Georges	365621	Place of worship	0.1
Cemeteries				
CEM1	Clevedon, Old Church Road	392706	Extension to existing cemetery	0.3
CEM2	Weston-s-Mare, Ebdon Road	355640	Extension to crematorium for garden of rest and uses ancillary to crematorium	2
CEM4	Banwell, Church Street	399592	Extension to existing cemetery	0.3
Community facilities				
CCH2	Weston-s-Mare, Land off Willow Close, St Georges	418690	Community Hall including children's play area and multi-use games area (muga)	0.4
CCH3	Portishead, East Portishead District Centre	468766	0.2 ha site reserved for library within town centre extension	0.2
CCH7	Kenn, Kenn Street	418690	Replacement of existing hall	0.4
CCH8	Weston-s-Mare, Maltlands, Railway Triangle	349615	Community Hall	0.2
CCH10	Weston-s-Mare, Ebdon Grounds	262643	Site reserved for community hall within Ebdon Grounds neighbourhood centre	0.02
Other community facilities				
OUF1	Nailsea, Trendlewood Way	479697	Unspecified community use	1.3
OUF3	Nailsea, Lodge Lane	483708	Provision for community uses	0.7

OUF9	Portishead, Boat storage Yard	474769	Boat storage yard	1.2
OUF7	Weston-s-Mare, St Georges	372636	Site reserved for public house	0.2
OUF8	Weston-s-Mare, Ebdon Grounds	363643	Site reserved for public house within Ebdon Grounds neighbourhood centre	0.1
Public utilities				
PUS1	Clevedon, Princes Road	405714	Site for 33/11 KV substation	0.02
PUS2	Clevedon, Near Colehouse Farm	406697	Site for 33/11 KV substation	0.16
PUS6	Easton-in- Gordano, Markham Farm	520749	Site for 33/11 KV substation	0.2
PUS7	Nailsea, West End	442693	Site for 33/11 KV substation	1.7
PUS3	Nailsea, Pound Lane	469712	Site for 33/11 KV substation	0.09
PUS4	Tickenham, Moore Lane	447717	Site for 33/11 KV substation	0.12
PUS8	Weston-s-Mare, Beach Road	318611	Site for 33/11 KV substation	0.01
PUS9	Weston-s-Mare, Ebdon Grounds	365643	Site for 33/11 KV substation	0.06
PUS5	Weston-s-Mare, Lypstone Farm, Locking Castle	362616	Expanded substation	0.2
Proposed allotments				
PAL1	Land between Weston-in- Gordano and North Weston	460746	Site safeguarded for proposed allotments	1

PAL2	Weston-s-Mare, Railway triangle Locking Castle	356617	Site safeguarded for proposed allotments	1.5
PAL5	Clevedon, Rear of Hither Green Industrial Estate	418709	Site safeguarded for proposed allotments	0.3

Educational provision School playing fields represent an important community resource. Where they are no longer required for educational purposes, but there is a shortfall of open space within the locality then the priority should be to retain them as outdoor playing space. If there is no shortfall in open space but there is a demonstrable need for other cultural or community facilities then permission for non-community use will not be granted.

11.51 **Allotments** Demand for allotments is variable over time, but it is reasonable to assume that with increasing amounts of leisure time and smaller gardens, demand will at least remain stable over the Plan period. The Council will therefore generally seek the retention of existing allotments in that use. 'Statutory allotments' can only be disposed of with the consent of the Secretary of State; the criteria used for assessing such requests are additional to planning requirements. New allotment provision will be sought where large-scale residential development is planned, such as at Locking Castle, and where it is planned to develop existing allotments for cemetery use at Portishead and Clevedon.

11.52 **Public houses** The local pub is often a focal point for the community, especially in villages. The Council cannot prevent the closure of a pub that is no longer viable but it does have some control over changes to other uses. It will use its planning powers to ensure that the importance of the pub to the community is taken into account when considering applications for conversion to residential or other use. Monitoring Outcome objective: To ensure an appropriate level and quality of community facilities within the district. To safeguard existing facilities in line with identified standards or local needs. Output objective: Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

To ensure an appropriate level and quality of community facilities within the district. To safeguard existing facilities in line with identified standards or local needs.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Policy CF/5 – Telecommunications development

Planning permission for telecommunications development will be granted or prior approval given, provided that the following criteria are met.

