

West Somerset Annual Monitoring Report 2007/8

Part of the West Somerset
Local Development Framework



December 2008

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Executive Summary

- 0.1 The Council has a statutory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004¹, to submit an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to the Secretary of State by 31 December of each year. This is one of the portfolio of documents that comprise the Local Development Framework (LDF) in the new development plan regime introduced as part of the 2004 legislation. This document is the third AMR and covers the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008. The purpose of the document is to assess the:
- Implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS); and,
 - Extent to which policies in the Local Development Documents (LDD's) are being achieved.
- 0.2 A total of four types of indicator are required to monitor the effectiveness of planning policies:
- **Contextual Indicators.** These describe the wider social, environmental and economic background against which Local Development Framework (LDF) policies operate;
 - **Core Output indicators.** These assess the performance of policies in relation to national targets, for example housing completions per annum are measured;
 - **Local Output Indicators.** These are set at the local level and are specific to measuring the performance of policies in relation to local targets; and,
 - **Significant Effects Indicators.** These assess significant social, environmental and economic effects of policies and are linked to the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 0.3 This year's AMR is not comprehensive, and the national guidance indicates that it is acceptable for AMRs to develop gradually to take account of ongoing discussions, tools to assist in monitoring being developed by statutory bodies, and emerging best practice.
- 0.4 Due to a change of emphasis as to the content of LDF documents including the DCLG requirement that the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) should be given priority, limited availability of staff resources in throughout 2007 and most of 2008, progress on the preparation of LDD's under the new development plan regime was delayed. Following negotiations with Government Office for the South West, a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS)² was submitted to them at the end of the AMR reporting period and was subsequently approved in July 2008. The Statement of Community

¹ H.M. Government; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: Chapter 5; HMSO; 2004; ISBN 0 10 540504 3

² West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; West Somerset Council; 2008.

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involvement (SCI)³ had been endorsed as fit for purpose following Independent Examination (Reg. 34⁴) stage and was approved for Adoption by Full Council on 31st October 2007.

- 0.5 Joint working between West Somerset Council, Somerset County Council and the South West Regional Assembly through the County Strategic Information Providers (CSIP) group has benefited the preparation of the AMR. The group shares best practice and information on monitoring.

Contextual Indicators

- 0.6 The Contextual Indicators paint a picture of West Somerset's environment, economy and social standing. The data however in some cases is up to four years old and represents the whole of West Somerset district as opposed to the West Somerset local planning area. This is a continuing challenge to the presentation of an accurate picture through the AMR of the local planning authority area as many of the recognised sources of data use local authority administrative boundaries as the smallest geographical building block for the dissemination of data.
- 0.7 The population of West Somerset is very low for the physical size of the District when compared with other local authorities in Somerset, with approximately 35,400⁵ people residing in the whole of the District area. One third of these live in the largest settlement, Minehead. 52.5% of the district's population are aged 50 years or over and 32.8% are over retirement age (60 for females, 65 for males)⁶ and the age profile identifies a significant absence of people between the ages of 19 to 34⁷. This suggests a lack of higher education facilities and well-paid jobs exist in the area to encourage future generations of the indigenous population to remain here. Also, higher than average house prices have been causing out-migration as prospective first-time buyers find it increasingly difficult to find affordable housing to buy on the starting salaries and wages offered in many local jobs.
- 0.8 The average household size in West Somerset is 2.16⁸, which is less than the averages for South West England and England and Wales. The District contains a higher than regional and national averages of 1 person households at over 33%⁹. This correlates with the high number of elderly people in the District, who are likely to make up a large proportion of these households.

³ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Statement of Community Involvement (Adopted 2008); West Somerset Council; 2008.

⁴ H.M. Government; The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 2204); HMSO; 2004; ISBN 0 11 049748 1

⁵ Office for National Statistics; Resident Population Estimates for Local Authorities: The Local Authority Mid-Year Population Estimate for 2007; Office for National Statistics; 2008; (data-set)

⁶ Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics: Resident Population Estimates – All Persons 2007; Office for National Statistics; 2008; (data-set)

⁷ Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; Office for National Statistics; 2003

⁸ ibid

⁹ ibid

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- 0.9 The percentage of second homes in the district (5.8%) far exceeds the regional and national figures¹⁰. This is thought to be a contributory factor to the high ratio (9.07:1) of average house price¹¹ to average earnings¹² in Somerset, which is the one of highest in England. This statistic correlates with the fall in persons between the ages of 19 and 34, who have found it difficult to step onto the housing ladder. The tenure of dwellings perhaps disguises this problem, given that a higher percentage of dwellings are in private ownership in West Somerset than the rest of the United Kingdom.
- 0.10 The district's economic performance is rather mixed when compared to the national average. Although the unemployment rate of 1.4% in West Somerset sits below the national rate of 2.2%¹³, the average earnings per week (by residence), £439.60, is over £30 below the national equivalent of £471.90¹⁴. This can be attributed to the significant presence of low-paid and seasonal industries such as farming and tourism in the District within the local economy.
- 0.11 Despite West Somerset's rurality and associated accessibility problems, the Census 2001¹⁵ shows private vehicle use for travelling to work to be at 57.5%, which is well below the national figure of 65.27%. This proportion of people walking or cycling to work (21%) in the District is above the national average by 8% whilst 31.9% of the Districts residents working population travel less than 2km to work. This is 10% higher than the national figure of 21.14%. This suggests that much of the district's settlements consist of a strong sustainable element through a higher degree of self-containment, as it appears that many workplaces are close to places of residence.

Core Output Indicators

- 0.12 Core Output Indicators have been monitored subject to the availability of data.
- 0.13 Business development within the district for the period 2007/8 was encouraging with work being completed on two developments of significant size (>500 sq.m. floorspace). Both were redevelopments of existing land for industrial and related activities, one of which was an allocated site in the Local Plan. Work was also well advanced on two other developments in Minehead that will subsequently provide more than 1,000 sq.m. of additional employment floorspace when completed. However, there remained 6.0

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics; Vacant Dwellings 2005: Second Homes (Dwellings); Office for National Statistics; 2005; (data-set)

¹¹ Land Registry of England and Wales; House Price Index Custom Report: Household Type Breakdown – Somerset: March 2008; Land Registry for England and Wales; 2008 (data-set)

¹² Office for National Statistics; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2008 Results: Analysis by Place of Work by Local Authority; Office for National Statistics; 2008; (data-set)

¹³ Office for National Statistics; Claimant Count Unemployment, March 2008; National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS); 2007 (dataset)

¹⁴ Office for National Statistics; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2008: Analysis by Place of Residence by Local Authority – Weekly Pay: Gross; Office for National Statistics; 2008; (dataset)

¹⁵ Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; op.cit.

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Hectares of land allocated for employment covering the Use Classes B1, B2 and B8¹⁶, uncommitted and undeveloped at the end of the monitoring period.

- 0.14 Since 1991 a total number of 2,119 net dwellings have been completed in the West Somerset local planning area. This figure exceeds the Annual Strategic Requirement (1,760 dwellings), as set in the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review¹⁷, by 328 dwellings. This, on average, puts the District's residential build rate just over three years ahead of itself. Most of these completions have come through the form of windfalls. These are usually very small sites that would not identified through the development plan process and whose timing and location for development cannot be easily predicted. Only one (Paddons Field, Farrington Hill, Stogursey) of the three remaining allocated sites from the District Local Plan¹⁸ had commenced development during the AMR reporting period although the other two were committed through the granting of planning approval on each.
- 0.15 A total of approximately 411 dwellings approved and/or under construction as at the end of the AMR reporting period. The housing trajectory for the remaining three years covered by the Joint Structure Plan Review to 2011¹⁹ has been calculated. Based on average annual rate of completions over the first 16 years of the Structure Plan and projected forward for the remainder of the plan period a further 700+ dwellings could be built within the West Somerset local planning area, economic and financial circumstances permitting. The trajectory forecasts that the total number of net additional dwellings at 2011 will exceed the Structure Plan requirement of 2100 by a minimum of 375 dwellings.
- 0.16 Of the dwellings completed in 2007/8, only 45.89% were completed on previously developed land, well below the national target of 60%. Of the 146 completions these were distributed over 38 different sites. There was a significant increase in the number of windfall developments outside of the three main settlements when compared with 2006/7.
- 0.17 The number of affordable houses completed in the AMR period was 25, which was than that acheived the previous year. The Local Plan had been adopted in April 2006²⁰ and it is expected that the Planning Obligations Codes of Practice²¹ mechanism will be formally updated during 2009 or possibly replaced by a more flexible Supplementary Planning Document in 2010. This will assist in the delivery this type of development in the future via planning gain.

¹⁶ H.M. Government; Town and Country Planning, England and Wales: The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (Statutory Instrument 1987 No. 764); HMSO; 1987; ISBN 0 11 076764 0

¹⁷ Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; Somerset County Council; 2001; ISBN 0 861 83357 0

¹⁸ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset Council; 2008.

¹⁹ Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

²⁰ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op.cit.

²¹ RPS Group Plc; West Somerset Planning Obligations Codes of Practice: Revised Draft; West Somerset District Council; 2005

- 0.18 Data for transport, local services and biodiversity was not available for monitoring.

Local Output Indicators

- 0.19 Due to the need to revise the Local Development Scheme²² and limited resources in the form of professional personnel, this has had an impact on commencing the Development Plan Documents (DPD's) plus work on identifying the relevant output indicators by the end of the AMR accounting period. Local Output Indicators will be established and reported on over the next AMR period. Nevertheless, baseline data has been collected for the locally strategic policies, which have been identified in the LDS to evolve through the LDF process presenting key targets to monitor. Other policies such as Transport and Biodiversity have been omitted from this exercise due to the difficulty of extracting sufficient data particularly the former in relation to area to which the AMR applies.
- 0.20 The Community Plan has been revised and updated as the Sustainable Community Strategy²³. It was adopted in early 2007 and will now have an important influence on the formulation of the Local Output Indicators.
- 0.21 Dwelling completion data between 1991/2 and 2007/8 indicates that overall housing development is spread proportionately amongst Minehead, Watchet and Williton, and the rest of the District. This is in line with the Settlement Policies objectives stated in the West Somerset Local Plan.²⁴
- 0.22 The economic, employment and related data reveals that in March 2008, the average earnings by residence per week was £439.60, over £30 lower than the national average²⁵. 14,200 people were employed of which 24.6% were self-employed. 65.3%²⁶ of West Somerset employees are in full time jobs which is lower than the national equivalent. All of these statistics act as a baseline to be improved in meeting the Employment Policies Objective, set out in the West Somerset Local Plan²⁷.
- 0.23 Retail data shows that some shopping for comparison and convenience goods is lost mainly to Taunton, which is outside of the District. The recent West Somerset Retail & Town Centre Study²⁸ concludes there is capacity for more retail premises in the District, particularly at Minehead. This should help claw back some of the leakage to other places like Taunton. This will assist the Local Plan retail objectives in sustaining and enhancing the vitality and

²² West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – December 2007; op. cit.

²³ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; West Somerset Council; 2007.

²⁴ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op.cit.

²⁵ Office for National Statistics; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2008; op. cit.

²⁶ Office for National Statistics; Labour Market Profile – West Somerset 2007/8; National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS); 2008 (dataset)

²⁷ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op.cit.

²⁸ Donaldsons LLP; West Somerset Retail & Town Centre Study; West Somerset District Council; 2005

viability of the District's shopping centres. Ultimately, it will help to provide a more sustainable economy as well as reducing the need to travel longer distances.

- 0.24 Data for housing is exclusively confined to Policy H/4: Affordable Housing. Data illustrates that whilst there is a demand from applicants on the housing register for mostly 1-bedroom dwellings the majority of dwellings being built in the District are either 2 or 3 bedrooms in size. However, there is an issue as to whether the provision of 1-bedroom accommodation to meet this demand would be appropriate in the longer-term especially in relation to affordable housing to rent. It appears inconsistent with the Lifetime Homes initiative that has been promoted by Central Government throughout 2008.²⁹ The provision of 1-bedroom properties is aimed at a niche market and does not allow for any flexibility within the structures for changed social circumstances (e.g. people living together having children). This would require them to relocate in order to obtain larger accommodation to meet their new living requirements. Anecdotal evidence from developers indicates a preference to move away from 1-bedroom accommodation because of its limited opportunities, with emphasis being 2-bedrooms as the preferred minimum size/type.

Significant Effects Indicators

- 0.25 Significant Effects Indicators are yet to be developed as the Sustainability Appraisal Framework is still in the early stages of preparation. Due to the need to revise the LDS³⁰ and the need to appoint consultants to undertake this aspect of work this did not commence until after the AMR reporting period had finished.

Remedies and Next Steps

- 0.26 The Remedies and Next Steps section identifies a number of limitations that have arisen in the preparation of the AMR. Whilst the Contextual Indicators were monitored it was felt that the quality of data could be better. This will be discussed with members of the CSIP. Data availability has limited the monitoring of the National Core Output Indicators³¹. This is to be investigated both internally and externally, with monitoring by the authority likely to be expanded to achieve the inclusion of the necessary data. Some limitations concern the Local Plan and LDF not being at the correct preparation stages to allow the development of Local Output Indicators. This will be overcome as the Local Plan has now been adopted.

²⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government et. al.; Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society; Communities and Local Government Publications; 2008

³⁰ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – December 2007; op. cit.

³¹ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide; HMSO; 2005; ISBN 1 85112 772 0 and, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Local Development Framework Core Output Indicators: Update 1/2005; ODPM Publications; 2005

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004³², to submit an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to the Secretary of State by 31st December of each year. This is one of the portfolio of documents that comprise the Local Development Framework (LDF) in the new development plan regime introduced as part of the 2004 legislation. It will supplement and eventually replace the policies and guidance contained in the area-wide local plan, the West Somerset District Local Plan³³. The Local Development Framework is the umbrella title for the portfolio of Local Development Documents (LDDs). LDDs hold planning policy and associated information such as proposal maps and specific allocations, and have other purposes such as managing the preparation of planning documents and public consultation.
- 1.2 This document is the fourth Annual Monitoring Report and covers the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008. It is produced for West Somerset Council and relates only to that area for which the Council is the Local Planning Authority. It therefore excludes that part of the district that is within the Exmoor National Park. The Council has a statutory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004³⁴ to submit an AMR to the Secretary of State by 31 December of each year. The purpose of the document is to assess:
- The implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS)³⁵;
 - If objectives and targets set in the Development Plan Documents (DPD's) are being achieved;
 - If planning policies have had unintended consequences; and,
 - If assumptions and objectives behind planning policies are still relevant.
- 1.3 The AMR is regarded as a key component in the functioning of the LDF. Without it the LDF could become ineffective, under performing and dated, which will, in turn, affect the control of development and future planning of the District.
- 1.4 The monitoring of policies will follow a process whereby objectives will be set in each Development Plan Document (DPD). Targets will be established to provide an aim for the DPDs' policies with indicators formed from these targets to measure the policies performance. A total of four indicators are required to be monitored in the AMR:

³² H.M. Government; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: Chapter 5; HMSO; 2004; ISBN 0 10 540504 3

³³ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset Council; 2007.

³⁴ H.M. Government; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: Chapter 5; op. cit.

³⁵ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – December 2007; West Somerset Council; 2007.

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- **Contextual Indicators.** These describe the wider social, environmental and economic background against which LDF policies operate;
 - **Core Output indicators.** These assess the performance of policies in relation to national targets, for example housing completions per annum are measured;
 - **Local Output Indicators.** These are set at the local level and are specific to measuring the performance of DPD policies; and,
 - **Significant Effects Indicators.** These assess significant social, environmental and economical effects of policies and are linked to the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 1.5 This year's AMR is not comprehensive, and the national guidance indicates that it is acceptable for AMRs to develop gradually to take account of ongoing discussions, tools to assist in monitoring being developed by statutory bodies, and emerging best practice. Work to develop the AMR for next year will start once this report is submitted, to ensure that relevant information is collected and interpreted, and to take into account comments received and emerging national best practice. Sub Regional workshops commenced in January 2006 to allow discussion and comparison of output, and to provide Local Authorities with the chance to analyse the LDF process as a whole and the positioning of the AMR within this. This sub regional work will assist in the development of future AMR's in the region.
- 1.6 Owing to the ongoing work needed to combine the West Somerset District Local Plan³⁶ into one document, very little progress was made with the LDF during the monitoring period. The Local Plan was formally adopted in April 2006.

³⁶ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

2 Local Development Scheme Implementation

- 2.1 The West Somerset Local Development Scheme (LDS) was originally approved in March 2005 as part of the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004³⁷. This would provide a timetable for the production of various elements of the Local Development Framework (LDF) over a given time-scale. The LDS can be treated as a planning policy information guide and is the first point of contact for finding out how and when LDDs will be prepared and produced. It provides information such as:
- The role and content of each Local Development Document (LDD) within the Local Development Framework (LDF);
 - The geographical area that each Local Development Document affects;
 - The timetable illustrating the preparation stages for each Local Development Document.
- 2.2 Although the LDS was approved in 2005³⁸, it was quickly recognised that due to the resource implications associated with progressing the West Somerset Local Plan through Proposed Modifications to Adoption, revision to the original LDS was necessary. Negotiations were undertaken with Government Office to find a practical and acceptable solution. These were completed and a revised LDS was approved in July 2006³⁹. Following personnel changes in September and December 2006 at West Somerset Council, plus receipt of new advice from GOSW and DCLG regarding the content of Core Strategy DPD's, the Council, along with other local planning authorities were invited to submit revisions to their LDS's by 30th March 2007. West Somerset Council therefore, proposed further revisions to the July 2006 version of its LDS and these were the subject of negotiation with GOSW with a new document being submitted in March 2008.⁴⁰ This was finally approved by Government Office in July 2008. It may be subject to further revision as a consequence of the revised Government guidance contained in PPS 12: Local Spatial Planning⁴¹, the associated amendments to the planning legislation enacted through the new Regulations and, the new Planning Act that received Royal Assent towards the end of 2008. However the procedural implications of these events falls outside of this AMR reporting period.

