



# West Somerset Annual Monitoring Report 2008/9

Part of the West Somerset  
Local Development Framework

December 2009

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**Executive Summary**

- 0.1 The Council has a statutory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004<sup>1</sup>, 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. 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 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)<sup>2</sup> was submitted to them at the end of the AMR reporting period and was subsequently approved on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009. The Statement of

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

<sup>2</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; West Somerset Council; 2009.

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Community involvement (SCI)<sup>3</sup> had been endorsed as fit for purpose following Independent Examination (Reg. 34<sup>4</sup>) stage and was approved for Adoption by Full Council on 31<sup>st</sup> 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 35,500<sup>5</sup> people residing in the whole of the District area. One third of these live in the largest settlement, Minehead. Almost 53.0% of the district's population are aged 50 years or over and 33.24% are over retirement age (60 for females, 65 for males)<sup>6,7</sup> and the age profile identifies a significant absence of people between the ages of 19 to 34<sup>8</sup>. 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 2.16<sup>9</sup>, 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

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<sup>3</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Statement of Community Involvement (Adopted 2008); West Somerset Council; 2008.

<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>5</sup> Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics West Somerset (Local Authority): People and Society: Population and Migration: Resident Population Estimates, All Persons 2008; Office for National Statistics; 2009; (data-set)

<sup>6</sup> Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics - West Somerset (Local Authority): People and Society: Population and Migration: Resident Population Estimates, Females 2008; Office for National Statistics; 2009; (data-set)

<sup>7</sup> Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics - West Somerset (Local Authority): People and Society: Population and Migration: Resident Population Estimates, Males 2008; Office for National Statistics; 2009; (data-set)

<sup>8</sup> Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics West Somerset (Local Authority): People and Society: Population and Migration: Resident Population Estimates, All Persons 2008; op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; Office for National Statistics; 2003

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at over 33%<sup>10</sup>. This correlates with the high number of elderly people in the District, who are likely to make up a large proportion of these households.

- 0.9 The percentage of second homes in the district (6.28%<sup>11</sup>) far exceeds the regional and national figures<sup>12</sup>. This is thought to be a contributory factor to the high ratio (9.42:1) of average house price<sup>13</sup> to average earnings<sup>14</sup> 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 2.5% in West Somerset sits below the national rate of 4.0%<sup>15</sup>, the average earnings per week (by residence), £420.60, is over £70 below the national equivalent of £491.00<sup>16</sup>. 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 2001<sup>17</sup> 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.

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Partnership; 2008

<sup>12</sup> Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset (Local Authority): Housing: Vacant Dwellings: Second Homes (Dwellings), March 2007; Office for National Statistics; 2009; (data-set)

<sup>13</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government; Housing Statistics: Live Tables on Housing Market and House Prices: Table 581 Housing Market: Mean House Prices Based on Land Registry Data, by District, From 1998 – 2009Q1; Department for Communities and Local Government; 2009; (data-set)

<sup>14</sup> Office for National Statistics; 2008 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) Analysis by Place of Residence by Local Authority: Table 8.7a Annual Pay – Gross (£) for All Employee Jobs: United Kingdom 2008; Office for National Statistics; 2009 (data-set)

<sup>15</sup> Office for National Statistics; NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics: Labour Market Profile West Somerset – Total JSA Claimants: All People Claiming JSA – West Somerset March 2009; Office for National Statistics; 2009 (dataset)

<sup>16</sup> Office for National Statistics; NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics: Labour Market Profile West Somerset – Earnings by Residence (2009); Office for National Statistics; 2009; (dataset)

<sup>17</sup> Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; *op.cit.*

**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 2008/9 was encouraging with work being completed on two developments of significant size (>200 sq.m. floorspace). One involved the redevelopment of a seldom used car-park, whilst the other involved development on a previously landscaped site within an existing trading estate. Neither site formed part of an employment land allocation through the Local Plan. However, there remained 6.0 Hectares of land allocated for employment covering the Use Classes B1, B2 and B8<sup>18</sup>, uncommitted and undeveloped at the end of the monitoring period.
- 0.14 Since 1991 a total number of 2,239 dwellings (net) have been completed in the West Somerset local planning area. This figure exceeds the Annual Strategic Requirement (1,865 dwellings), as set in the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review<sup>19</sup>, by 374 dwellings. This, on average, puts the District's residential build rate over three and a half 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. One (Paddons Field, Farringdon Hill, Stogursey) of the three remaining allocated sites from the District Local Plan<sup>20</sup> was completed during the AMR reporting period. The remaining two sites had extant planning approval, in full or outline, at the end of the reporting period.
- 0.15 A total of almost 570 dwellings were approved and/or under construction as at the end of the AMR reporting period. The housing trajectory for the remaining two years covered by the Joint Structure Plan Review to 2011<sup>21</sup> has been calculated. Based on average annual rate of completions over the first 18 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 c.450 dwellings.
- 0.16 Of the dwellings completed in 2008/9, 67.5% were completed on previously developed land, above the national target of 60%, although this included a significant proportion of conversions of existing buildings and an element of dwellings built in the gardens of existing residential units. Of the 120

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<sup>18</sup> 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

<sup>19</sup> 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

<sup>20</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset Council; 2008.