- i. New antennae are to be located on existing masts, buildings or structures wherever possible, or alongside existing installations where this will provide a more environmentally acceptable solution.
- ii. The siting and external appearance of the apparatus and associated landscaping are designed to minimise environmental impact and effect on residential amenities.

In addition, within more sensitive areas and their settings more careful siting and design will be required. Operators will need to demonstrate that no suitable alternative site exists. Sensitive areas include the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), historic landscapes, Historic Parks and Gardens, ancient monuments (whether scheduled or not), and prominent landscape features.

Proposals for development in the Green Belt will not be approved unless the quality of openness is maintained. Sensitive siting and design will be required of proposed telecommunications developments and developers will need to demonstrate that no suitable alternative site exists.

11.53 Transmitters and masts are an essential and beneficial element in the life of the local community and contribute to the growth of the national economy. The Government's overall approach to planning for telecommunications, set out in PPG8, is to seek a balance between the need and demand for maintaining and developing telecommunications systems and the protection of amenity. Policy EC5 of Regional Planning Guidance encourages investment in communications networks and associated technology but also demands that adequate regard is given to local environmental and amenity considerations. The Government also has responsibility for protecting public health and the Council will take into account the latest advice from Government on health risks from mobile telecommunication base stations (see Policy GDP/2, Chapter 4). Planning applications and applications for prior approval of siting and appearance of apparatus will need to include a statement that when operational the apparatus will meet International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines.

11.54 Much telecommunications development does not require a planning application but under the General Permitted Development Order 1995 (as amended), it may require prior approval by the local planning authority with respect to siting and design. PPG8 states that it is legitimate for local planning authorities to require evidence of need for the proposed development.

11.55 Sites visually conspicuous from sensitive areas shall be regarded as being within that area for the purposes of assessing siting, design and materials and their effect on visual amenity. The Council will have regard to particular technical constraints on the location and design of proposed development, however in all locations the siting and proliferation of

unsuitably placed or unsightly structures will be discouraged. Existing masts or buildings are to be preferred as locations for new apparatus. In most cases mast sharing is to be preferred unless it can be shown that an additional structure located alongside or behind an existing installation would be the least environmentally damaging option. Developers may be asked to demonstrate that mast or site sharing has been considered.

- 11.56** Developers will be expected to explore innovative design solutions. In assessing the appearance, siting and design of proposed development whether for prior approval or planning approval the Council will take into account issues such as materials, colour, dimensions, overall shape and whether the structure is solid or open, topography, vegetation and relationship to the skyline. Particularly in sensitive areas the aim should be to blend into the landscape.
- 11.57** Proposals for planning permission or prior approval for development in the Green Belt will not be approved unless the quality of openness is maintained, or very special circumstances are shown to exist which outweigh the harm caused. The lack of suitable sites outside the Green Belt that would meet the needs of network coverage or capacity may be considered a very special circumstance (see Policy RD/3, Chapter 6). Advice on development in AONB's is provided in PPG7 and on nature conservation aspects in PPG9. Listed Building Consent is required where telecommunications development proposals affect the architectural or historic interest of a Listed Building.
- 11.58** Where it is appropriate, the Council will impose conditions requiring the removal of antennae or masts if they become redundant.

Monitoring

Outcome objective

Telecommunications development should be provided in accordance with Policy CF/5.

Output objective

Through development control and monitoring of planning applications.

Appendix 1.1

General Development Sites

This appendix sets out the major sites allocated for development during the Plan period. These include proposals for both mixed-use and single use schemes. The background for the allocations is set out in the relevant chapters of the Local Plan e.g. Economy, Housing, Retailing and Town Centres, Cultural and Community Facilities, etc. The sites are also shown on the Proposals Map. The requirements and proposals shown are by no means exhaustive and are intended to provide an overview of the main development requirements of the sites included. Details, including construction status, are accurate at April 2006.