Development Plan Documents

- 2.3 For the reasons referred to in para. 2.2 above, work on the Core Strategy DPD and Williton Area Action Plan had not progressed beyond the initial scoping report exercise for the sustainability appraisals^{42,43} for each, and early

³⁷ H.M. Government; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: Chapter 5; HMSO; 2004; ISBN 0 10 540504 3

³⁸ West Somerset District Council; West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2005; West Somerset District Council; 2005.

³⁹ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – July 2006; West Somerset Council; 2006.

⁴⁰ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; West Somerset Council; 2008.

⁴¹ Department for Communities and Local Government; Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS 12); The Stationary Office; 2008; ISBN 0 11 753996 9.

⁴² Environ UK Ltd; West Somerset Council Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report; West Somerset Council; 2006.

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evidence gathering, by the end of the reporting period of the AMR on 31st March 2008. As a consequence of the revised advice concerning the content of Core Strategy DPD's, the nature of the evidence base required and the potential sources was re-appraised and work commenced on evidence gathering. An important component of this evidence was the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. West Somerset Council commenced work in conjunction with its neighbouring authorities to commission two Strategic Housing Market Assessment studies to be carried out. The studies were to be based on the areas identified in a study commissioned by the South West Housing Body⁴⁴. This document was subsequently used as part of the evidence base for the draft version of the Regional Spatial Strategy⁴⁵.

- 2.4 The work on these two Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA's) was well advanced by the end of the AMR reporting period, with completion of both expected in late 2008 or early 2009. The two studies for the Taunton SHMA (comprising Sedgemoor District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council, West Somerset Council and the Exmoor National Park Authority) and the Northern Peninsula SHMA (comprising North Cornwall District Council, North Devon District Council, Torrington District Council, West Somerset Council and, the Exmoor National Park Authority) are being prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in PPS 3: Housing⁴⁶ and the related guidance issued by DCLG.⁴⁷ Both will include Strategic Land Viability Assessments (SLVA's) which will provide a better understanding of the potential capacity of residential development sites to support affordable housing as an integral element of the overall development. They will also provide benchmark information on the operation of thresholds in settlements and the proportion of affordable housing that could be sought on different types of site (small, large, Greenfield, PDL, etc.).
- 2.5 Other influential studies and documents are also being progressed that will feed into the Core Strategy DPD. The updating of the Community Plan, which has now become the Sustainable Community Strategy⁴⁸, and two studies involving identification of residential and employment land capacity within the District, The revision of the Community Plan will assist the focus of establishing a Spatial Vision in the Core Strategy DPD, whilst the West Somerset Employment Land Review will also be useful. Progress on the Urban Capacity Study, which was due for revision in the summer of 2005, commenced in 2006 although the completion has been delayed in order to integrate with and take advantage of the information that would come out of the Employment Land Review. Work on the latter had commenced by the end of 2006.

⁴³ Environ UK Ltd; West Somerset Council Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report – Appendix 1: Topic Papers; West Somerset Council; 2006.

⁴⁴ DTZ Pinda Consulting; Analysis of Sub-Regional Housing Markets in the South West; South West Housing Body; 2004

⁴⁵ South West Regional Assembly; RSS: The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; South West Regional Assembly; 2006

⁴⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government; Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3); The Stationary Office; 2006; ISBN 0 11 753976 7

⁴⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government; Strategic Housing Market Assessments: Practice Guidance; Communities and Local Government Publications; 2007.

⁴⁸ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; West Somerset Council; 2007.

Project Management Documents

- 2.6 Project Management Documents are the title that West Somerset District Council uses in the public domain for LDDs that are not DPDs. This is to avoid confusion over the similar names of 'Local Development Document' and 'Development Plan Document'. In addition to this, we feel that 'Project Management Document' is a better reflection of the purpose of LDDs i.e. the Statement of Community Involvement, Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Report, which do not carry Development Plan status.
- 2.7 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)⁴⁹ began preparation in July of 2005. At the end of the AMR reporting period in March 2008 it had gone through the Public Examination stage (Reg. 34⁵⁰), the Inspectors binding Report had been received and the document was approved for adoption by Full Council on 31st October 2007.

⁴⁹ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Statement of Community Involvement (Adopted 2007); West Somerset Council; 2007.

⁵⁰ H.M. Government; The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 2204); HMSO; 2004; ISBN 0 11 049748 1

3 Joint Working

- 3.1 The SWRA coordinate and share best practice on monitoring and information, coordinated through the Strategic Information Providers (SIP) group. Reference is made in recent ODPM advice to this work as an example of good practice. A copy of this document can be found on the South West Observatory planning module website.
<http://www.swrpm.org.uk/LDF/index.asp>
- 3.2 West Somerset Council has developed its monitoring responsibilities through the County Strategic Information Providers (CSIP) group. The CSIP has a membership of all the district councils in Somerset, the County Council and the South West Regional Assembly. It meets on a regular basis with the intention of coordinating and streamlining the collection and analysis of information of common relevance, particularly in relation to the Core Output Indicators and other contextual indicators. A set of contextual indicators has been produced, which enables consistency of reporting across the county. The information on contextual indicators in this report draws on this work, and a summary of the suggested contextual indicators can be found on the South West Observatory planning module website.
<http://www.swrpm.org.uk/LDF/index.asp>
- 3.3 The South West Local Government Association (SWLGA) and South West E-Government Group (SWEGG) have recently received funding from ODPM to develop an SA tool for monitoring purposes. The work to develop the contextual indicators has greatly informed the development of this tool namely the 'One Stop Sustainability Appraisal Shop' (OSSAS). More details are available on the planning module web site via the ODPM Document: '[AMR - FAQs & Seminar Feedback on Emerging Best Practice 2004/05. ODPM. Sept 05](#)' at <http://www.swrpm.org.uk/LDF/index.asp>.
- 3.4 The project will deliver a web-based tool kit to aid West Somerset Council to undertake Sustainability Appraisals (SAs) / Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) of the LDF. The tool kit will be an online 'One Stop Shop' for quick, easy, and free access to standardised and reliable core baseline data for Sustainability Appraisals for all local authorities. These tools will comprise a GIS capability, guidance and a report facility. The datasets will have standardised definitions and draw from reliable data sources. It will also provide links to guidance and good practice in undertaking SEA or SAs. It is envisaged that the tool will enable West Somerset Council to enhance the AMR dataset collection as the monitoring process evolves.

4 Context

- 4.1 The planning system can be used as a mechanism to help the community address economic, social and environmental issues. With the use of the AMR, the current picture of West Somerset's economy, environment and social situation can be set. As the LDF period rolls forward, the annual examination of contextual indicators will allow the picture to evolve and trends to emerge.
- 4.2 This section will take a brief look at the key issues, challenges and opportunities that West Somerset Council faces corporately as well as in its role as the local planning authority. Greater attention will be given to the Contextual Indicators, with commentary provided on what the data is representing.

Painting the West Somerset Picture - Key Issues

- 4.3 West Somerset is the smallest district in Somerset, with a population of approximately 35,400 residents⁵¹ covering an area of 727 sq km⁵². The District is extremely rural with a population of approximately 12,000 persons, living in the main settlement, Minehead. This accounts for approximately one third of the total District population. Geographically, the District incorporates the western side of the Quantock Hills, stretching further west covering the Brendon Hills and Exmoor. The Bristol Channel lies directly to the north. The district's economy is mainly driven by agriculture and tourism.
- 4.4 Despite the towns of Bridgwater lying to the east and Taunton to the south, both identified as Strategically Significant Towns in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy⁵³, the District suffers from accessibility problems due to its sparsely spread population, geographical constraints and limited transport links with these and other large urban areas such as Barnstaple, Exeter, Ilfracombe and, Tiverton. This affects the economy by limiting the type of jobs available to those in tourism and agriculture, which have traditionally been low paid and seasonal. Limited accessibility and the restricted economy is also detrimental to the area's social standing, with affordable housing being a major issue facing the authority. It is these issues that encouraged West Somerset District Council to establish a number of community priorities in December 2004⁵⁴ and these are shown below.

⁵¹ Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics: Resident Population Estimates, All Persons – Mid 2007; Office for National Statistics; 2008 (dataset)

⁵² Somerset County Council; Somerset Areas at April 1st 1985; Somerset County Council; 1985

⁵³ South West Regional Assembly; RSS: The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; South West Regional Assembly; 2006

⁵⁴ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Corporate Plan – 2007 Onwards; West Somerset Council; 2007.

West Somerset Council Community Priorities (March 2007)

- To increase the number of permanent jobs offering above average pay for the area;
- To increase the number of economically active residents in the district;
- To increase the number of houses for sale that local people can afford to buy;
- To maintain and where possible increase the opportunities for residents to access facilities and services – particularly in the deeply rural areas and for young people;
- To reduce the levels of deprivation of individuals, particularly those living in the rural areas.

Challenges and Opportunities

- 4.5 The community priorities illustrate the challenges faced by West Somerset Council, particularly in its role as the local planning authority. These priorities are likely starting points to base our spatial objectives around, which will act as hooks to hang various policies, in the preparation of Development Plan Documents. The policies will be tailored to help achieve the priorities.
- 4.6 Whilst the current Local Plan⁵⁵ policies are sufficient to at least control the challenges that lie before the authority, the new planning system encourages the authority to explore their core root. This will provide an opportunity to develop new policies to counteract the problems that underlie the challenges.
- 4.7 The Planning Policy team has already provided assistance in tackling the challenges. It has supported the adoption of the Affordable Home Ownership Model, which was established to ease the spiralling difficulty for certain demographic groups to mount a foot on the housing ladder. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has since praised this model. In the period 2005/6 the team continued to be involved in a number of development projects to help boost the West Somerset economy, job prospects and accessibility to better services. Such projects have involved the Watchet East Wharf mixed-use scheme, the Minehead: Vulcan Road Key Site project, New Horizons learning and leisure complex in Minehead and, the Central Williton regeneration package. The Williton Regeneration Area SPD will support Williton's future role as a focus for development within the district.

Contextual Indicators

- 4.8 Contextual Indicators essentially paint a picture of where the district stands in terms of the economy, the environment and its social well-being. They will be used to provide a backdrop against which to consider the effects of policies and inform the interpretation of output and significant effects indicators.
- 4.9 The Indicators have been collected for three geographical areas; West Somerset, Somerset or the South West, and either England or the United Kingdom. Due to the need to assess as much up to date information as possible various data sources have been used in the collection of data, hence the use of different geographical areas outside of West Somerset. This also explains why, in some cases, data might not be recorded for 2007/8 but a few years earlier.

⁵⁵ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset Council; 2007.

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- 4.10 The area covered by the West Somerset Local Development Framework is the part of West Somerset that falls outside of the Exmoor National Park boundary⁵⁶. This is unlike other local authority services such as Housing, which cover the whole of the West Somerset district. Many data sources do not recognise the difference between the Local Planning Authority boundary and the District Council boundary. Therefore, the data presented in the following section covers the whole of West Somerset. This issue will be discussed further in Section 6.
- 4.11 The following section will discuss the contextual indicators outcomes and what they mean to West Somerset. The commentary will compare the data for West Somerset with that of the wider geographical area i.e. regionally or nationally, thus putting West Somerset's position into context.

Population

- 4.12 The population of West Somerset contributes very little to the total population of the South West of England. The very rural nature of the district provides the reason for this. The only settlement defined as a town (for planning policy purposes) in West Somerset is Minehead, which accommodates approximately 12,000 (one third) of the district's residents. All other settlements in the district have a population of less than 4,000.

Indicator	West Somerset	South West England	England & Wales
Population Size	35,400	5,178,000	54,072, 000
Age Structure	See Graph 1		

Table 1 Contextual Indicators: Population

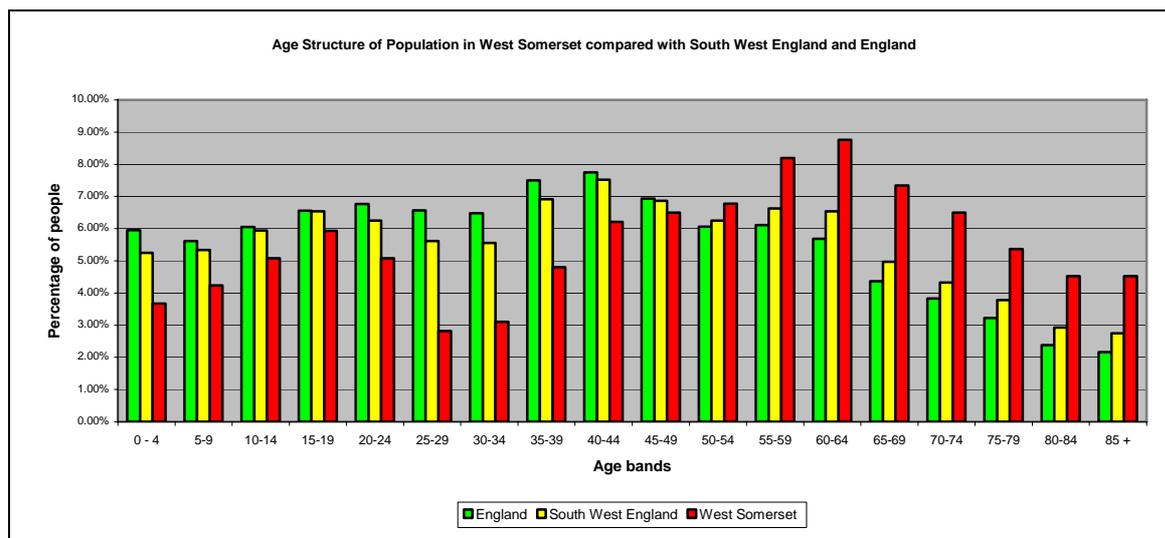
Source: ONS Mid Year Population Estimate 2007⁵⁷

- 4.13 The age structure of West Somerset's population shows a complete reverse trend to that of England and Wales, but is similar to that of the South West region. This is unsurprising given rural areas such as West Somerset are attractive to older generations who look to retire to places with a pleasant environment. The notable dip in persons within the age range of 19 – 34 years suggests significant out-migrating, which hints that there is a lack of higher education facilities and higher paid jobs to anchor this cohort to the District. Higher than average house prices are also thought to contribute towards this. Although the South West region and England and Wales experience a similar dip, the percentage drop is not as significant as West Somerset's. Also, higher than average house prices are causing out-migration of younger adults who are unable to secure employment and/or purchase accommodation in the area.

⁵⁶ H.M. Government; National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; HMSO; 1949.

⁵⁷ Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics: Resident Population Estimates, All Persons – Mid 2007; Office for National Statistics; 2008 (dataset).

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Graph 1

Source: ONS Mid Year Population Estimate 2007⁵⁸

Households

4.14 The Contextual Indicators representing Households reveal the average household size in West Somerset to be less than the averages for South West England and England and Wales. This is presumably related to the age structure, as shown in Graph 1, whereby a high percentage of West Somerset residents consist of elderly persons, which implies fewer people living together.

4.15 The composition of households in West Somerset supports the previous point. Graph 2 illustrates that the percentage of households consisting of one person is higher than that for both South West England and England and Wales, conversely there is a lesser percentage of married and cohabiting couple households in West Somerset compared to the greater geographical areas. Therefore this suggests that one-person households might consist of a high number of elderly persons (given the district's age structure), which raises potential issues for the housing, health, and social services in supporting this type of household.