<sup>21</sup> 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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completions these were distributed over 42 different sites. There was an increase in the number of windfall developments outside of the three main settlements when compared with 2007/8.

- 0.17 The number of affordable houses completed in the AMR period was 26, which was one more than that achieved the previous year. The Local Plan had been adopted in April 2006<sup>22</sup> and it is expected that the Planning Obligations Codes of Practice<sup>23</sup> mechanism will be replaced by a more flexible Supplementary Planning Document by the end of 2009. This will assist in the delivery this type of development in the future via planning gain.
- 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 Scheme<sup>24</sup> 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 Strategy<sup>25</sup>. 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 2008/9 indicates that overall housing development is distributed in proportion with the settlement size with the greatest going to Minehead followed by, Watchet and Williton, and then, the rest of the District. This is in line with the Settlement Policies objectives stated in the West Somerset Local Plan.<sup>26</sup>
- 0.22 The economic, employment and related data reveals that in March 2008, the average earnings by residence per week was £420.60, over £70 lower than the national average<sup>27</sup>. 15,300 of the resident population were in employment

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<sup>22</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op.cit.

<sup>23</sup> RPS Group Plc; West Somerset Planning Obligations Codes of Practice: Revised Draft; West Somerset District Council; 2005

<sup>24</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; West Somerset Council; 2007.

<sup>26</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op.cit.

<sup>27</sup> Office for National Statistics; NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics: Labour Market Profile West Somerset – Earnings by Residence (2009); op. cit.

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of which 38.6% were self-employed.<sup>28</sup> 64.0%<sup>29</sup> 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 Plan<sup>30</sup>.

- 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 Study<sup>31</sup> 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 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.<sup>32</sup> 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 LDS<sup>33</sup> and the need to appoint consultants to undertake this aspect of work this did not commence until after the AMR reporting period had finished.

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<sup>28</sup> Office for National Statistics; NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics: Labour Market Profile West Somerset – Labour Supply: Employment and Unemployment (Apr 2008 – Mar 2009); Office for National Statistics; 2009; (data-set)

<sup>29</sup> Office for National Statistics; NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics: Labour Market Profile West Somerset – Labour Demand: Employee Jobs (2008); Office for National Statistics; 2009; (data-set)

<sup>30</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op.cit.

<sup>31</sup> Donaldsons LLP; West Somerset Retail & Town Centre Study; West Somerset District Council; 2005

<sup>32</sup> 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

<sup>33</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; op. cit.

### **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 Indicators<sup>34:35</sup>. 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.

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<sup>34</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide; HMSO; 2005; ISBN 1 85112 772 0

<sup>35</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Local Development Framework Core Output Indicators: Update 1/2005; ODPM Publications; 2005

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004<sup>36</sup>, to submit an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to the Secretary of State by 31<sup>st</sup> 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 Plan<sup>37</sup>. 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. 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 2004<sup>38</sup> 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)<sup>39</sup>;
  - 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:

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<sup>36</sup> H.M. Government; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: Chapter 5 (as amended); HMSO; 2004; ISBN 0 10 540504 3

<sup>37</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset Council; 2007.

<sup>38</sup> H.M. Government; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: Chapter 5; op. cit.

<sup>39</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; West Somerset Council; 2009.

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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 Plan<sup>40</sup> into one document, very little progress was made with the LDF during the monitoring period. The Local Plan was formally adopted in April 2006.

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<sup>40</sup> 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 2004<sup>41</sup>. 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 2005<sup>42</sup>, 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 2006<sup>43</sup>. 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup> This was finally approved by Government Office in July 2008. This has subsequently been subject to a further revision<sup>45</sup> due to the publication of new legislation<sup>46,47</sup> and guidance.<sup>48</sup>

### **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

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<sup>41</sup> H.M. Government; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: Chapter 5; HMSO; 2004; ISBN 0 10 540504 3

<sup>42</sup> West Somerset District Council; West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2005; West Somerset District Council; 2005.

<sup>43</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – July 2006; West Somerset Council; 2006.

<sup>44</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; West Somerset Council; 2008.

<sup>45</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; West Somerset Council; 2009.

<sup>46</sup> H.M. Government; Planning Act 2008 (Chapter 29); The Stationary Office; 2008; ISBN 0 10 542908 1

<sup>47</sup> H.M. Government; The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 (Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 1371); The Stationary Office; 2008; ISBN 0 11 081762 0

<sup>48</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government; Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS 12); The Stationary Office; 2008; ISBN 0 11 753996 9.