West Wick, Locking Castle – site area 54 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site References: H20, E22, POP15
Inset Map 42

337458 161970

Development Requirements:

Comprehensive mixed use scheme including:

- Significant provision for business development, 12.5 ha, predominantly B1 use
- Around 600 dwellings (10% affordable housing on 500 dwellings and 30% on 100 dwellings – total of 80 affordable dwellings) and provision of live / work units
- Mix of densities ranging from 35 – 55 dph
- Substantial area of open space (3.7 ha) to include wetland area/habitat
- Public art on site including item adjacent to motorway, bridge within POS, boundary treatment and play equipment
- 210 place primary school (1.1 ha)
- Secondary school (13.2ha)
- Access via West Wick bypass and Wovershill Road
- Cycle and pedestrian links to Priory School and Locking Castle District Centre
- Financial contributions to M5 Junction 21 upgrade
- Five year subsidies from developers for bus services on development
- Major business / conference orientated hotel (3.4 ha)

Construction Status: Lidl distribution centre and other smaller employment units completed. Outline planning application for residential and further employment use approved.

Vacant land not previously developed within WsM settlement boundary.

Phasing: 600 dwellings 2006 – 2011

Moor Lane, (including Airport View), Locking Castle – site area 48.8 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site References: H18, POP18, POP54

Inset Map 42

335605 161454

Development Requirements:

Large scale housing and community development including:

- Around 1700 dwellings to include a wide range and mix of house types and sizes
- Densities ranging from around 30- 65 dph
- Residential dwellings bordering the Primary Distributor Road
- Substantial area of POS (6.9 ha)
- Financial contributions towards the provision of a new primary school
- Public art in the form of statues within play areas
- Cycle and pedestrian links to Worle School, Locking Castle District Centre and Weston-super-Mare town cycle network
- New road link / road bridge to adjacent Railway Triangle development
- Access to site from existing Moor Lane and Old Mill Way via the Summer Lane development
- Financial contributions to M5 Junction 21 upgrade
- Financial contributions to River Banwell Flood Alleviation works
- Subsidies towards local bus service
- New electricity sub-station

Construction Status: 588 1355 dwellings completed, with a further 184 82 under construction. Several other planning permissions approved but not yet started, several more currently under consideration. Airport View Caravan Park has outline consent for residential.

Vacant land not previously developed within WsM settlement boundary.

Phasing: 331 dwellings before 2011; (218 Moor Lane and 113 Airport View)

St Georges – site area 20.7 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site References: H21, E21, M3, POW2, POP14, 38, 39, and 36

Inset Map 42

337395 163293

Development Requirements:

Large scale housing and community scheme including:

- Around 550 dwellings to include 15 affordable units
- Around 1.63 ha of land for mixed-use development including 0.73 ha for employment purposes (B1, B2 and B8) and 0.9 ha for residential development of 45 dwellings including 14 affordable units
- Primary school within development
- Inclusion of Place of Worship / community hall within development

- Linear open space running parallel to the River Banwell
- Public art on site to be arranged
- Cycleway provision to form a continuous link from North Worle to Queensway
- Cycle and pedestrian links to Priory School and Queensway District Centre
- Financial contribution to M5 Junction 21 upgrade
- Financial contribution to River Banwell Flood Alleviation works
- Financial contribution to the provision of cycle / footbridge on Bristol Road
- Provision of public house and restaurant through the retention of Brimbleworth Farmhouse (Grade II Listed building)
- Access via Dunedin Way and the continuation and completion of Meadowlands as a second access
- Minimise the impact of development on adjoining countryside and River Banwell

Construction Status: 239 552 dwellings completed. Primary school under construction.

Vacant land not previously developed within WsM settlement boundary.

Phasing: 45 dwellings 2006 – 2011

Aisecome Way – site area 11.3 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: E17, M6

Inset Map 42

334424 161013

Development Requirements:

Major mixed-use scheme including:

- Remaining land approximately 5.8 ha of land for employment use (B1, B2 and B8) and 3.6 ha for non-food retail use
- Approximately 1.5 ha of land for a demonstration plant for research into waste and the recovery of materials and energy
- Resistance to the development of non-employment (B1, B2 and B8) uses on employment element
- Access to site via Aisecome Way (through road)
- Cycle and pedestrian links to Weston-super-Mare town cycle network
- Enhancement of landscaping along Herluin Way to shield road from Development

Construction Status: Speculative and purpose built employment premises completed. Consents for non-employment uses including car sales and repair and A3 uses have been implemented. Site now allocated as mixed-use site comprising employment (B1, B2 and B8) and retail use.