Indicator	West Somerset	South West	England & Wales
Total number of households	15,627	2,085,984	21,660,475
Average household size	2.16	2.31	2.36
Household composition:			
One Person Households	5158 (33.01%)	617810 (29.62%)	6,502,612 (30.02%)
Married Couple Households	5033 (32.21%)	775468 (37.18%)	7,915,315 (36.54%)
Cohabiting Couple Households	1149 (7.35%)	171537 (8.22%)	1,794,451 (8.28%)
Lone Parent Households			
With dependant children	670 (4.29%)	113037 (5.42%)	1,399,939 (6.46%)
With non-dependant children only	409 (2.62%)	54357 (2.61%)	663,547 (3.06%)
All Other Households	3208 (20.53%)	353775 (16.96%)	3,384,611 (15.63%)
See Graph 2			

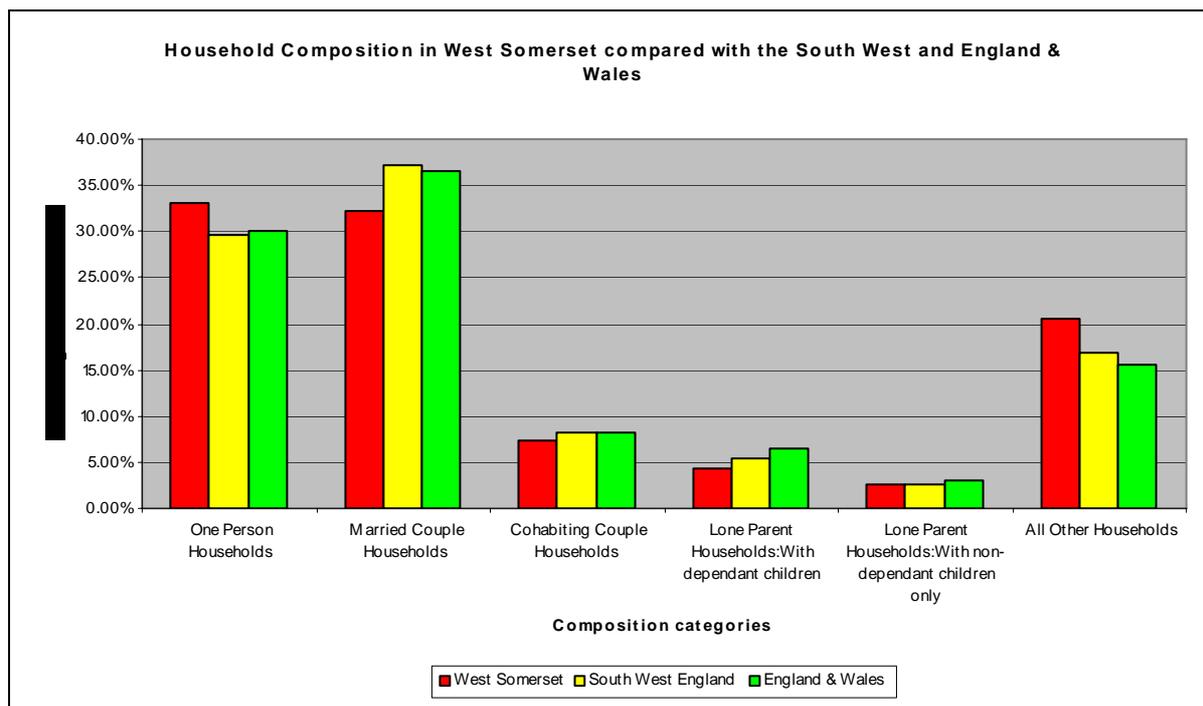
Table 2 Contextual Indicators: Households

Source: Census 2001⁵⁹

⁵⁸ ibid.

⁵⁹ Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; HMSO; 2003

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Graph 2

Source: Census 2001⁶⁰

Dwellings

- 4.16 The percentage of second homes in West Somerset far exceeds that for the region and England and Wales. This is expected considering the environment acts as a pull factor to urban dwellers and given that past house prices were lower than average, making such properties affordable. The high level of second home ownership has increased house prices in the District. This has been detrimental to the local population who now find it difficult to step on to the housing ladder, hence the affordability problem the authority faces.
- 4.17 Vacant dwellings in West Somerset as at 31st March 2007 are, proportionately, a full percentage point lower than the regional equivalent and lower again than those vacant nationally at 2001, a figure that is unlikely to have changed too much since then. This is a positive comparative for the authority but does reveal that some properties are under-utilised and could be developed for residential use. Cost might be a factor that is currently preventing this but mechanisms do exist in the form of grants to help overcome this.

Indicator	West Somerset	South West	England & Wales
Total number of dwellings	c.17,000 (at 2007)	2,185,966	22,538,641
% Second homes	4.3 % (693)	1.8% (38,381)	0.6% (150,718)
% Vacant properties	1.8% (303) (at 2007)	2.8% (61,601)	3.2% (727,448)

Table 3 Contextual Indicators: Dwellings – Total number; Vacant and Second Homes Source: WSDC Council Tax Records⁶¹; Census 2001⁶²

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ West Somerset Council; Council Tax Records 2006/07; West Somerset Council; 2007 (dataset – not publicly available)

⁶² Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; *op. cit.*

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4.18 The tenure of dwellings in West Somerset is confined to two broad owners of dwellings. Unlike some parts of the UK where dwellings are in local authority ownership, West Somerset Council has no ownership over the District's housing stock. The last of the Council's stock was sold in the late 1990s to meet corporate objectives. Instead, social housing in the District is provided through housing associations, namely Magna, which explains the above average ownership of dwellings by Registered Social Landlords. This percentage share of the housing stock is encouraged to continue to assist with providing a solution to the district's affordable housing issue. The higher than national average privately owned dwellings correlates with the very high ownership of second homes, and perhaps paints a false picture of the situation in West Somerset. This disguises the fact that there is an affordability issue, and should not be overlooked in factors that are causing high house prices.

Indicator	West Somerset	South West	United Kingdom
Private Owned	86.71%	N/A	82.95%
Local Authority Owned	0%	N/A	8.77%
Owned by RSL	13.29%	N/A	7.74%
Owned by other public sector bodies	0%	N/A	0.47%

Table 4 Contextual Indicators: Dwellings – Tenure at 2004

Source: Audit Commission 2004⁶³

Crime

4.19 The crime statistics for West Somerset reveal the district to be significantly below the national average for all crimes, including harrassment offences. This might be unsurprising given the very low population of the district, but it should not be overlooked that rural areas can be more vulnerable to crime due to police surveillance having to cover a much sparsely populated area. Taking this into consideration, the data gives a positive outlook for community safety in West Somerset. The outlook should not be taken for granted however; crime is an issue that must be given thought in developing planning policies, particularly those that concern design of the built environment.

Indicator	West Somerset	England
All Crimes per 1,000 population	Domestic Burglaries	4.98
	Violent Offences	16.57
	Theft of Vehicle	2.96
	Theft from a Vehicle	7.53
	Harrassment	3.97

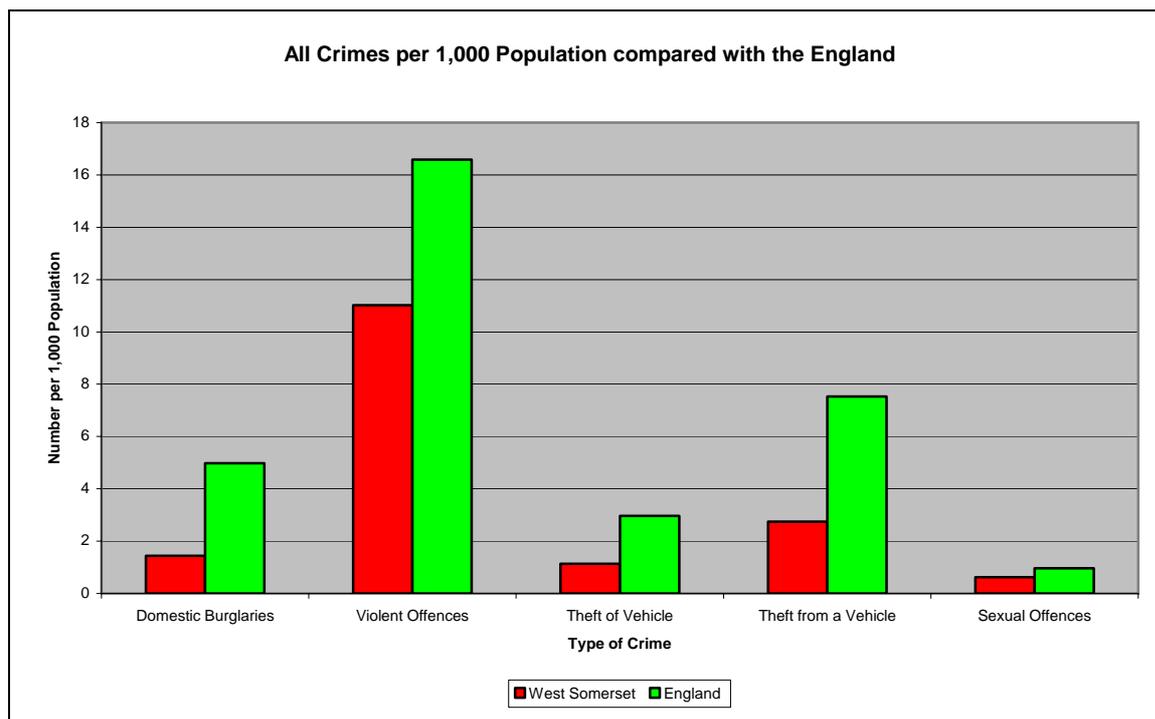
Table 5 Contextual Indicators: Crime – All Crimes per 1,000 population

Source: Home Office 2007/8⁶⁴

⁶³ Audit Commission; Housing Stock by Tenure, 2004; Audit Commission; 2004

⁶⁴ Home Office; British Crime Survey (England and Wales) 2007-08: Local Authority Areas – Recorded Crime for Key Offences 2006/07 to 2007/08; Home Office; 2008 (dataset)

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Graph 3

Source: Home Office 2007/8⁶⁵

4.20 As emphasised with the data for All Crimes, the data presented in Table 6 is important to developing planning policies concerning design of the built environment.

Indicator		West Somerset	United Kingdom
Percentage of residents surveyed who say that they feel fairly safe or very safe outside:	After dark	73.6%	72.31%
	During the day	98.00%	97.58%

Table 6 Contextual Indicators: Crime

Source: Audit Commission 2004/05⁶⁶

Social

4.21 The house price to income ratio in West Somerset far exceeds that of the South West region and England in general. There are two probable reasons for this large difference. First, employment in West Somerset is traditionally based around low paid and seasonal industries such as agriculture and tourism thus implicating a low-income scale. Second, people from outside the area have influenced the housing market by purchasing second homes, thus causing a false demand for housing and consequently increasing the average house price. This is supported by the data in the 'Dwellings' section. This ratio data is an important indicator in helping to provide housing at an affordable cost; something that the planning system can have an impact on. Provisional analysis of data from the Land Registry for 2008⁶⁷ linked with the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2008⁶⁸ suggests that the ratio of average

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Home Office; British Crime Survey 2004/05; Home Office; 2005 (dataset).

⁶⁷ Land Registry of England and Wales; House Price Index Custom Report: Household Type Breakdown – Somerset: March 2008; Land Registry for England and Wales; 2008 (data-set)

⁶⁸ Office for National Statistics; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2008 Results: Analysis by Place of Work by Local Authority; Office for National Statistics; 2008; (data-set)

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house price to average individual earnings in West Somerset could be as high as 9.07:1. When lower quartile house prices and lower quartile earnings are used (to represent those aspiring to get onto the housing ladder) the disparity becomes even more marked at 10.93 in West Somerset compared with 7.25 in England.⁶⁹ This is a significant increase on the data collected by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2002⁷⁰ and 2003⁷¹ comparing affordability of housing across England (see Table 7). It indicates that the opportunity for young single people in West Somerset to enter the housing market on their own and remain in the area is difficult to achieve and getting worse with time.

- 4.22 Only two of the top 25% of the most deprived wards in England can be found in West Somerset⁷². Despite being put in this category they are ranked low at 7047 (Minehead South) and 7094 (Williton East) out of a total of c.32,000. Both wards are focused within or adjacent to the larger settlements in the district, which provides an opportunity to concentrate efforts on improving these two areas. The local development framework will prove to be pivotal in addressing these disparities.

Indicator	West Somerset	South West England	England
House Price / H/hold Income ratio (residence based)	6.80 (2003) Small sample - >50	4.66	4.11
Indices of Multiple Deprivation (No. of Wards within upper 25% most deprived nationally)	2 (Minehead South; Williton East)	278 (top 20%)	8,121

Table 7 Contextual Indicators: Social

Sources: Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2004⁷³; ODPM 2004⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government; Live Tables on Housing Market and House Prices: Table 576 – Ratio of Lower quartile House Price to Lower quartile Earnings by District, from 1997; Department for Communities and Local Government; 2008 (data-set)

⁷⁰ Wilcox, S.; Can Work – Can't Buy: Local Measures of the Ability of Working Households to Become Home Owners; Joseph Rowntree Foundation; 2003; ISBN 1 85935 098 4

⁷¹ Wilcox, S.; Affordability Differences by Area for Working Households Buying their Homes – 2003 Update; Joseph Rowntree Foundation; 2004

⁷² Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Indices of Deprivation 2004; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; 2004 (dataset)

⁷³ Wilcox, S.; Affordability Differences by Area for Working Households Buying their Homes – 2003 Update; op. cit.

⁷⁴ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Indices of Deprivation 2004; op. cit.

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Health

- 4.23 The life expectancy for West Somerset is above the average for the United Kingdom. The percentage of households with one or more person with a limiting long-term illness is also above the average for the United Kingdom. Although the life expectancy statistics suggests health care in the district might be of a good level, the latter statistic hints that more health care facilities might be required to cope with persons with a limiting long-term illness.

Indicator	West Somerset	South West	England
Life Expectancy			
Male	79.20	78.50	77.32
Female	83.70	82.70	81.55
Households with one or more person with a limiting long term illness (%)	38.3%	33.07%	32.98%

Table 8 Contextual Indicators: Health

Sources: ONS 2006⁷⁵ and 2001⁷⁶

Economy

- 4.24 The unemployment rate, as represented by the Claimant Count for Job Seekers Allowance, for West Somerset is similar to that of the region and below that for the United Kingdom. Although this is a positive indication for West Somerset's economy, the average earnings per week is also below those regionally and nationally. As commented elsewhere in this report, this may be due to a combination of factors. The district has a higher proportion of employers who operate in traditionally low-paid and seasonal industries such as agriculture and tourism, than regionally and nationally and this has an impact on the level of average earnings. Better-paid industries are unlikely to locate in West Somerset due to accessibility limitations caused by geographical constraints and because of the small pool of persons of a workable age.
- 4.25 These issues were recognised by the public regeneration agencies active in the area in the Western Somerset Economic Development & Access Strategy⁷⁷ published in 2002. The combination of these factors present a real challenge to the local authority in attracting better-paid jobs. Care also needs to be taken when using data on earnings and income, and also some unemployment estimates, as the surveys used to collect this are sample only. The number of people and/or units surveyed in the West Somerset area may be close to or below usual confidence thresholds that are required to provide a reliable data for comparative purposes. An example of this is the ONS estimates for unemployment for West Somerset based on the Annual Population Survey and Labour Force Survey. These showed that at the end

⁷⁵ Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics: Key Figures for Health and Care – Life Expectancy at Birth (Persons, Jan 04 – Dec 06); Office for National Statistics; 2006 (dataset)

⁷⁶ Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; op. cit.

⁷⁷ EDAW; Western Somerset Economic Development & Access Strategy; West Somerset District Council; 2002.

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of the monitoring period a reliable figure and rate for unemployment in the District could not be supplied due to the small sample size involved.

- 4.26 Compared with 2006 there was a small decrease of 0.3% in the total number of businesses registered for VAT in the district by the end of 2007⁷⁸. This was only the second fall in the number of business registered for VAT since 1994 for which comparable records exist and the total stock is still 3.8% higher than 12 years previously. The loss of businesses from the VAT Register cannot solely be attributed to business failure. For small businesses, their removal may be as a result of their turnover falling below the annual turnover threshold, which on 1st April 2007 was £64,000⁷⁹ and therefore, the benefits of being registered for VAT are not deemed to be economically attractive to the owner and operator. The business may continue to trade following its removal from the Register. Although the level of increase in registrations is lower than the regional and national rates, the rate of de-registrations is also lower. In the 1990's it was estimated VAT Registered businesses in Somerset represented only 55% - 60% of the total business stock in the county⁸⁰. Given the predominance of small and micro businesses in West Somerset for which the higher proportion of self-employment in the district compared with elsewhere could be a reliable proxy indicator (West Somerset: 26.5%, South West: 14.5% and England: 11.8%^{81,82}), this could suggest that the total stock of businesses in West Somerset could be between c.2,700 and 2,900.

Indicator		West Somerset	South West	United Kingdom
Unemployment Rate (Claimant)		1.3%	1.3%	2.1%
VAT Registered Businesses	Registrations	95 (5.7%)	8.9%	10.2%
	De-registrations	100 (6.0%)	6.6%	7.3%
	Total Stock	1660	159,670	1,673,830

Table 9 Contextual Indicators: Economy

Source: Nomis 2008⁸³ and 2007⁸⁴

Environment

- 4.27 The whole length of rivers in Somerset classed as good biological quality is significantly higher than the national equivalent. In terms of good chemical quality the proportion is lower than that for biological bur remains much higher than the figure for England and Wales (see Table 10). This suggests that monitoring and enforcement of farming techniques and other potential

⁷⁸ Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform; UK Business: Activity, Size and Location Table B1.1 – UK Number of VAT-Based Enterprises in 2007: District, Counties and, Unitary Authorities Within Region and Country by Broad Industry Group; National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS); 2008 (dataset)

⁷⁹ Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform; UK Business: Activity, Size and Location 2007; National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS); 2008.

⁸⁰ Somerset County Council; Somerset Structure Plan Review: Background Paper – Supplementary Information on Matters 1 – 8; Somerset County Council; 1997.

⁸¹ Office for National Statistics; Annual Business Inquiry: Annual Employment Survey Employee Jobs (Workplace-Based), 2001; National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS); 2003 (dataset)

⁸² Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; op. cit.

⁸³ Office for National Statistics; Claimant Count Unemployment, March 2008; National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS); 2008 (dataset)

⁸⁴ Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform; UK Business: Activity, Size and Location Table B1.1 – UK Number of VAT-Based Enterprises in 2007: District, Counties and, Unitary Authorities Within Region and Country by Broad Industry Group; op. cit.

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sources of pollution from industry are more effective and the various industrial sectors are using greater environmentally friendly methods.

Indicator	West Somerset	United Kingdom
% of river length assessed as good:		
a) biological quality	91.4%	72.3%
b) chemical quality	83.2%	69.5%
Air Quality (AQMA's)	0	124

Table 10 Contextual Indicators: Environment Sources: Environment Agency 2007^{85,86} WSC 2006⁸⁷ & DEFRA 2007⁸⁸

Transport

4.28 Given West Somerset's rural context and thus inaccessibility by public transport, the assumption could be made that travel to work by private motor vehicle would be greater than that nationally. However, interpreting the data in Table 11, the reverse has occurred. Although this data does not correlate with travel by public transport, which is some 9% below the national figure and supports the inaccessibility point made elsewhere in this report, it does correlate with the data for travel by foot or bicycle. This figure for West Somerset is some 8% greater than that for the United Kingdom. This suggests that for a relatively large amount of the working population, their workplace can be found near to their place of residence. This would be supported by the large proportion of West Somerset's employment sector being made up of farming, whose workers tend to live on site. Likewise, it also suggests that settlements are perhaps more sustainable than those found elsewhere in the country.