Vacant land not previously developed within WsM settlement boundary.

Weston-super-Mare Football Club – site area 2.7 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: H40

Inset Map 42

333356 160244

Development Requirements:

Residential scheme including:

- Around 214 dwellings
- High density urban form (80 dph)
- 14% affordable housing (29 dwellings)
- Cycle and pedestrian links to Wyvern School and greater Weston-super-Mare town cycle network
- Provision of surface water drainage works within development.

Construction Status: Planning application for 214 dwellings approved.

79 dwellings complete, with a further 40 under construction.

Redevelopment of existing uses within WsM settlement boundary.

Phasing: 135 dwellings 2006 – 2011

Port Marine, Portishead – site area 21.5ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site References:

H7, POP46, 33, 22 and 45

Inset Map 35

347267 177267

Development Requirements:

Major residential and community development including:

- 939 dwellings (831 complete 108 remaining) including 10% affordable housing
- High density urban form with substantial number of flats / apartments on site
- Around 4.5 ha of POS including a central park area and linear walkway along dock edge
- Public art throughout the site, within central park area and within public open space areas around dock edge
- 330 place primary school to meet needs of new housing
- Inclusion of community facilities in the form of a boating centre
- Cycle and pedestrian links to Portishead Town Centre
- Financial contribution to the redevelopment of the Cabstand area
- Surface water drainage strategy upgrades to Portbury Ditch outfall.

Construction Status: 831 dwellings complete and a further 97 under construction. Primary school complete.

Vacant, previously developed land or buildings within Portishead settlement boundary.

Phasing: 108 dwellings 2006 – 2011

Dockside, Portishead – site area 27.5 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site References: H8, E7, POP45, POP7
Inset Map 35

347498 177000

Development Requirements:

Comprehensive mixed use scheme including:

- 1000 dwellings (10% affordable housing)
- Around 6.5 ha of land for employment use (B1, B2 and B8)
- Town centre extension (4.5 ha) to include library, food store, health centre, shops and various A3 uses
- Around 2.2 ha of unspecified community use likely to reflect the nature of the site and include a boat yard, hoist and lock
- Over 5.5 ha of POS to include linear walkway along dock edge
- On site public art provision
- Access via Harbour Road
- Cycle and pedestrian links to Portishead Town Centre
- Substantial / comprehensive land decontamination
- Surface water drainage strategy upgrades to Portbury Ditch outfall.

Construction Status: Outline planning application approved, several reserved matters applications for residential, employment, library and mixed-use applications approved. 4000+ sqm foodstore completed.

Vacant, previously developed land or buildings within Portishead settlement boundary.

Phasing: 1000 dwellings 2006 – 2011

The Ashlands, Portishead – site area 68.4 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site References: H9, E8, POP8, 41, 50, 40 and 34, SFC7

Inset Map 35

147939 176708

Development Requirements:

Large scale housing and community scheme including:

- Around 1500 dwellings including 10% affordable housing (150 houses)
- Around 15.5 ha of POS throughout the site
- On site public art provision
- 420 place primary school to meet the needs of the new development
- Relocation of electricity substation from the centre to the north east of site
- Financial contributions to M5 Junction 19 improvements
- Formal recreation playing fields off site provision at Clapton Lane
- Minimise the impact of development on adjoining countryside and Green Belt
- Cycle and pedestrian links to Portishead Town Centre
- £1 million contribution towards rail studies / infrastructure

- £1 million contribution to subsidise bus services
- Pegasus crossing on Portbury Hundred
- Surface water drainage strategy upgrades to Portbury Ditch outfall.

Construction Status: 14 reserved matters applications now approved for 764 dwellings. 369 dwellings complete with a further 155 dwellings under construction.

Vacant, previously developed land or buildings within Portishead settlement boundary.