4.29 The data for the mode taken to travel to work is perhaps supported by the data for the distance travelled to work. As reported in the previous paragraph, fewer people travel to work by private motor vehicle in proportion to those in the United Kingdom as a whole. This correlates with the number of people who travel 2km or less to work in West Somerset. The percentage for this is much higher in the district (31.9%) than it is for the United Kingdom (21.14%). This supports the previous point made that for a large amount of the working population their work place is close enough to their place of residence for them to take an alternative mode of transport to the private motor vehicle.

⁸⁵ Environment Agency; Rivers of Good Biological Quality in England and Wales 1990 to 2006; Environment Agency; 2007 (dataset)

⁸⁶ Environment Agency; Rivers of Good Chemical Quality in England and Wales 1990 to 2006; Environment Agency; 2007 (dataset)

⁸⁷ West Somerset Council; Air Quality Review and Assessment: Updating and Screening Assessment 2006; West Somerset Council

⁸⁸ Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; E-Digest Statistics About: Air Quality Monitoring 2006; Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; 2007 (dataset)

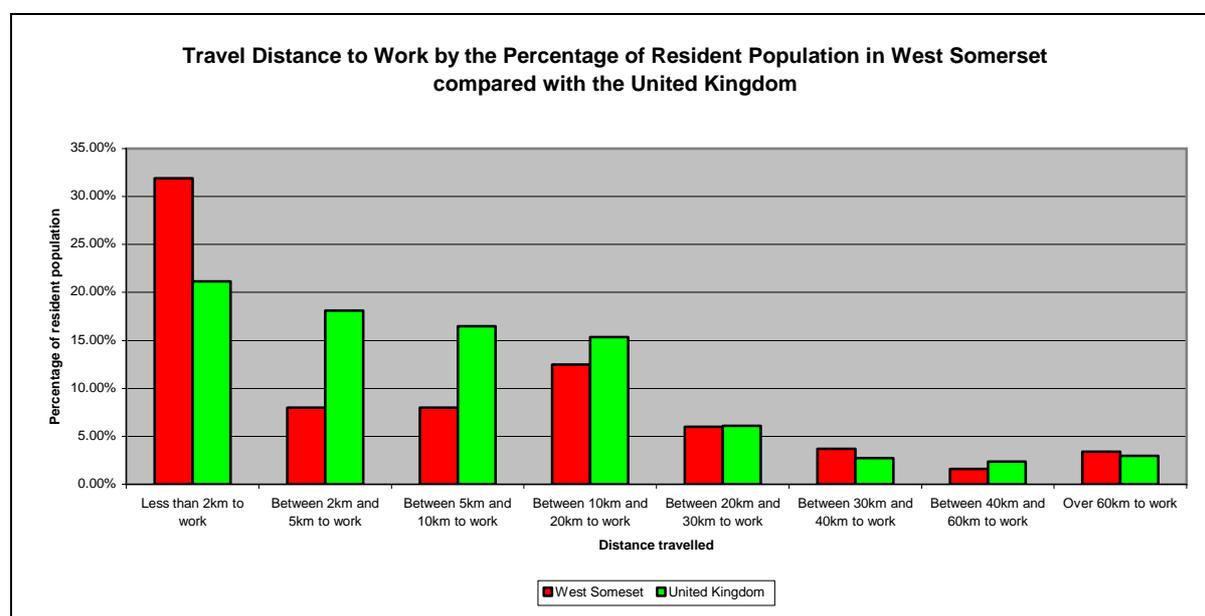
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	Indicator	West Somerset	United Kingdom
Percentage of the resident population who travel to work by:	Private Motor Vehicle (Car, Taxi, or Motorcycle)	57.5%	65.27%
	Public Transport	2.6%	11%
	Foot or Cycle	21%	13.3%
Percentage of the resident population travelling:	Less than 2km to work	31.9%	21.14%
	Between 2km and 5km to work	8%	18.11%
	Between 5km and 10km to work	8%	16.48%
	Between 10km and 20km to work	12.5%	15.34%
	Between 20km and 30km to work	6%	6.09%
	Between 30km and 40km to work	3.7%	2.74%
	Between 40km and 60km to work	1.6%	2.36%
Over 60km to work	3.4%	2.97%	

Table 11 Contextual Indicators: Transport

Source: ONS 2001⁸⁹

4.30 From the cohort 10km to 20km (see Graph 4), a trend emerges whereby the West Somerset statistic begins to match and then exceed that for the United Kingdom (except for 40km to 60km). If the district were to be scrutinised closer, it could be assumed that areas lying close to the district's fringes, such as Stogursey, the Dulverton vicinity and those south of Williton, would see high levels of out-commuting to places such as Bridgwater, Tiverton and Taunton. Although the planning system can attempt to make places within West Somerset more sustainable, it is inevitable that places closer to the district border will continue to accommodate commuters who want to live in a pleasant environment but work where the job market is more diverse.



Graph 4

Source: ONS 2001⁹⁰

Education

4.31 The percentage of 15 year old pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE's at grades A* to C or equivalent in West Somerset in 2007 is lower than the corresponding proportions for the county and England. This is a reversal of

⁸⁹ Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset: Distance Travelled to Work – Workplace Population (UV80); Office for National Statistics; 2003 (dataset)

⁹⁰ ibid.

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the situation in the previous year⁹¹ but reflects the danger of restricted data-collection and analysis which in this case is based solely on one educational establishment. Although the planning system cannot have a direct influence on improving grades, it can act as a mechanism to help the education system to achieve this. This is achieved by use of the Planning Obligations Codes of Practice SPG⁹².

Indicator	West Somerset	Somerset	England
Percentage of 15 year old pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE's at grades A* to C or equivalent	55%	58%	61%

Table 12 Contextual Indicator: Education

Source: DCFS 2008⁹³

⁹¹ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Annual Monitoring Report 2006/7; West Somerset Council; 2007

⁹² RPS Group Plc; West Somerset Planning Obligations Codes of Practice: Revised Draft; West Somerset District Council; 2005

⁹³ Department for Children, Schools and Families; Achievement and attainment Tables: Secondary School Achievement and Attainment Tables 2007 – West Somerset Community College; Department for Children Schools and Families; 2008 (dataset)

5 Implementing Local Development Framework Policies

- 5.1 During 2007/8, the West Somerset Local Development Framework was not progressing to the timescales set in the first revision to the Local Development Scheme (LDS)⁹⁴ due to the limitations on resources to progress the necessary Development Plan Documents and finish off the work associated with publishing the adopted West Somerset District Local Plan.⁹⁵ Negotiation with Government Office for the South West (GOSW) for a revised LDS were taking place at the end of this AMR reporting period, and a further revised LDS was approved in July 2008.⁹⁶ The West Somerset District Local Plan and its policies were automatically 'saved' under the three year saving period provided for under the 'transitional arrangements'.⁹⁷ The Local Planning Authority has submitted its case to GOSW for a further extension of time on most of the policies contained in the Local Plan beyond the three-year automatic saved period. This was done in November 2008, outside of the reporting period of this AMR. A decision on the success of the submission and the policies saved for a further period should be known by April 2009.
- 5.2 Shortly after gaining approval for the first revision to the LDS⁹⁸, the Planning Policy Team experienced changes in personnel in September and December 2006. This meant that the experience and continuity in LDF production was significantly disrupted. Only one of the posts was operational throughout all of 2007 and most of 2008, which severely restricted the capacity of the organisation to progress LDF documents. During 2007 new advice emerging from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) through Government Office for the South West (GOSW) altered the priorities for the production of LDF documents. Emphasis was placed on the production of the Core Strategy DPD ahead of all other documents unless progress was so far advanced on the latter that this could result in the value of research that had already been carried out, being diminished due to delay.
- 5.3 At the start of the AMR review period 2007 PPS 3: Housing⁹⁹ came into effect and required Local Planning Authorities were expected to produce Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) studies, in conjunction with neighbouring authorities, based on the areas identified in the Deposit Draft version of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).¹⁰⁰ In the case of West Somerset, The authority fell into two Housing Market Areas, Taunton (including Sedgemoor, Taunton Deane and West Somerset) and, the Northern Peninsula (comprising North Cornwall, North Devon, Torridge and

⁹⁴ West Somerset District Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – July 2006; West Somerset District Council; 2006.

⁹⁵ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset Council; 2008.

⁹⁶ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; West Somerset Council; 2008.

⁹⁷ H.M. Government; The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 2204); HMSO; 2004; ISBN 0 11 049748 1

⁹⁸ West Somerset District Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – July 2006; op.cit.

⁹⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government; Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS 3); The Stationary Office; 2006; ISBN 0 11 753976 7.

¹⁰⁰ South West Regional Assembly; The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; South West Regional Assembly; 2006.

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West Somerset Councils plus the Exmoor National Park Authority). The Council committed itself to both studies in order to ensure complete coverage for both its housing and planning policy responsibilities. DCLG published guidance¹⁰¹ on the form and content of the SHMA studies and work was well advanced on both by the end of the AMR reporting period, with final publication of each expected in late 2008 or early 2009.

- 5.4 Despite the progress on evidence gathering for the LDF and the personnel resource limitations within the Planning Policy Team of the Council meant that it was not possible to identify the definitive set of Local Output Indicators. The LDS and its subsequent revised versions have identified the likely type of policies to be monitored. Baseline data has been gathered for some of these policies in this AMR period. This is explained in paragraphs 5.20 to 5.24.

Core Output Indicators

- 5.5 The Council has met monitoring requirements for some of the Core Output Indicators and Housing Trajectories. Commentary is provided for the monitored indicators, whilst remedial action for those not monitored is explained in Section 6. The Core Output Indicators are those indicators that are used to measure the implementation of local planning policies in relation to national targets. The data presented in relation to the indicators will be used by the South West Regional Assembly to build up a regional picture of spatial planning performance to inform the preparation of their annual monitoring reports. The data presented is that recorded by West Somerset Council.

Business Development

Core Output Indicator No.	Core Output Indicator: Business Development	Data
1a	Amount of land developed for employment by type: B1 (b+c) + B2 + B8.	1.0 ha
1b	Amount of land developed for employment, by type, which is in development and/or regeneration areas defined in the local plan.	0.0 Ha
1c	Percentage of COI 1a, by type, which is on previously developed land	100.0%
1d	Employment land supply by type (Class B1, B2 and B8)	6.0ha
1e	Losses of employment land in (i) development/regeneration areas and (ii) local authority area.	0.0ha
1f	Amount of employment land lost to residential development.	0.0ha

Table 13

West Somerset Council 2008

- 5.6 A limited amount of employment land was developed during the 2007/8 reporting period. What development that did take place and was completed during this time was relatively small scale. With the exception of two schemes most of it was below the thresholds established for monitoring of 0.2 Hectares of land for site area and/or greater than 500sq.m. of gross floorspace created for activities within the B Class of uses (B1, B2 and B8) identified in the Town

¹⁰¹ Department for Communities and Local Government; Strategic Housing Market Assessments: Practice Guidance – Version 2; Communities and Local Government Publications; 2007.

& Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987¹⁰². These Classes cover uses such as; B1 – commercial offices, research and development laboratories and, light industry, B2 - general industrial and, B8 - storage & distribution centres. The two larger projects that were completed during the reporting year comprised incubator/small-scale industrial starter units within larger buildings at the Roughmoor Industrail Estate in Williton and at the former County Council Highways depot between Brushford and Dulverton. Both projects involved a significant contribution by West Somerset Council in order to enable them to be progressed. They provide a range of different sized industrial units to encourage new and emerging small local businesses to expand and develop in modern, efficient accommodation.

- 5.7 The first of the completions involved the demolition of an old industrial structure and its replacement by a modern energy efficient structure that will provide 2,360 square metres of floorspace for B-class uses. The second project involved the redevelopment of the highways depot site through the construction of 933 square metres of industrial floorspace. The site had been identified as having employment generating potential and had been included as an allocated site for industrial development through Policy E/1 of the Local Plan¹⁰³. Both projects have resulted in the provision of just under 3,500 sq.m. of new industrial floorspace to meet the needs of fledgling modern industries within the District. Whilst the development at Williton was on part of the same industrial estate that was identified for industrial development through this allocation policy, it did not form part of the land that had been allocated. As a consequence of the completion of development on the 0.5 Hectare allocated site between Brushford and Dulverton, this has meant that a total of 6.0 Hectares of land identified for industrial development in the West Somerset District Local Plan¹⁰⁴ remains undeveloped and uncommitted at the end of the AMR reporting period.
- 5.8 During the same period work also commenced on some modern business starter units on the former car park areas adjacent to the West Somerset Railway station in Minehead. At the end of the reporting period work was well under way on six of the nine proposed units (the development will ultimately comprise three buildings with three units within each) that will provide c.9,000 sq.ft. (c.850 sq.m.) of usable B.1 and/or B.8 floorspace. The scheme was being funded by Somerset County Council, South West Regional Development Agency and European Union grants and was part of a larger mixed-use development that entailed the provision and enhancement of facilities associated with the operations of the West Somerset Railway and improvements to car-parking provision around the railway station. Development had also commenced on a smaller new industrial unit that would provide an additional 200 sq.m. of floorspace for an existing local business.

¹⁰² H.M. Government; Town and Country Planning, England and Wales: The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (Statutory Instrument 1987 No. 764); HMSO; 1987; ISBN 0 11 076764 0

¹⁰³ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

Housing

- 5.9 Under the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (Adopted April 2000)¹⁰⁵, a total of 2,400 dwellings were identified as being required to meet anticipated demand over the period 1991 – 2011. This figure covered the combined area of the local planning authorities of West Somerset Council and the Exmoor National Park Authority (including that part of the National Park that was in North Devon). Of this figure an allowance of 300 dwellings was identified for Exmoor National Park with the remainder, 2,100 expected to be provided in that part of West Somerset outside of the National Park. Recent work has progressed to revise housing requirements for the local planning authorities of Somerset (excluding Exmoor National Park). The outcome of this work was presented as part of the draft version of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (RSS)¹⁰⁶. This will cover the period 2006 to 2026.
- 5.10 At the end of the AMR reporting period, the Regional Spatial Strategy¹⁰⁷ had been placed on Deposit for twelve weeks during the summer of 2006, an Examination in Public (EiP) had been held between April and July 2007 and the Panel appointed to conduct the EiP had published their report and recommendations in January 2008.¹⁰⁸ As a consequence of revised population projections from the Office of National Statistics¹⁰⁹ for the period to be covered by the RSS, DCLG had requested planning authorities to look at what the implications of these new figures would mean for future housing requirements in their respective areas. The local and strategic planning authorities undertook this work and their evidence was submitted for consideration as part of the EiP debates in the summer of 2007. The outcome of this work and its consideration by the EiP Panel, was a modest revision in the dwelling requirement for West Somerset that was recommended through the Panel Report.¹¹⁰ The figure for the twenty year period increased from 2,200 in the draft RSS¹¹¹ to 2,500. The Council was awaiting the Secretary of State's verdict on the EiP Panel's recommendations at the end of the AMR reporting period. This was published in July 2008¹¹² and will be reported in full in the next AMR.

¹⁰⁵ Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; Somerset County Council; 2001;

ISBN 0 861 83357 0

¹⁰⁶ South West Regional Assembly; RSS: The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; South West Regional Assembly; 2006

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public Panel; Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public April – July 2007, Exeter: Panel Report; Government Office for the South West; 2008.

¹⁰⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government; DCLG Revised 2004-Based National Population Projections; Communities and Local Government Publishing; 2006.

¹¹⁰ Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public Panel; Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public April – July 2007, Exeter: Panel Report; *op. cit.*

¹¹¹ South West Regional Assembly; RSS: The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; *op. cit.*

¹¹² Government Office for the South West; The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes – For Public Consultation, July 2008; Government Office for the South West; 2008.

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Core Output Indicator No.	Core Output Indicator: Housing Trajectory	Data
2a(i)	Net additional dwellings since the start of the development plan period (1991).	2,119
2a(ii)	Net dwellings for the current year.	146
2a(iii)	Projected net additional dwellings up to the end of the relevant development plan period in 2011 (inc. windfall allowance and sites with full planning permission only).	c.700+
2a (iv)	The annual net dwelling requirement (to 2011).	105
2a (v)	Annual average number of net additional dwellings needed to meet overall Structure Plan housing requirements, having regard to previous years' performances (to 2011).	-30

Table 14

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- 5.11 The number of net dwellings completed since 1991 in the West Somerset local planning authority area is 2,119. This figure exceeds the Annualised Strategic Requirement (1,759 dwellings or 105 per annum) and the overall requirement, as set by the Structure Plan¹¹³, by 360 dwellings at the end of 2007/8. This implies the average dwelling build rate in the area is over three years ahead of itself. As illustrated in Graph 5 the build rate has not been consistent but has fluctuated over the years. There appears to have been a dip in completions between the late 1990s and early 2000s but the overall rate of housing completions from 2001/02 to 2006/7 was upward indicating a continuing demand for housing within the West Somerset local planning authority area and reflecting the prevailing economic conditions both locally and nationally. The latest set of data for 2007/8 shows a fall from the previous year but the level of completions remains above the annualised rate.
- 5.12 Although historic evidence of housing completions in West Somerset has shown a rather erratic pattern of development over the years, there are indications that the uncertainty in the housing market that existed at the end of the AMR reporting period are feeding through into local development. There has been a significant tailing off development as represented by the number of dwellings completed in 2006/7.¹¹⁴ However, the total number of approved dwellings during the year has increased from the 117 in 2006/7¹¹⁵ to 163 with full planning permission plus a further 76 identified through outline approval, although 73 of the latter were on just two sites. In addition outline planning approval was given for a large mixed-use development incorporating a new hospital for Minehead which included a residential element that could result in excess of over 100 dwellings being provided although the exact details have yet to be worked through. The number of dwellings under construction at the end of the reporting period was up on the previous year from 150 in 2006/7¹¹⁶ to only 217 in 2007/8. Given the changes in the current financial economic and housing markets, it is expected that despite these positive indicators, the prospects for implementation of the larger developments is unlikely in the next few years due to the current poor financial and economic climate.

¹¹³ Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

¹¹⁴ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Annual Monitoring Report – December 2007; West Somerset Council; 2007

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*

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- 5.13 As in previous years, most of the completions have come through in the form of windfall developments on small sites. Only Strongvox's Paddons Field development at Stogursey and Summerfield Homes completion of The Holms on Doniford Road, Watchet were of significant size (> 20 dwelling units each). The former, is one of the few remaining sites allocated in the West Somerset District Local Plan¹¹⁷ and is likely to be completed by the end of the next monitoring period. Both this and the Watchet development were on greenfield sites and unusually, this type of development accounted for 43.15% of the total completions. Unusually, in this monitoring year only 67 dwellings were completed on previously developed land (see Table 17 and para. 5.17) of the total.
- 5.14 Of all the completions only 26.71% were not on windfall sites. These are developments, the timing and location could not have been predicted in advance and incorporated into the local plan and its site allocation process. At the end of the AMR reporting period three sites remained allocated and undeveloped as identified in Policy H/1 of the Local Plan¹¹⁸ (see table 16), but planning permission had been granted on all them. The capacity of the remaining undeveloped sites was not wholly clear for all of them as two had only outline approval at this stage and the potential development area of the site off Seaward Way, Minehead had been increased beyond that identified as allocated in the Local Plan. There are indications that the total development of all these sites could realise as much as a further 239 dwellings, far in excess of that identified through the Local Plan allocation process.
- 5.15 The impact of large developments, which are unusual in West Somerset, on the housing completions statistics is shown in the former Lido site development in Minehead. This accounted for 181 new dwelling completions between 2002 and 2006 and the site is now built out. This was a very large windfall site, the size of which is unusual for settlement the size of Minehead in a predominantly rural location has probably contributed to a distortion in the build rate in recent years. If this were deducted from the net additional dwellings at the end of 2005/6, the resulting figure, at 112 dwellings per annum, would be close to the Annualised Strategic Requirement.
- 5.16 Despite the Joint Structure Plan Review¹¹⁹ setting a figure of 2100 dwellings to be met by 2011, the authority has been in a position to calculate and project the likely number of completions for the remainder of the period. Table 15 demonstrates that this requirement was reached during the monitoring year being reported on. By taking account of the average of past windfall completions, housing allocations to be developed (see Table 15) and existing commitments, a total of approximately 700+ dwellings is estimated could be built by 2011. This will exceed the Joint Structure Plan Review housing requirement by some 720 dwellings. The Annualised Residual Rate, as illustrated in Graph 5, is calculated at 123 dwellings per annum. However as mentioned earlier and demonstrated in Graph 5, housing development in

¹¹⁷ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

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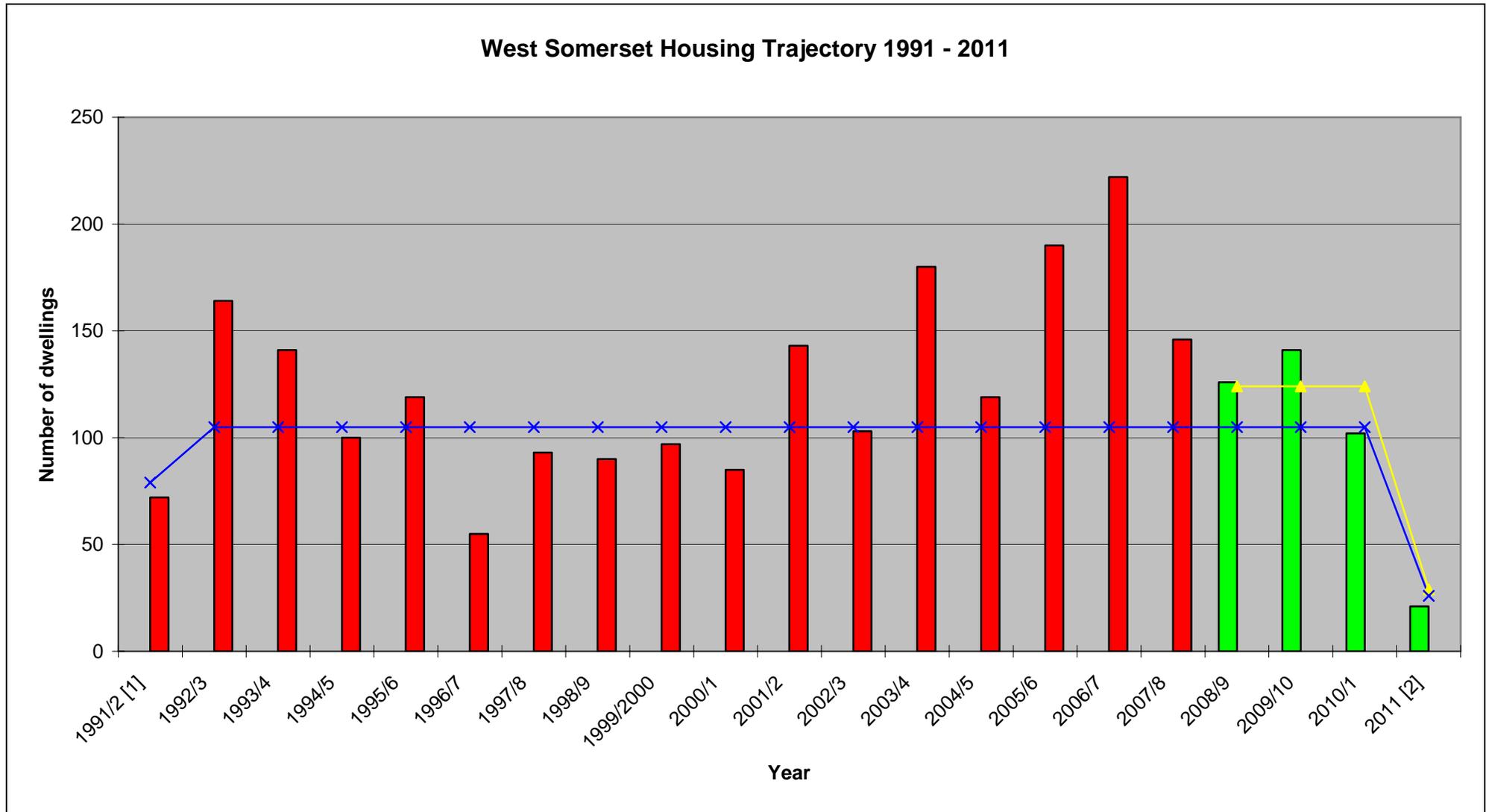
West Somerset can be erratic and does not always correspond to how the regional and national economy is performing.

Policy H/1: Housing Allocation Sites	No. of Units	Expected Completion Date
Rear of North Street, Williton	20	2010/11
St Audires Close East, Stogursey	45	2008/09
Seaward Way, Minehead	36	2010/11
Higher Marsh Farm, Dunster Marsh	40	2009/10
Total	141	

Table 16 Policy H/1 Housing Allocations¹²⁰

¹²⁰ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

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Graph 5

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DEVELOPMENT PLAN HOUSING COMPLETIONS AND PROJECTIONS 1991 - 2011

Criteria	Monitoring Year'																			
	91/2''	92/3	93/4	94/5	95/6	96/7	97/8	98/9	99/00	00/1	01/2	02/3	03/4	04/5	05/6	06/7	07/8	08/9	09/10	10/1
Completions	72	164	141	100	119	55	93	90	97	85	143	103	180	119	190	222	146			
Annual JSPR requirement	79	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105
Under/over provision	-7	59	36	-5	14	-50	-12	-15	-8	-20	38	-2	75	14	85	117	41			
Cumulative completions	72	236	377	477	596	651	744	834	931	1016	1159	1262	1442	1561	1751	1973	2119			
Cumulative under /over provision	-7	52	88	83	97	47	35	20	12	-8	30	28	103	117	202	319	360	255	150	45
Completions						55	93	90	97	85	143	103	180	119	190	222	146			
Annual RPG 10 requirement''''						125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Under/over provision						-70	-32	-35	-28	-40	18	-22	55	-6	65	97	21			
Cumulative completions						55	148	238	335	420	563	666	846	965	1155	1377	1523			
Cumulative under /over provision						-70	-102	-137	-165	-205	-187	-209	-154	-160	-95	2	23	-102	-227	-352

Table 15

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Notes

JSPR	Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011 ¹²¹
RPG 10	Regional Planning Guidance for the South West 1996 - 2016 ¹²²
'	Monitoring year = 01APRxx to 31MARxx (following year)
''	Data collection period = 01JUL91 – 31MAR92
'''	Assumed base date for RPG 10 monitoring = 01APR96

¹²¹ ibid.

¹²² Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions; Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10); The Stationary Office; 2001

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Core Output Indicator No.	Core Output Indicator: Housing	Data
2b	Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land.	45.89%
2c (i)	Percentage of new dwellings completed at less than 30 dwellings per hectare.	N/A
2c (ii)	Percentage of new dwellings completed at between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare.	N/A
2c (iii)	Percentage of new dwellings completed at above 50 dwellings per hectare.	N/A
2d	Affordable housing completions	25

Table 17

- 5.17 West Somerset usually enjoys a high rate of housing completions on previously developed land. During the AMR reporting period 45.89% of completions were on previously developed land (PDL). The national target of 60% of completions to be built on these types of sites, often referred to as 'brownfield land', has regularly been exceeded, which is a positive outcome given the need to protect the area's high environmental value. In previous AMR's, due to the way in which PDL is defined to include domestic gardens, West Somerset has normally achieved a rate in excess of the Government's target. This outcome correlates with the Settlement Policy SP/5 found in the adopted West Somerset District Local Plan¹²³, which restricts development outside of settlement boundaries. Added to this is the tightly drawn development limits around a number of settlements, which reduces the opportunity for development to occur on greenfield (previously undeveloped) sites unless they are within existing settlement boundaries.
- 5.18 Due to changes in the methods of monitoring housing development which took place during the AMR reporting period, it has not been possible to provide a definitive figures on development density. With a more rigorous monitoring regime now being established it will be possible to produce a more comprehensive and accurate picture of residential development in future Annual Monitoring Reports. Of the 146 dwellings completed during the year these were located on 38 separate sites. The overall number of completions is down compared to the previous year, and a notable feature is the fact that over 63 of the dwelling completions occurred on just two sites accounting for over 43% of the total.
- 5.19 The number of affordable houses developed in the period 200/8 was 25, a drop on the numbers from 2006/7. The affordable housing element of 14 dwellings as part of the Paddons Field development at Stogursey was a significant contributor to this total. The 11 units at the Clanville Grange housing development in Minehead were successfully disposed of as low-cost affordable housing to buy during the year. These formed part of a larger mixed-tenure scheme of 48 units on a former car park close to the town centre. The affordable units were acquired by the Council and were to be sold off at a discounted rate (33% below open-market valuation) to first-time buyers who would not otherwise be able to purchase a home of their own on the open market. A clause would be inserted in the sale of the properties so that any subsequent re-sale of the properties would result in the Council

¹²³ *ibid.*

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receiving a portion of the uplift in the sale price of the house as a result of market forces.

- 5.20 The low level of provision of affordable housing in recent years is a cause of continuing concern for the Council. Affordability of housing is a major issue for the Authority and the need to provide opportunities for younger people and families to remain in the area where they may have spent a significant amount of their early years. This reflects the priority that housing and particularly affordable housing is receiving nationally. The West Somerset District Local Plan has introduced Policy H/4¹²⁴ to assist in the delivery of affordable housing. This is supported by the Planning Obligations Codes of Practice that is being developed as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)¹²⁵. This seeks to draw contributions from developers through planning gain and is due to be adopted in early 2009 now that the Local Plan and Policy PO/1¹²⁶ have been formally adopted.

Site/Scheme	No. of Affordable Units	Expected Completion Date	Planning Permission
Shutgate Meadow, Williton	4	Completed 2005	
Severn Terrace, Watchet	17	Completed 2006	
Townsend Farm, Carhampton	20	June 2010	No
Land adjacent Sure Start, Minehead	23	December 2009	Outline
Clanville, Minehead	11	Completed 2007	
The Butts, Stogumber	3	March 2010?	
The Holms, Watchet	12	Completed 2008	
Burgage Road, Stogursey	2	N/A	
Higher Marsh Farm, Dunster Marsh	12	May 2009	Outline
Downfield Hotel, Watchet	2	December 2007	
Watchet Glazing, Churchill Way, Watchet	3	N/A	
Total	109		

Table 18 Affordable Housing Schemes

- 5.21 Through discussions with developers a number of potential schemes have been identified which are expected to deliver affordable housing (see Table 18 above). Of the total of 109 units identified above 46 had been delivered by the end of the AMR reporting period and a further 63 were calculated to come forward over the next two to three years. However, it is acknowledged that the increasingly difficult economic financial conditions that began to emerge in the latter half of 2007 and their impact on finances that are likely to be available, then delivery of these units may be delayed. Of particular concern to local authorities are the difficulties being encountered with shared-ownership properties when the occupants seek to move on but future buyers unable to secure appropriate guarantees from financial institutions. Whilst the Governments preference is for new affordable housing to be provided equally in terms of shared ownership and social rented, local experience is that there is a greater demand for the latter in West Somerset due to the disparities between local incomes and prevailing house-prices. There is early indication that this will be supported by evidence emerging through the two Strategic Housing Market Assessment studies that the Council is actively engaged in.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*

¹²⁵ RPS Group Plc; West Somerset Planning Obligations Codes of Practice: Revised Draft; West Somerset District Council; 2005

¹²⁶ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; *op. cit.*

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This information should be available and reported on in the next Annual Monitoring Report for 2008/9.

Transport

Core Output Indicator No.	Core Output Indicator: Transport	Data
3a	Percentage of completed non-residential development complying with car-parking standards set out in the local plan.	N/A See Section 6
3b	Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre.	N/A See Section 6

Table 19

5.22 At present West Somerset Council does not hold data for the indicators found in Table 19. The steps to remedy this are explained in Section 6.

Local Services

Core Output Indicator No.	Core Output Indicator: Local Services	Data
4a	Amount of retail, office and leisure development.	N/A (See Section 6)
4b	Percentage of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres.	N/A (See Section 6)
4c	Percentage of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standard.	N/A (See Section 6)

Table 20

5.23 At present West Somerset Council does not hold data for the indicators found in Table 20. The steps to remedy this are explained in Section 6.

Flood Protection and Water Quality

Core Output Indicator No.	Core Output Indicator: Flood Protection and Water Quality	Data
7	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality.	0

Table 21

5.24 The data in Table 21 reveals that there was no planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality. Every effort was made in the Proposed Modifications stage of the Local Plan to update the flood maps to assist the determination of planning applications that infringe flood plain land or the water quality of watercourses. This should help joint working between the Environment Agency and the local planning authority of what should and should not be granted.

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Biodiversity

Core Output Indicator No.	Core Output Indicator: Biodiversity	Data
8 (i)	Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including change in priority habitats and species (by type).	N/A See Section 6
8 (ii)	Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional or sub-regional significance.	N/A See Section 6

Table 22

5.25 At present West Somerset Council does not hold data for the indicators found in Table 21. The steps to remedy this are explained in Section 6.

Renewable Energy

Core Output Indicator No.	Core Output Indicator: Renewable Energy	Data
9	Renewable energy capacity installed by type.	0

Table 23

5.26 This indicator is not monitored but through discussions with Development Management officers it has been gathered that there were no extant planning permissions for the installation of renewable energy. One application for a development of 12 turbines adjoining the Hinkley Point nuclear power station had been submitted to the Authority for consideration but had been refused and the applicants had started Appeal procedures at the end of the previous AMR reporting period. This was subsequently withdrawn and a fresh application submitted for nine turbines on the same site. This second application had not been determined by the end of this AMR reporting period. Its likely implementation should it be approved was placed in doubt following the announcement by central government over its consideration of promoting a new generation of nuclear power stations to meet the nations future energy needs. One of the potential sites for early development of this programme would be Hinkley Point as permission had been granted for a third nuclear power station on the site of the proposed windfarm following a public inquiry at the end of the 1980's. The planning permission had been allowed to lapse in 1999. The site has subsequently been acquired by an energy company who, although it has a renewable energy unit within its organisation, have indicated that their preference for this site would be for nuclear power generation. The long-term future of the site was still unresolved at the end of the AMR reporting period and further progress on this matter will be reported in the next monitoring report. The steps to remedy the omission of monitoring on this indicator will be discussed in Section 6.