Phasing: 1,131 dwellings 2006 – 2011

Gordano Gate, Portishead – site area 6.5 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: E4

Inset Map 35

347257 176286

Development Requirements:

Major employment scheme including:

- 6.5 ha for the development of employment uses (B1, B2 and B8)
- Access to site from Serbert Way and Serbert Road serving existing Coleman unit
- Resistance to the development of non-employment (B1, B2 and B8) uses on site
- Cycle and pedestrian links to Portishead Town Centre

Construction Status: Coleman UK building completed along with various speculative and purpose built employment buildings. Other non-employment uses (public house, restaurant and nursery) also complete.

Vacant, previously developed land or buildings within Portishead settlement boundary.

The Vale, Portishead – site area 23 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site References: H10, E5

Inset Map 35

347632 176071

Development Requirements:

Mixed use scheme including:

- 491 dwellings on site
- Access to new dwellings via The Bramleys
- Comparatively low density to minimise the effect of development on adjoining Green Belt and open countryside
- Retention and protection of Moor Farm, Portbury Common (Grade II Listed Building)
- Approximately 2.2 ha for employment use (B1, B2 and B8) on two separate plots of land
- Two new points of access both onto Conference Avenue
- Minimise possible loss of amenity issues to nearby residential dwellings

- Cycle and pedestrian links to Portishead Town Centre

Construction Status: All 491 dwellings completed. Employment (office) buildings complete on one employment site, the other remains vacant.

Vacant land not previously developed within Portishead settlement boundary.

Phasing: 12 dwellings 2002 – 2006
93

Clevedon 5/20 – site area 8.5 9.5 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: E26
Inset Map 12
341104 169718

Development Requirements:

Major employment scheme including:

- 8.5 ha of land for employment use (B1, B2 and B8)
- Resistance to the development of non-employment (B1, B2 and B8) uses on site
- 1 ha of land for employment use (B1, B2 and B8) and A3 retail use at Portbury House
- Listed Building at Portbury House to be retained
- Access via Kenn Road

Construction Status: Major employment uses (BOC, Palm International, WH Ware) constructed and operating on site. Several further approved buildings are currently under construction with only a small amount of land remaining to be developed.

Vacant land not previously developed.

Ham Green Hospital – site area 12.7 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site References: H49, E27
Inset Map 17
353139 175610

Development Requirements:

Mixed use scheme including:

- 165 dwellings in total
- 15 affordable dwellings
- Conversion of former Nurse's School to flats
- Development of seven office buildings for B1 use
- Conversion of Ham Green Lodge to B1 employment use
- Area of public open space on former orchard
- On-site public art provision
- Access from Ham Green
- Minimise the effects of development on surrounding Green Belt
- Cycle and pedestrian links to Pill and Bristol via Ashton to Pill path
- Improvements to Ham Green Road and reconstruction of Hospital Road

- Road safety improvements around St Katherine's School

Construction Status: All 165 dwellings complete. Several office /employment units completed with further units under construction and other applications under consideration.

Redevelopment of existing uses – former hospital (major site in the Green Belt)

Phasing: 53 dwellings 2002-2006

Long Ashton Research Station – site area 14.3 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site References: H54, E28, POP44, POP47

Inset Map 26

353436 169977

Development Requirements:

Mixed use scheme including:

- 342 dwellings on approximately 9.8 ha
- 20% affordable housing (68 dwellings)
- 4500 sqm of employment use (B1) on 1.2 ha
- Around 1 ha of POS
- Provision of over 2 ha of playing fields
- Two new access points onto Weston Road and improvements to Weston Road
- Alteration of existing access onto Wild Country Lane
- Upgrading of bus stops and shelters on Weston Road
- Cycle and pedestrian links to local primary schools and village centre

Construction Status: Mixed-use planning application approved. 84 dwellings complete and a further 66 dwellings under construction.

Redevelopment of existing uses – former agricultural research station within Long Ashton settlement boundary.

Phasing: 342 dwellings 2002 – 2006 258 dwellings 2006 – 2011

Moor Lane, Backwell – site area 8.3 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site References: H46, E24, POP20

Inset Map 2

347902 168981

Development Requirements:

Mixed use scheme including:

- 90 dwellings on 3.8 ha
- 10% affordable housing (9 dwellings)
- Around 3 ha for employment use (B1, B2 and B8)
- Approximately 1.5 ha of POS
- Improvements to Moor Lane and Station Road junction
- General improvements to Moor Lane

Construction Status: All 100 dwellings completed. At present the employment allocation has no planning approval.

Vacant land not previously developed within Backwell settlement boundary.

Clarence Road / Beach Road – site area 0.9ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: H56

Inset Map 42

331772 160370

Development Requirements:

Residential redevelopment scheme including:

- 106 dwellings predominantly apartments
- High density urban form (100 – 150 dph)
- 20% on site affordable housing (16 – 24 units)
- Retention of 3-5 Clarence Road including repair and reinstatement of elevations where necessary
- The enhancement and protection of the Beach Lawns Conservation Area
- POS contribution to the improvement of Beach Lawns / Clarence Park area

Construction Status: Two planning applications for 106 dwellings approved and under construction.

Redevelopment of existing uses – existing residential and nursing home within WsM settlement boundary.

Phasing: 109 dwellings 2002 – 2006 106 dwellings 2006 – 2011

Weston Gateway – site area 8.4 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: H61, E37, M1

Inset map 42

337119 162149

Development Requirements:

Mixed-use scheme including:

- 136 dwellings on 2.85 ha (14 dwellings already under construction at Appletree Farm)
- 30% affordable housing (41 dwellings)
- Residential element to the west of the site adjoining existing residential development
- Around 2.75 ha for B1a employment use
- Hotel development to front Bristol Road

Construction Status: No current planning permissions.

Vacant land not previously developed within Weston-super-Mare settlement boundary.

Phasing: 136 dwellings 2006 – 2011

East of Park and Ride, Locking Castle – site area 9.4 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: H17, E19, M2
Inset map 42

337057 162437

Development Requirements:

Mixed-use scheme including:

- 100 dwellings on 2 ha
- 30% affordable housing (30 dwellings)
- Around 7.4 ha for employment use (B1, B2 and B8)
- Access to employment development via Somerset Avenue

Construction Status: No current planning permissions.

Vacant land not previously developed within Weston-super-Mare settlement boundary.

Phasing: 100 dwellings 2006 – 2011

A.P. Burt Paper Mill site, Portishead – site area 4.1 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: H65, E34
Inset map 35

347525 176721

Development Requirements:

Residential and employment scheme including:

- 120 dwellings on 2.4 ha
- 30% affordable housing (36 dwellings)
- Around 1.7 ha for employment use (B1, B2 and B8)

Construction Status: No current planning permissions.

Redevelopment of existing uses – employment site within Portishead settlement boundary.

Phasing: 120 dwellings 2006 – 2011

Barrow Hospital, Barrow Gurney – site area 23 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference:

Inset map East

353933 168893

Development Requirements:

Mixed-use scheme including:

- Employment use (B1) in the form of a Science Park and conversion to offices
- Workshop provision (B1c use)
- Leisure uses to include an equestrian centre, rugby pitch and clubhouse and cricket pitch and pavilion

- A maximum of 18 residential units including existing units, conversions and new build
 - The retention of broadleaf woodland and parkland setting
 - No increase in the footprint, volume or height of the buildings
 - Improved accessibility and footway improvements
 - Improved access to local bus services
 - Detailed travel plan

Construction Status: Outline planning application for mixed-use scheme comprising mainly employment and leisure uses

Previously developed site designated as Major Developed Site in the Green Belt

Phasing: 2006 – 2011

Former Gasworks – site area 3.5 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: M7, E14

Inset map 42

332827 160709

Development Requirements:

Mixed-use scheme including:

- 1.2 ha of non-food retail / leisure use fronting Marchfields Way
- Around 2.3 ha of employment use (B1, B2 and B8)

Construction Status: No current planning permissions.

Vacant derelict land with intermittent storage use within Weston-super-Mare settlement boundary

Phasing: 2006 – 2011

Land west of Kenn Road, Clevedon – site area 8.2 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: E39

Inset map 12

340891 169393

Development Requirements:

Major employment scheme:

- 8.2 ha of employment use (B1, B2 and B8)
- Resistance to the development of non-employment uses on site
- Access from Kenn Road

Construction Status: No current planning permissions.