Local Output Indicators

- 5.27 At the end of the last AMR reporting period the West Somerset LDF preparation process had begun with the approval of revised LDS by GOSW¹²⁷. However, due to a number of reasons outlined earlier in this Section, the production of various Development Plan Documents have not been progressed as quickly as originally intended. Therefore the identification and development of Local Output Indicators has likewise not occurred. At the end of March 2008, the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)¹²⁸ had passed the Public Examination stage (Regulation 34¹²⁹) and the Inspector had issued his binding report. This gave the SCI a clean bill of health subject to some minor modifications to the text. The SCI was adopted after the end of the reporting period covered by this AMR. The SCI was approved by Full Council for adoption during the monitoring period being reported on 31st October 2007.
- 5.28 The West Somerset District Local Plan was formally adopted April 2006, and the policies that were identified to be saved beyond the automatic three year saving provided for under the 'transitional arrangements', had been identified in the original LDS¹³⁰. These were not subject to change in the revised LDS when that was subsequently approved in July 2006¹³¹ or the second revision to the LDS¹³² that was submitted to GOSW at the end of this AMR reporting period. Following these changes, and amendments to other influential documents such as the emerging West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy¹³³ (to replace the Community Plan) and the revised Housing Strategy¹³⁴, it has been possible to create Local Output Indicators that can be applied to the Local Plan policies. Specific policies within the Local Plan have been identified where certain data can be used to provide the basis for a monitoring system by proxy. These include the housing, retail and employment development policies and, through inference, the settlement strategy policies. These are covered in more detail in paras. 5.32 – 5.46.
- 5.29 Unlike the monitoring approach that is required by local planning authorities in the LDF, which is structured as Objective-Target-Indicator, the indicators that will be formed in the next AMR period to measure the Local Plan policies¹³⁵ might only consist of say an objective and an indicator. This is because many of the Local Plan policies were not originally drafted with the monitoring of their performance as an integral element. Where it has been possible the

¹²⁷ West Somerset District Council; West Somerset Local Development Scheme – July 2006; op.cit.

¹²⁸ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Statement of Community Involvement (Adopted 2008); West Somerset Council; 2008.

¹²⁹ H.M. Government; The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 2204); op. cit.

¹³⁰ West Somerset District Council; West Somerset Local Development Scheme – July 2006; op.cit.

¹³¹ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – July 2006; op. cit.

¹³² West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; op. cit.

¹³³ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; West Somerset Council; 2007.

¹³⁴ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Council Housing Strategy 2005 – 2008/9 – Updated 2006; West Somerset Council; 2006

¹³⁵ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

new approach has been used, otherwise a slightly different approach has been employed.

- 5.30 Despite not being in a position to establish a set of definitive Local Output Indicators for the Local Plan policies for this AMR, baseline data has been collected to represent the locally strategic policies. These locally strategic policies will evolve through the LDF process presenting key targets to monitor, as proposed in the LDS. Other policies that should be monitored such as Transport and Biodiversity have been omitted from this report due to difficulty in extracting sufficient data. Nevertheless these policy themes will be given consideration during future AMR periods as the monitoring process becomes more effective and relevant indicators identified.
- 5.31 Depending on the amount of baseline data available per policy theme, trends will be analysed to provide a foundation for the future monitoring of policies to be based on. The policies chosen for analysis are key to the development of sustainable communities, a key Government objective. Their role in sustainable development will be elaborated on within the analysis of the data below.

Settlement Policies: SP/1 to SP/5

- 5.32 The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (adopted 2000)¹³⁶ determines the overall scale of development in the local plan area for the period 1991 – 2011, in terms of housing and employment land. It also identifies the settlements that are of strategic significance to the delivery of its strategy and policies. As such, Policy STR2: Towns, of the Joint Structure Plan Review¹³⁷ identifies Minehead as the only strategically significant settlement in West Somerset and the strategy emphasises that it should be the main focus for development during the plan period. The Joint Structure Plan Review leaves the designation of settlements beneath the strategically identified ‘towns’ and their position in the settlement hierarchy for the area, to the relevant Local Planning Authorities through their respective local plans¹³⁸. It does however make a general distinction between Rural Centres and Villages, the designation of relevant settlements being determined by the role and function, services and facilities they offer at a more local level and their impact and influence on the surrounding area (Policy STR3: Rural Centres and Villages¹³⁹).
- 5.33 Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR4, STR5 and, STR6¹⁴⁰ emphasise that the scale of development within the settlement hierarchy and the rural remainder should reflect the role and function of those individual locations. Within the West Somerset District Local Plan¹⁴¹ the order of the settlement hierarchy within the Local Planning Authority area and the scale of

¹³⁶ Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

¹³⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

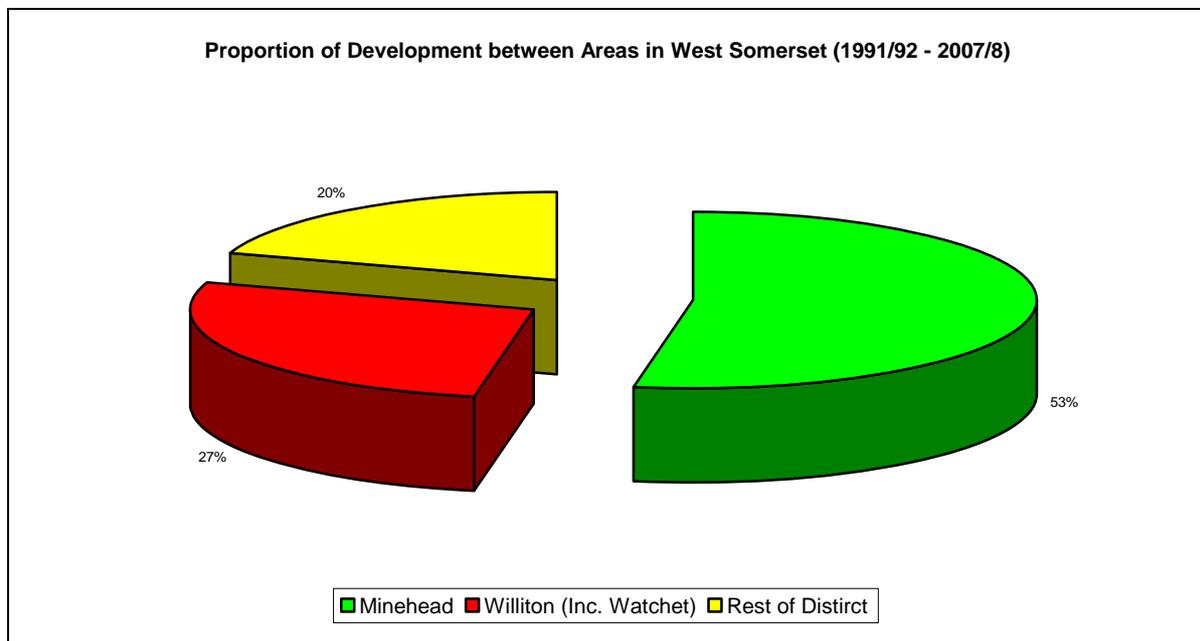
¹⁴¹ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

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development that is expected in each is expressed through Policies SP/1 - 5. Therefore, these Settlement Policies provides a basis for controlling the general scale and pattern of new development within the LPA administered area in the District and a framework to guide the future investment of scarce resources. The policy, above all, provides the key means of working towards the aim of achieving sustainable development. Three Objectives have been established to guide the Policy:

- *To maintain the role of Minehead as the main growth area in keeping with its role as a town;*
- *To maintain the roles of Watchet and Williton as Rural Centres; and,*
- *To designate villages and apportion limited growth selectively.*

5.34 In simple terms the Objectives are being achieved, as illustrated in Graph 6, with Minehead achieving 52.8% of the share of housing development in the District between 1991/92 and 2007/8. The remaining share is split between the two Rural Centres, and the rest of the district (which roughly translates as the main villages). With over one quarter of all housing developments being located in the two rural centres of Williton and Watchet it can be interpreted that this proportion is enough to support their 'Rural Centres' role as designated in the Joint Structure Plan Review¹⁴². Furthermore with around 80% of housing development located in the three main West Somerset settlements, the cluster of development is kept close to those centres that provide services, jobs and provide better transport links. This endorses the Local Plan's overall strategy to promote a sustainable pattern of development.



Graph 6

5.35 Although the overall development has kept to the objectives set for the Settlement Policy, the data in Graph 7 and Table 24 shows that the trend has not been consistent. Despite the early to mid 1990s keeping to the objectives, between 1996 and 2002 five out of the six years saw more housing

¹⁴² Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

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development either in Williton and Watchet or rural areas as opposed to in Minehead. This trend reversed between 2002/3 and 2004/5 with nearly all development sited in Minehead. Since that time, in the four years that have been covered by the Annual Monitoring Report regime the emphasis of housing completions has again been centred on the three main settlements. However it is noted that in the current reporting period the number of completions was lower in Minehead than Watchet and Williton and, this in turn was lower than that for the rural remainder in terms of number of completions only. The three main settlements did still account for over 60% of the total completions.

- 5.36 In the first revision to the LDS¹⁴³ Williton was the only settlement to be specifically identified as a location for development that would require the production of a Local Development Document. This was originally intended as an Area Action Plan but, due to the need to progress the Core Strategy DPD as a priority, this has been redesignated as a Supplementary Planning Document in the second revision to the LDS¹⁴⁴. The future development and redevelopment in and around the centre of the settlement will probably be regulated through the creation of a development brief.
- 5.37 The outcome of the public examination of the draft RSS¹⁴⁵ has given an indication of the scale of development that will need to be accommodated in the area over the 20 year period to 2026. The EiP Panel Report¹⁴⁶ was published in January 2008 and the Secretary of State's response through Proposed Changes was published in July 2008¹⁴⁷, outside of this AMR's reporting period. The impact of a higher level of housing requirement is illustrated in Table 24, which attempts to equate a proportionate increase in the figure for Somerset provided by RPG 10¹⁴⁸ at 125 dwellings per annum for West Somerset (outside of the Exmoor National Park), and the base date has been taken as 1st April 1996. This figure is similar to that which was recommended by the EiP Panel in their report on the RSS.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – July 2006; op. cit.

¹⁴⁴ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; op. cit.

¹⁴⁵ South West Regional Assembly; RSS: The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; op. cit.

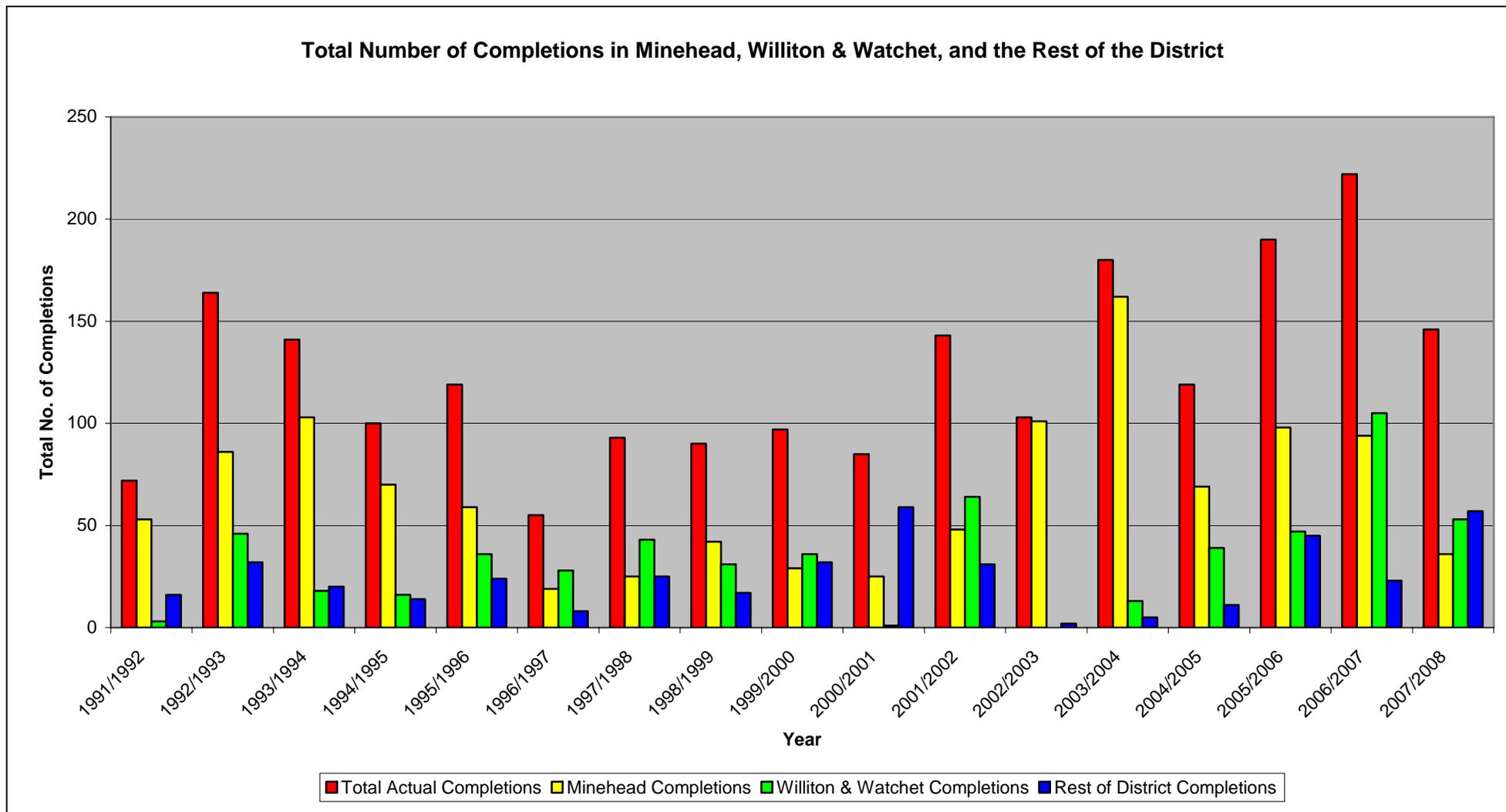
¹⁴⁶ Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public Panel; Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public April – July 2007, Exeter: Panel Report; op.cit.

¹⁴⁷ Government Office for the South West; The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes – For Public Consultation, July 2008; op.cit.

¹⁴⁸ Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions; Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10); op.cit.

¹⁴⁹ Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public Panel; Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public April – July 2007, Exeter: Panel Report; op.cit.

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Graph 7

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Distribution of Development in West Somerset 1991/2 – 2007/8

Settlement	Monitoring Year																	Total
	91/2	92/3	93/4	94/5	95/6	96/7	97/8	98/9	99/00	00/1	01/2	02/3	03/4	04/5	05/6	06/7	07/8	
Minehead no.	53	86	103	70	59	19	25	42	29	25	48	101	162	69	98	94	36	1119
%	73.6	52.4	73.1	70.0	49.6	34.5	26.9	46.7	29.9	29.4	33.6	98.1	90.0	58.0	51.6	42.3	24.7	52.8
Cumulative No.	53	139	242	312	371	390	415	457	486	511	559	660	822	891	989	1083	1119	-
%	73.6	58.9	64.2	65.4	62.2	59.9	55.8	54.8	52.2	50.3	48.2	52.3	57.0	57.1	56.5	54.9	52.8	-
Williton & No. Watchet	3	46	18	16	36	28	43	31	36	1	64	0	13	39	47	105	53	579
%	4.2	28.1	12.8	16.0	30.2	50.9	46.2	34.4	37.1	1.2	44.7	0.0	7.2	32.8	24.7	47.3	36.3	27.3
Cumulative No.	3	49	67	83	119	147	190	221	257	258	322	322	335	374	421	526	579	-
%	4.2	20.8	17.8	17.4	20.0	22.6	25.5	26.5	27.6	25.4	27.8	25.5	23.2	23.9	24.0	26.7	27.3	-
Rest of LPA area No.	16	32	20	14	24	8	25	17	32	59	31	2	5	11	45	23	57	421
%	22.2	19.5	14.2	14.0	20.2	14.6	26.9	18.9	33.0	69.4	21.7	1.9	2.8	9.2	23.7	10.4	39.0	19.9
Cumulative No.	16	48	68	82	106	114	139	156	188	247	278	280	285	296	341	364	421	-
%	22.2	20.4	18.1	17.2	17.8	17.5	18.7	18.7	20.2	24.3	24.0	22.2	19.8	19.0	19.5	18.4	19.9	-
LPA total No.	72	164	141	100	119	55	93	90	97	85	143	103	180	119	190	222	146	2119
%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cumulative No.	72	236	377	477	596	651	744	834	931	1016	1159	1262	1442	1561	1751	1973	2119	-

NB % may not total 100 due to rounding.

Table 24: Distribution of housing completions in West Somerset outside of the National Park

- 5.38 The implications from the monitoring data for the period 1996/7 – 2007/8, seem to suggest that this requirement could be achievable for the period of the emerging RSS (2006 – 2026). It should also be noted that the eleven year period referred to included an unusually long period of economic stability and growth both nationally and locally and these conditions are not expected to prevail over the next few years. Given the real and perceived constraints that affect the three main settlements in the Local Planning authority area of West Somerset, this may necessitate a change in the development strategy affecting the three key settlements. Should this be necessary and/or desirable, such a change will be tested through the progression of the LDF Core Strategy through to adoption.
- 5.39 It is expected that the proportion of development in the rest of the district, for the remainder of the plan period to 2011 will remain relatively low, although it is acknowledged that spikes in the data may occur for this area due to the nature of the development being based on primarily windfall development which can be notoriously unpredictable. Also, the impact of the economic and financial difficulties that were beginning to emerge at the end of the AMR reporting period will affect the future delivery of all types of housing development in the short to medium term in West Somerset. The extent of this cannot be readily predicted at this stage.