Vacant land not previously developed outside Clevedon settlement boundary

Phasing: 2006 – 2011

South of Herluin Way, Weston-super-Mare – site area 30.6 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: M5, E15

Inset map 42

333888 160577

Development Requirements:

Major mixed-use scheme:

- 10.5 ha of employment use (B1, B2 and B8) at southern end of site
- 10 ha of non-food retail uses opposite existing retail park
- 10.1 ha of leisure / open space uses

Construction Status: No current planning permissions.

Vacant land not previously developed within Weston-super-Mare settlement boundary

Phasing: 2006 – 2011

Bridge Farm, Weston-super-Mare – site area 1.5 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: H63, M4

Inset map 42

336995 162674

Development Requirements:

Mixed-use scheme including:

- 70 dwellings on 1 ha
- 30% affordable housing (21 dwellings)
- 0.5 ha of B1 employment use

Construction Status: No current planning permissions.

Vacant land not previously developed within Weston-super-Mare settlement boundary

Phasing: 2006 – 2011

Winterstoke Road Business Park, Weston-super-Mare – site area 26 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: E12

Inset map 42

333944 159420

Development Requirements:

Major employment development including:

- 26 ha of employment use (B1, B2 and B8)
- Resistance to the development of non-employment uses on site
- Site forms major part of wider regeneration of Weston-super-Mare

Construction Status: No current planning permissions.

Redevelopment of existing uses / derelict previously developed land within Weston-super-Mare settlement boundary

Phasing: 2006 – 2011

Weston Airfield East, Weston-super-Mare – site area 33 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: E36

Inset map 42

334819 160733

Development Requirements:

Major employment development including:

- 33 ha of B1a employment use
- Development of prestige business / office development
- Resistance to the development of non B1 employment uses on site
- Site forms major part of wider regeneration of Weston-super-Mare

Construction Status: No current planning permissions.

Vacant land not previously developed land outside Weston-super-Mare settlement boundary

Phasing: 2006 – 2011

RAF Locking- site area 25 ha

Written Statement Policy Schedule Site Reference: E35

Inset map 25 and 42

337257 160050

Development Requirements:

Major employment development including:

- 25 ha of B1 employment use
- Development of prestige business / office development
- Resistance to the development of non B1 employment uses on site
- Site forms major part of wider regeneration of Weston-super-Mare

Construction Status: No current planning permissions.

Vacant previously developed land outside Weston-super-Mare / Locking settlement boundaries

Phasing: 2006 – 2011



Appendix 1.2

Regeneration Sites

This appendix lists those previously-used sites which are the subject of proposals in the Plan. One of the targets associated with Policy GDP/1 is that all of these sites will be brought into use over the Plan period. These sites will be the priority locations for new development.

Comprehensive Mixed-use Development /Major Schemes Location and Site Reference Policy

Former Portishead Power Station, Port Marine, Portishead

See Policies H/2 including residential allocation (H7), public open space (POP46 and CF/4, POP33 and POP22) and CF/4

Land at Portishead Quays, Portishead including residential

See Policies H/2, E/5, (H8), employment (E7), public open space (POP43, POP45 and POP7), town centre extension (HCR4) to include health centre, (CCH3) library and community facilities relating to the use of the marina (OUF9, OUF10 and OUF12), and CF/4

Ashlands, Portishead including residential (H9), employment

See Policies H/2, E/5, (E8), public open space (POP8, POP40, POP41 and POP50), and primary school (SFC7)

Long Ashton Research Station, Long Ashton including residential (H54), employment (E28), public open space and CF/4, (POP44)

See Policies H/2, E/5

Redundant Hospital Sites

Ham Green Hospital, Easton-in-Gordano including completed residential area and employment (E27).

See Policies RD/6, H/2 and E/5

Barrow Hospital, Barrow Gurney including healthcare, employment, residential, leisure and educational use.