Employment Policies: E/1 to E/8

- 5.40 The adopted West Somerset District Local Plan¹⁵⁰ has a single objective for the employment policies to:
- *Increase the number of permanent jobs offering above average pay for the area.*
- 5.41 Owing to the lack of data available the data extracted can act only as baseline for the indicator that might be developed to monitor this objective, or one similar. Although the number of 'permanent jobs' should be monitored such data is difficult to extract, thus the number of full time jobs have been looked at to substitute this omission. It is considered that the majority of full time jobs are likely to be permanent.
- 5.42 Of the 11,500 total employee jobs in 2006¹⁵¹ almost 65% of those were full time (see Graph 8). This does not, however reflect the full picture of employment within West Somerset as the Census 2001¹⁵² revealed that over 27% of the residents of the District were self-employed, double the rate for England. If it is assumed that this type of worker is likely to live very close to their place of work then it is estimated that there could be a further 4,000+ people working within the District giving a total workforce of c.15,500. The

¹⁵⁰ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

¹⁵¹ Office for National Statistics; Annual Business Inquiry Employee Analysis 2006: Employee Jobs; National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS); 2007 (dataset)

¹⁵² Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; Office for National Statistics; 2003

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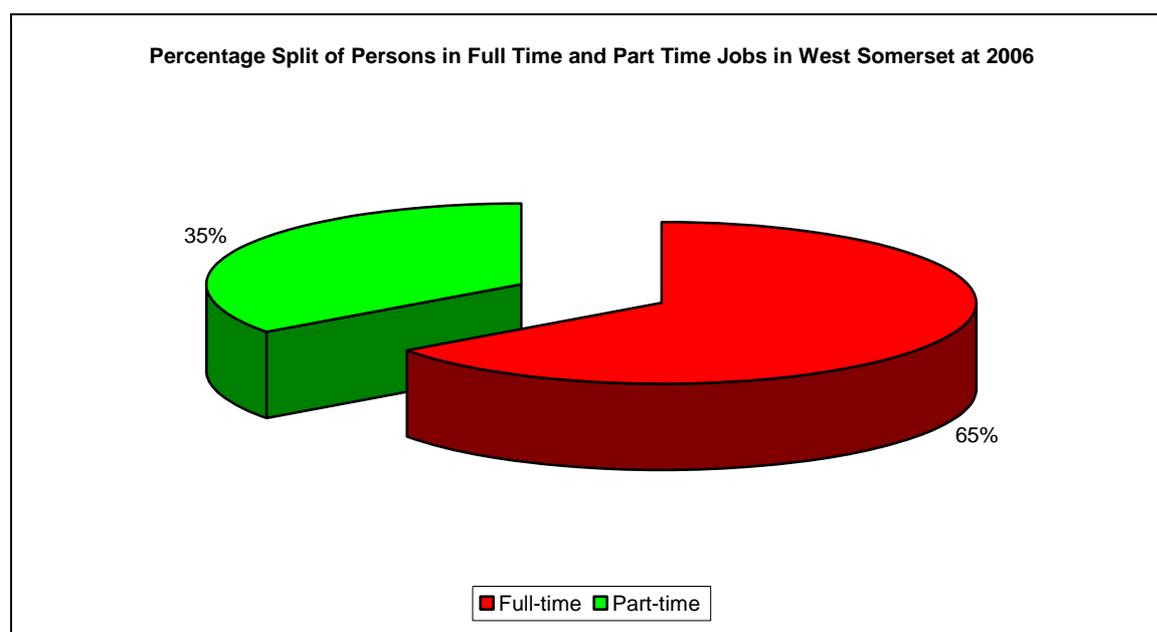
Office for National Statistics provide a more conservative estimate of 14,200 for all types of employment throughout the District.¹⁵³

5.43 Of the employee jobs the average individual earnings per week for full-time employees in the District was £439.60, as shown in Table 25, which is over £30 below the national equivalent of £471.90.¹⁵⁴ In fulfilling the objective of the Plan, this figure will have to increase year on year. This will require a greater number of better-paid jobs in the area to increase the average earnings. In addition to this the number of full time jobs will have to increase too. The Plan provides a framework for this through the allocation of 6.0 Hectares of employment land in Policy E/1 to be utilised. Employment policies are also shaped to encourage employment development throughout the District including the development of the sustainable concept of work/live units.

	West Somerset (employee jobs)	West Somerset (%)	South West (%)	Great Britain (%)
Total employee jobs	11,500	-		
Full-time	7,500	65.0	64.6	68.9
Part-time	4,000	35.0	35.4	31.1

Table 25: Employee employment 2006

Source ONS 2006¹⁵⁵



Graph 8: Breakdown of Employee Employment in West Somerset

Source: ONS 2006¹⁵⁶

	West Somerset	UK
Average Earnings per Week (full time workers)	£439.60	£471.9

Table 26: Average Earnings 2006

Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2008

¹⁵³ Office for National Statistics; Labour Market Profile – West Somerset 2007/8; National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS); 2008 (dataset)

¹⁵⁴ Office for National Statistics; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2008 Results: Analysis by Place of Residence by Local Authority; Office for National Statistics; 2008; (data-set)

¹⁵⁵ Office for National Statistics; Annual Business Inquiry Employee Analysis 2006: Employee Jobs;

op. cit.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*

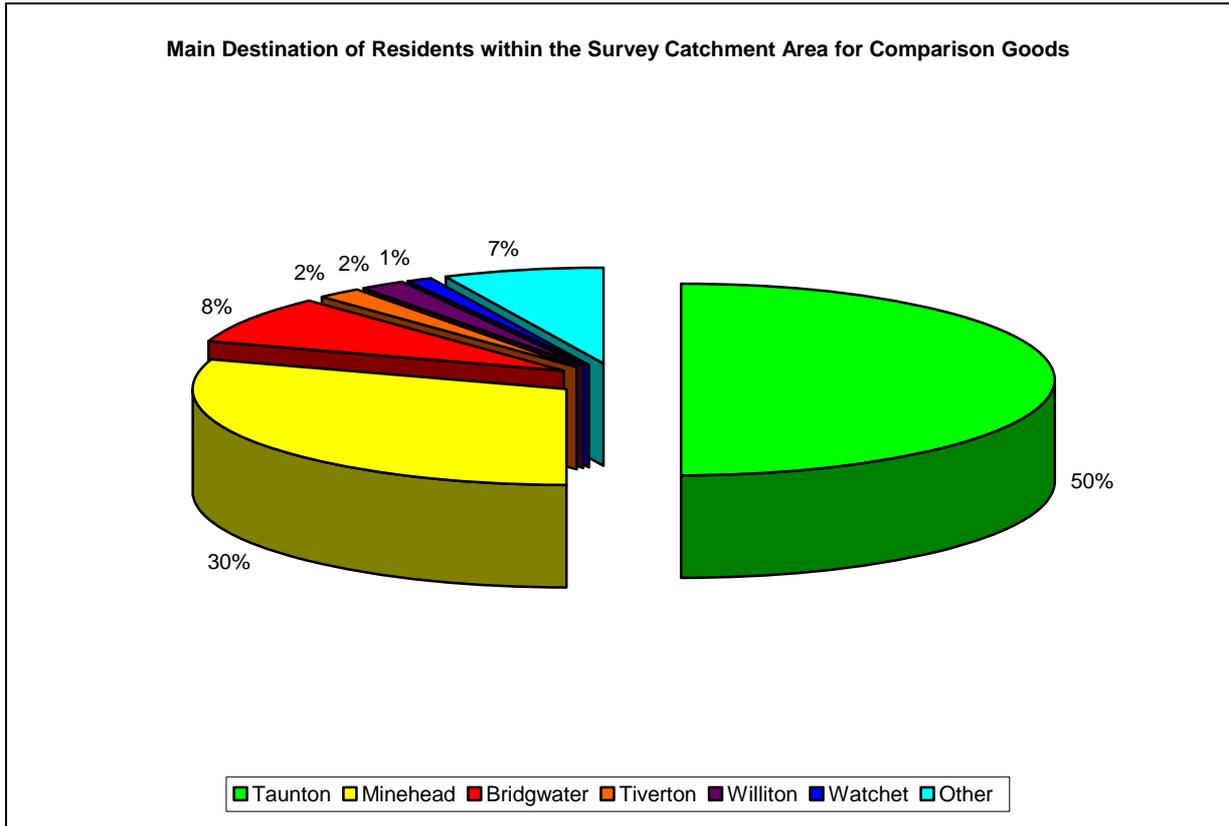
Retail Policies: SH/1 to SH/6

- 5.44 The adopted West Somerset District Local Plan¹⁵⁷ states two objectives for Shopping in the District:
- *To sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of Minehead Town Centre, Watchet and Williton shopping areas; and,*
 - *To support the retention of shops in the villages.*
- 5.45 Data to assist the monitoring of these objectives and associated policies has been taken from the West Somerset Retail and Town Centre Study¹⁵⁸, adopted in November 2005. This data will act as a good baseline for future monitoring. Difficulties associated with extrapolating the results over the medium to long-term means that it is expected to be revised once every 5 years. Owing to the infrequent nature of retail development in West Somerset, the reliability of such development data over such a long time-scale is not deemed as useful or credible.
- 5.46 The data presented covers a spatial dimension regardless of the area confined to the boundaries of the local planning authority. By this it is meant that the data includes areas that fall outside of the district such as parts of Taunton Deane and Exmoor National Park, but use West Somerset to shop. This therefore does not distort the monitoring of the objective and policies.
- 5.47 Graph 9 shows 50% of residents in the catchment area prefer Taunton rather than the other shopping centres as their favoured shopping destination for comparison goods. Whilst it should be borne in mind that some of these residents already live outside West Somerset and thus closer to other shopping destinations, some of the majority controlled by Taunton could be clawed back into the district. It was concluded in the West Somerset Retail and Town Centre Study¹⁵⁹ that there could be a capacity for c.5,400sq.m. net of additional retail floorspace by 2011, and 8,550sq.m. net by 2016, for comparison goods floor space in Minehead. This indicates the future opportunities available in the District to bring shoppers to West Somerset, which will help to provide a more sustainable economy as well as reducing the need to travel. Ultimately it will push the Council towards achieving the employment objective.

¹⁵⁷ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

¹⁵⁸ Donaldsons LLP; West Somerset Retail & Town Centre Study; West Somerset District Council; 2005

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*



Graph 9

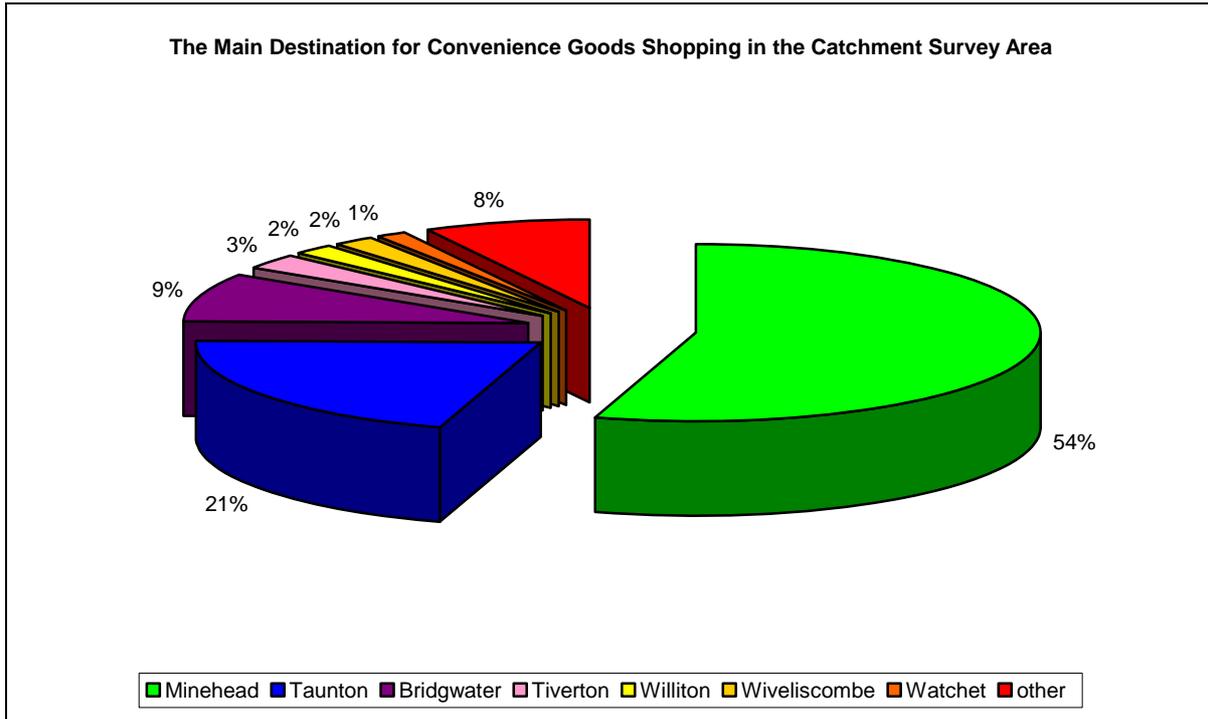
Source: West Somerset Retail and Town Centre Study¹⁶⁰

- 5.48 Unlike comparison goods, the majority of residents in the catchment area surveyed use Minehead as their main convenience goods shopping destination. Although the main supermarket of Tesco is situated on an out of centre site, it does act as a good anchor to encourage people to venture a little further into the town centre of Minehead. Therefore the outcome is positive in attracting custom to Minehead town centre. At the end of the AMR reporting period the Council was considering a variety of retail development options for a site that was in an out-of-centre location at Vulcan Road, Minehead. There was considerable interest from a number of the national retail companies including the four main supermarket operators. The various options were subject to a public consultation exercise and a decision was due to be made as to the preferred course of action after the end of the reporting period. Progress on this project will be reported in the next AMR.
- 5.49 The other centres of Watchet and Williton are not prominent retail centres compared to Minehead, but given their size they are not expected to compete with it. Instead existing policy in the District Local Plan (Policy SH/3)¹⁶¹ looks to support the status of these shopping centres. Therefore future analysis of this type of data will look to the share remaining buoyant or better still increasing.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁶¹ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; *op. cit.*

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Graph 10: Convenience Shopping Destinations in West Somerset Source: West Somerset Retail and Town Centre Study¹⁶²¹⁶³

Centre	Main Comparison (non-food) Shopping Destination	Centre	Main Convenience (food) Shopping Destination
Taunton	50.7%	Minehead	54.6%
Minehead	29.8%	Taunton	20.8%
Bridgwater	7.7%	Bridgwater	8.7%
Tiverton	1.9%	Tiverton	2.8%
Williton	1.7%	Williton	2.1%
Watchet	1.1%	Wiveliscombe	1.9%
Wiveliscombe	-	Watchet	1.2%

Table 27 West Somerset Residents Shopping Location Preferences Source: West Somerset Retail and Town Centre Study¹⁶⁴

Housing Policies: H/4

5.50 The adopted version of the West Somerset District Local Plan¹⁶⁵ lists a number of objectives relating to Housing. The stand out objective amongst this list concerns the problematic issue of affordable housing, which reads as:

- *To enable the provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of the local community in both the short and long term.*

5.51 Whilst dwelling completions, including affordable units, per annum are monitored through the Core Output Indicators, the size of the dwellings in relation to the number of specific dwelling sizes required are not. The data in Tables 28 and 29 do not provide a direct correlation between the number of dwellings required by applicants on the housing register by size and the percentage of open market and affordable dwellings completed by size. The

¹⁶² Donaldsons LLP; West Somerset Retail & Town Centre Study; op. cit.

¹⁶³ *ibid*

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

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data required to achieve this is currently being developed as part of the work associated with the two Strategic Housing Market Assessment studies that the Council is actively participating in. and will be reported in subsequent AMR's. However, by analysing the two existing datasets together trends can be gathered as to the likely specific size requirements and the actual build rate of dwellings and their sizes. This will assist the delivery of Local Plan Policy H/4: Affordable Housing¹⁶⁶ by guiding negotiations between the local planning authority and developers on the sort of dwelling type needed.

Size	Nos. (2004)	% (2004)	Nos. 2005	% (2005)
1 Bed	697	52	703	55
2 Bed	395	29	349	27
3 Bed	190	14	186	15
4 Bed	26	2	38	3
Not Recorded	36	3	0	0
Total	1344	100	1276	100

Table 28: Number and Percentage of applicants on the housing register requiring specific sized dwellings
Source: West Somerset Housing strategy 2005-2008/9¹⁶⁷

Size	2004	2005
1 Bed	2%	20%
2 Bed	53%	44%
3 Bed	42%	29%
4 Bed	3%	7%

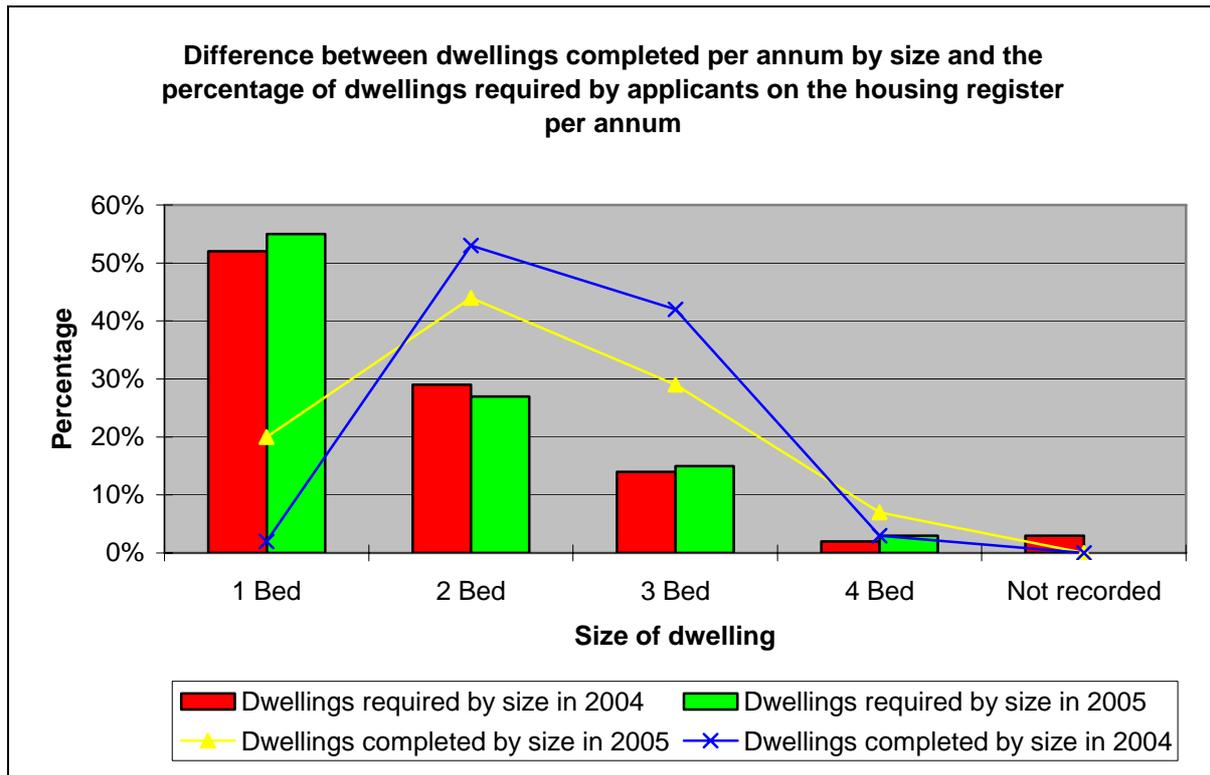
Table 29: Percentage of Total Dwellings Completed per Annum by Size

Source: West Somerset Housing Data

5.52 The percentage of dwellings by size required by applicants on the housing register over the periods 2003/4 and 2004/5 remained fairly constant. The percentage of dwellings by size completed over the same periods have followed a similar pattern to each other but have been built in differing quantities. Despite over a 50% requirement for 1-bedroom dwellings, only 2% of dwellings built in 2003/4 were of this size, rising to 20% the following year. There appears to be a prominent need for this type of dwelling in the District, not just proven by the housing register but by the Contextual Indicators revealing a high number of 1 person households too. However, there is concern that provision of this type of accommodation is only a short-term solution only as there is limited flexibility in the type of occupants. It does not encourage or permit the creation of families without the occupants having to seek new accommodation. This can be particularly disruptive and unsettling for those who cannot afford to buy their own home and are dependent on social housing. Anecdotal evidence from local builders suggests that the cost of building 2-bedroom dwelling units as opposed to 1-bedroom residential accommodation is almost negligible. Also, there is a preference to build the latter as there is a much wider potential market of occupants whether the housing is for sale on the open-market or social accommodation.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Council Housing Strategy 2005 – 2008/9 – Updated 2006; *op. cit.*



Graph 11

- 5.53 By recording future sizes, particularly of affordable dwellings, the onus can be put on developers to construct a greater number of 2 bedroom dwellings. These would offer greater flexibility to future occupants and avoid the danger of providing for a limited niche market. Of the other sizes, the percentage of completed dwellings far exceeds those required (with the exception of 4 bedroom dwellings).
- 5.54 The requirement for more 1 bedroom dwellings points towards the opportunity of providing more apartment type dwellings, which require less land and can be built at higher densities. This offers the chance to develop at a much sustainable rate. However, there is a need to ensure that such accommodation is mixed with other sized units, in order not to create the high density single type of accommodation that could generate social problems in the future.

Community Plan

- 5.55 In addition to the points raised in paragraphs 5.27 to 5.28, the West Somerset Community Plan¹⁶⁸ was subject to revision during a previous AMR reporting period and has been replaced by the West Somerset Sustainable Communities Strategy¹⁶⁹ early in 2007. This sets out the Council's vision and priorities for the period 2007 - 2010 and the means by which it will seek to address and meet these. To fulfil the DCLG's recommendation that the LDF is integrated with local initiatives, such as community strategies, it is thought the Local Output Indicator should be developed in close liaison with the

¹⁶⁸ West Somerset District Council; West Somerset Community Plan 2004 – 2007; West Somerset District Council; 2004.

¹⁶⁹ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; op. cit.

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objectives and targets set in the Community Plan. The LDS Local Development Documents Profiles¹⁷⁰ state that monitoring of key indicators will be developed in partnership with the Exmoor, Coast and Countryside Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership). The objectives and targets established in the Plan will be assessed to find commonalities with what the Local Plan policies are attempting to achieve, thus meeting the Objectives – Targets – Indicators structure. As the relevant DPDs preparation progresses the Sustainable Community Strategy¹⁷¹ will be used to assist in the forming of spatial objectives and targets.

Objective	Target	Indicator
To increase the number of houses for sale that local people can afford to buy.	X number of Affordable units built per annum.	Covered by Core Output Indicator 2d.
	To ensure the size of dwellings built match the requirements of applicants on the Housing Register.	Percentage of dwelling types built in West Somerset per annum compared with percentage of dwelling types required by applicants on the housing register.

West Somerset Local Output Indicator 1: Affordable Housing

The example here is related to Policy H/4 in the West Somerset District Local Plan (Adopted April 2006).

The example shows a likely objective that will be found in the revised Community Plan. Two targets have been set, of which one is covered by the required Core Output Indicator 2d (See page 18). The Indicator is set to measure the effectiveness of the policy in meeting the set target and is formed around the availability of existing data.

Figure 1: Example of the future DPD policy Objective – Target – Indicator structure

- 5.56 Figure 1 provides an example of what a future Local Output Indicator might look like after the integration of the Sustainable Community Strategy with the West Somerset LDF.
- 5.57 It is also felt that the preparation of the Local Output Indicators should be easier to identify now that the Sustainable Community Strategy has been adopted. This occurred in early 2007 and its influence should be more easily established in future Annual Monitoring Reports. This process is explained in greater detail in Section 6.

Significant Effects Indicators

- 5.58 Significant Effect Indicators are indicators that test the sustainability of LDF policies. The onus is on how effective policies are on the social, economical and environmental aspects of the areas that they affect. Government guidance requires Significant Effect Indicators to be closely developed with the objectives and targets that are established in the Sustainability Appraisal Framework that is prepared in parallel with Development Plan Documents.

¹⁷⁰ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; op. cit.

¹⁷¹ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; op. cit.

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- 5.59 At the time of submitting this report, due to the limited progress of DPD's and further revisions to the LDS (submitted to GOSW in March 2008)¹⁷², a Sustainability Appraisal Framework has been established and work commenced. The scoping report for the Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan DPD's were published in July 2006.^{173,174} However due to the change of priorities in the production of documents in the West Somerset LDF and the need to prioritise in favour of the Core Strategy DPD these may have to be re-appraised. This should be reported on in greater detail in the fifth AMR.

¹⁷² West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; op. cit.

¹⁷³ Environ UK Ltd; West Somerset Council Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report; West Somerset Council; 2006.

¹⁷⁴ Environ UK Ltd; West Somerset Council Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report – Appendix 1: Topic Papers; West Somerset Council; 2006.

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6 Remedies and Next Steps

- 6.1 Throughout this AMR a number of gaps have been identified whereby indicators have yet to be established, data has been difficult to extract and, other constraints on their identification and inclusion have become apparent.
- 6.2 The following section will identify discrepancies and limitations at the time of submission, and discuss the remedial action and explain the next steps to be taken over the coming year to ensure the discrepancy or limitation is overcome in the next AMR.

Local Development Scheme Implementation

Section	Local Development Scheme Implementation
Discrepancy / Limitation	Concern regarding the progression of both Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan DPD's following advice to produce the former ahead of the latter in the light of the Lichfield and Stafford decisions. Williton Area Action Plan is now proposed to be developed as a Supplementary Planning Document. Personnel changes have impacted on the implementation of works necessary.
Remedy	Revise the timescales in the LDS following negotiation with Government Office.
Next Steps	Revised timescales in the LDS submitted to SoS for approval on 30 th March 2008 and being re-negotiated over detail with GOSW ¹⁷⁵ .

Contextual Indicators

Section	Contextual Indicators
Discrepancy/ Limitation	Data collected represents the West Somerset District area as opposed to the West Somerset Local Planning Authority area. Therefore a proportion of the Exmoor National Park, which is monitored by the Exmoor National Park Authority, is represented in the data presented.
Remedy	Very few data sources provided by national programmes contain data that is specific to the West Somerset Local Planning Authority area. Therefore it is difficult to extract data that is purely representative of this area. Although not a direct remedial suggestion, it may prove beneficial to invite the Exmoor National Park Authority to the Somerset County Strategic Information Providers group and to adopt the common set of contextual indicators that have been used for this AMR. Through this method, both authorities can use the same indicators and thus report on these in unison, which will provide more clarity on the area that the data represents.
Next Steps	Contact Exmoor National Park Authority with the above suggestion and put any resulting outcome to the CSIP group for consideration.

¹⁷⁵ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; West Somerset Council; 2008.

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Section	Contextual Indicators
Discrepancy/ Limitation	<p>Some data is three or four years old and is released at intervals beyond one or two years.</p> <p>Data that is dated does not give an idea of the current situation. Therefore it is difficult to paint a picture of the area's context at the present time.</p> <p>Data that is released beyond one or two years, such as Census data, limits the ability of the AMR to observe trends as well as change, in the West Somerset context over a short to medium time period. This also defeats the purpose of the AMR, as the same data will be used year on year with the same commentary provided. However, it is recognised that data compiled from more regularly published data-sets have their own limitations. These are often derived from sample surveys and care needs to be taken when disaggregating national and regional data of this type down to areas of the statistical base and geographic size of West Somerset. Using data from such sources as the basis for rigorous and robust statistical analysis needs to be undertaken with care.</p>
Remedy	<p>Search for sources of data that are updated on a short-term basis, such as one or two years. Endeavour to re-establish contextual indicators that can be built around the data that is available, but which is also relevant and of use to building a picture of West Somerset's context whilst recognising the limitations of the data and information used. Ensure that where data is used as a proxy for Local Planning Authority area that the appropriate caveats are included so as not to mislead potential users of the data.</p>
Next Steps	<p>Discuss and identify with the CSIP data sources that are updated on a short-term basis. This will enable West Somerset District Council to provide a more recent analysis of the area's context.</p>

National Core Output Indicators

Section	National Core Output Indicators
Discrepancy / Limitation	<p>Some data has not been able to be provided by West Somerset Council.</p>
Remedy	<p>Revise the authority's monitoring system in order for the correct data to be collected for the Indicators.</p>
Next Steps	<p>Liaise with other services, such as Environmental Services, to establish a more effective monitoring system that collects data, which has previously not been a planning policy responsibility.</p> <p>Contact external organisations such as Somerset Environmental Records Centre and the Somerset County Council Local Transport Plan unit, through CSIP, who could also provide data.</p>

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Local Output Indicators

Section	Local Output Indicators
Discrepancy / Limitation	The West Somerset District Local Plan was finally adopted in April 2006 ¹⁷⁶ . Work has now commenced on identifying Local Output Indicators but these had been partly delayed due to the revision of the Community Plan ¹⁷⁷ into the Sustainable Community Strategy. ¹⁷⁸ Progression of the preparation stages of the DPDs has also been delayed and this has hampered the determination of indicators that will be consistent with both type of development plan policies and strategies for monitoring purposes.
Remedy	For this AMR baseline data has been provided for the locally strategic policies, which will evolve to present key targets in the LDF process. This has been identified in the revised LDS profiles submitted in March 2008 ¹⁷⁹ . Following adoption of the Local Plan ¹⁸⁰ , the arrival of a new Sustainable Community Strategy ¹⁸¹ and DCLG rationalisation of LAA monitoring targets/indicators, the LPA will develop indicators around the Plan's objectives concerning the saved policies and those that are anticipated to emerge from the DPD's as they progress through the various stages to eventual adoption. Establish objectives, targets and indicators around emerging DPD policies. This might evolve from those set for the saved policies. Data availability will need to be considered during this process.
Next Steps	Develop and refine indicators for the Local Plan policies reported on in this AMR. Further consider other saved policies that are likely to evolve as DPD policies and begin to establish objectives, targets and indicators around these. As part of the DPD preparation process consider new policies and how these will be monitored. Also take into account priority given to new LAA indicators.

Section	Local Output Indicators
Discrepancy / Limitation	The West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy ¹⁸² has been reviewed and includes a framework that will assist in the effective monitoring of both the adopted local plan and the emerging DPD's. This is consistent with Government guidance recommends integrating the Local Development Framework AMR with local community initiatives, such as community strategies.
Remedy	Assess and integrate Sustainable Community Strategy ¹⁸³ objectives and targets into DPD objectives, targets and indicators where practical.
Next Steps	Continuing liaison with the Local Strategic Partnership Officer. This will allow continuing integration of the LSP with the LDF and Sustainable Community Strategy ¹⁸⁴ , whilst also generating discussion on how the two could be monitored under a possible corporate monitoring system. Set up an LDF AMR Working Group to consider linkages between the Sustainable Community Strategy and LDF, and any other monitoring functions the authority undertakes. This will reduce duplication of monitoring, thus saving on resources.

¹⁷⁶ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset Council; 2008.

¹⁷⁷ West Somerset District Council; West Somerset Community Plan 2004 – 2007; West Somerset District Council; 2004.

¹⁷⁸ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; West Somerset Council; 2007.

¹⁷⁹ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; op.cit.

¹⁸⁰ West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op.cit.

¹⁸¹ West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; op.cit.

¹⁸² ibid.

¹⁸³ ibid.

¹⁸⁴ ibid.

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Significant Effect Indicators

Section	Significant Effect Indicators
Discrepancy / Limitation	Owing to the amendments to the LDS ¹⁸⁵ and DPD timescales contained within it, the Sustainability Appraisal Framework commenced in early 2006 ¹⁸⁶ , has been delayed with only the initial scoping reports completed to date. It has been decided to wait for the latest revision to the LDS ¹⁸⁷ to be agreed before progressing work to develop the Significant Effects Indicators.
Remedy	Continue background evidence gathering associated with the DPD's but await the outcomes of the Employment Land Assessment, Residential Urban Capacity Study and an early indication as to the future level and scale of development arising from the emerging RSS Examination in Public ^{188,189} as this will influence the development of Significant Effect Indicators.
Next Steps	The authority does not have the in-house capability to develop the Sustainability Appraisal Framework alone. This has been passed on to consultants to undertake as a piece of work. This work has started in 2006 and Scoping Reports ¹⁹⁰ have been produced. Further work awaits the results of the Employment Land Assessment and Strategic Housing Land Availability study that are due to be completed by during 2009. At this point objectives, targets and indicators will begin to emerge ready for future AMR's.

¹⁸⁵ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; op.cit.

¹⁸⁶ Environ UK Ltd; West Somerset Council Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report; West Somerset Council; 2006.

¹⁸⁷ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; op.cit.

¹⁸⁸ Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public Panel; Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public April – July 2007, Exeter: Panel Report; Government Office for the South West; 2008.

¹⁸⁹ Government Office for the South West; The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes – For Public Consultation, July 2008; op.cit.

¹⁹⁰ Environ UK Ltd; West Somerset Council Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report; op.cit.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This AMR for West Somerset has revealed a number of issues that need to be addressed to ensure a much more comprehensive report for the 2008/9 period. Nevertheless, some useful data has been extracted in setting a baseline for future comparisons.
- 7.2 The LDS is currently running behind the timescales set in its revised version¹⁹¹. However, there are concerns that there may be issues surrounding the quantum of additional work that may arise from other sources (e.g. the scale of development likely to be expected to be accommodated within the LPA through the emerging RSS, Strategic Housing Market Assessments, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments), the impact of advice regarding the phasing of progression of DPD's following the decisions on the Lichfield and Stafford DPD's and, the availability of resources to address these and the development of more relevant data-sets to serve the AMR (see para 7.4 below). This may mean that further review of the LDS will be required during 2008/9.
- 7.3 The joint working with the other Somerset district authorities, Somerset County Council, neighbouring Local Planning Authorities in Devon and, South West Regional Assembly has proved very beneficial in the production of this AMR and it is anticipated that these links will be maintained over future AMR reporting periods.
- 7.4 The indicators that have been monitored have revealed a number of limitations in the sources of data collected, the frequency at which this data is released, the type of data that West Somerset Council itself collects, and the availability of relevant data that reflects both the geographic area of the District and that for which it is the Local Planning Authority. In some cases these limitations are unavoidable, but it has been highlighted that this will be assessed over the next AMR period to ensure greater consistency in future AMRs.
- 7.5 Local Output Indicators will be established over the next AMR period. However, baseline data has been provided for this report on the locally strategic policies that will evolve as DPD policies through the LDF process. Further consideration will be given as to how other saved policies such as Transport and Biodiversity can be monitored.
- 7.6 Although Significant Effects Indicators were not monitored, steps are in place to ensure that these are addressed in the next AMR.

¹⁹¹ West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; West Somerset Council; 2008.