See Policy RD/6

Key Regeneration Sites – Weston Seafront / Town Centre / Weston Regeneration Area**Location and Site Reference Policy****The primary retail area of the Town Centre**

See Policy E/1A

Knightstone Island

See Policies E/1A, H/2

Birnbeck Pier

See Policy E/1A

Tropicana

See Policy E/1A

Dolphin Square

See Policy E/1A

Winterstoke Road Business Park

See Policy E/1C

Weston Airfield East

See Policy E1/C

RAF Locking

See Policy E/1C

Former Gasworks site, WsM

See Policy E/3, M7 and E/5, (E14)

Other Regeneration Sites to be brought into use**Land at ABB, High Street, Nailsea (E1) –**

See Policy E/5. Safeguarded employment sites.

Gordano Gate, Wyndham Way, Portishead (E4) –

See Policy E/5. Safeguarded employment sites.

Old Brickworks, Bristol Road, Portishead (E6) –

See Policy E/5. Safeguarded employment sites.

Land at Sunnyside, Weston-super-Mare (E13) –

See Policy E/5. Safeguarded employment sites.

Former Gas Works, Marchfields Way, Weston-super-Mare (E14)

See Policy E/5, Safeguarded employment sites.

Winterstoke Road/Old Junction Road, Weston-super-Mare (E15)

See Policy E/5, Safeguarded employment sites

Land at Havyatt Road Trading Estate, Wrington (E29)

See Policy E/5, Safeguarded employment sites.

Land at Wemberham Lane, Yatton (E30)

See Policy E/5, Safeguarded employment sites.

Land at Arnolds Way, Yatton (E31)

See Policy E/5, Safeguarded employment sites.

Land at Wemberham Lane, Yatton (E33)

See Policy E/5, Safeguarded employment sites.

Portbury House, Clevedon (E26 extension)

See Policy E/5, Safeguarded employment sites.

Staddon's Timber Yard, Moor Lane, Clevedon (H1)

See Policy H/2, Proposed sites for new residential development.

Land at Beach Avenue, Clevedon (H2)

See Policy H/2, Proposed sites for new residential development.

Albert Road Depot, Portishead (H60)

See Policy H/2, Proposed sites for new residential development.

Land at Atlantic Road South, Weston-super-Mare (H14)

See Policy H/2, Proposed sites for new residential development.

Manilla Place, Weston-super-Mare (H26)

See Policy H/2, Proposed sites for new residential development.

Airport View Caravan Park, Weston-super-Mare (H19)

See Policy H/2, Proposed sites for new residential development.

Orchard House, Ebdon Road, Weston-super-Mare (H29)

See Policy H/2, Proposed sites for new residential development.

39 South Road, Weston-super-Mare (H38)

See Policy H/2

Old Calor Gas Centre, Rectors Way, Weston-super-Mare (H39)

See Policy H/2, – Proposed sites for new residential development.

WsM Football Club, Winterstoke Road, WsM (H40)

See Policy H/2, Proposed sites for new residential development.

Stowell Concrete, Kenn (H50)

See Policy H/2

Land and buildings at Beach Road / Clarence Road, Weston-super-Mare (H55)

See Policy H/2,

Papermill Site, Portishead –

See Policy E/5, H/2

Royal Pier Hotel, Weston-super-Mare

See Policy H/2

Royal Pier Hotel, Clevedon

See Policy H/

141 Milton Road, Weston-super-Mare

See Policy H/2

Dorville Hotel, Weston-super-Mare

See Policy H/2

Severn Road, Weston-super-Mare

See Policy H/2

141 High Street, Portishead

See Policy H/2

New Bristol Road, Weston-super-Mare

See Policy H/2

Smart Systems site, Yatton

See Policy H/2

Arnold's Way site, Yatton

See Policy H/2

The Regent, Hill Road, Clevedon

See Policy H/2

Brighton Road, Weston-super-Mare

See Policy H/2

Whitecross Road, Weston-super-Mare

See Policy H/2

St Saviour's Church, Locking Road, Weston-super-Mare

See Policy H/2

Long Ashton Road, Long Ashton

See Policy H/2

Linden Road Methodist Church, Clevedon

See Policy H/2

Oxford Plasma site, Yatton

See Policy H/2

Clevedon Hospital, Old Street, Clevedon (HCR1) –

social services and health care. See Policy CF/4

St Peter's School, High Street, Portishead (OUF2) –

unspecified community use See Policy CF/4



North Somerset Council, Somerset House, Oxford Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1TG.