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scoping report exercise for the sustainability appraisals<sup>49,50</sup> for each, and early evidence gathering, by the end of the reporting period of the AMR on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. 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 Body<sup>51</sup>. This document was subsequently used as part of the evidence base for the draft version of the Regional Spatial Strategy<sup>52</sup>.

- 2.4 The work on these two Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA's) was completed during the AMR reporting period in December 2008 and February 2009 respectively. The two studies for the Taunton SHMA (comprising Sedgemoor District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council, West Somerset Council and the Exmoor National Park Authority)<sup>53</sup> and the Northern Peninsula SHMA (comprising North Cornwall District Council, North Devon District Council, Torridge District Council, West Somerset Council and, the Exmoor National Park Authority)<sup>54</sup> were prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in PPS 3: Housing<sup>55</sup> and the related guidance issued by DCLG.<sup>56</sup> Both will include Strategic Land Viability Assessments (SLVA's)<sup>57,58</sup> 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

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<sup>49</sup> Environ UK Ltd; West Somerset Council Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report; West Somerset Council; 2006.

<sup>50</sup> 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.

<sup>51</sup> DTZ Pieda Consulting; Analysis of Sub-Regional Housing Markets in the South West; South West Housing Body; 2004

<sup>52</sup> South West Regional Assembly; RSS: The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; South West Regional Assembly; 2006

<sup>53</sup> Fordham Research Group Ltd.; Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas: Strategic Housing Market Assessments - Final Report; Somerset Housing Market Partnership; 2009.

<sup>54</sup> Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Partnership; 2008

<sup>55</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government; Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3); The Stationary Office; 2006; ISBN 0 11 753976 7

<sup>56</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government; Strategic Housing Market Assessments: Practice Guidance; Communities and Local Government Publications; 2007.

<sup>57</sup> Fordham Research Group Ltd.; Taunton & South Somerset Housing Market Areas: Strategic Housing Land Viability Assessment – Final Report; Somerset Housing Market Partnership; 2009.

<sup>58</sup> University of the West of England; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Assessment Partnership: A Strategic Housing Viability Assessment Study – Parts 1 & 2; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Partnership; 2008.

has now become the Sustainable Community Strategy<sup>59</sup>, 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 an Urban Capacity Study to replace the one completed in 2000,<sup>60</sup> which was due for revision in the summer of 2005, had commenced in 2006 although the completion was initially delayed in order to integrate with and take advantage of the information that would come out of the Employment Land Review. However, this has since been superseded by the requirement of Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) to carry out Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments, the guidance for which was issued in the summer of 2007.<sup>61</sup> It was left to the LPA's to determine the exact nature of the methodology to be used in the context of the information provided in the practice guidance. West Somerset opted for that produced by the Somerset Housing Market Partnership<sup>62</sup> as this had been finalised and consultants were commissioned to carry out the work in accordance with the preferred methodology, although this did not commence until after the end of the AMR reporting period.

### **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)<sup>63</sup> began preparation in July of 2005. The document was approved for adoption by Full Council on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007.
- 2.8 The latest revision to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the local planning authority area of West Somerset outside of the Exmoor National Park was approved by Government Office for the South West (GOSW) in April 2009,<sup>64</sup> just outside of the reporting period of this Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). This provides the project timetable for the delivery of the Core Strategy, with anticipated adoption of this Development Plan Document by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011.

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<sup>59</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; West Somerset Council; 2007.

<sup>60</sup> Town Planning Consultancy Ltd.; Residential Urban Capacity Study for West Somerset District Council (Ref. B01001); West Somerset District Council; 2001.

<sup>61</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government; Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments: Practice Guidance – July 2007; Communities and Local Government Publications; 2007.

<sup>62</sup> Somerset Housing Market Partnership; Somerset Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Partnership: Methodology for Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments – July 2008; Somerset Housing Market Partnership; 2008

<sup>63</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Statement of Community Involvement (Adopted 2007); West Somerset Council; 2007.

<sup>64</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; op. cit

### **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 35,500 residents<sup>65</sup> covering an area of 727 sq km<sup>66</sup>. The District is extremely rural with an estimated population of 12,000 persons, living in the main settlement, Minehead.<sup>67</sup> This accounts for approximately one third of the total District population. Geographically, the District starts at the Steart Peninsula, just east of Hinkley Point and spreads westwards and southwards incorporating the northern part of the Quantock Hills, stretching further to the west covering the Brendon Hills and much of Exmoor. The Bristol Channel lies directly to the north. The district's economy is mainly driven by agriculture, retail, social care 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 Strategy<sup>68</sup>, 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 2007<sup>69</sup> and these have been incorporated into the latest version of the Council's Corporate Plan,<sup>70</sup> which are shown below.

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<sup>65</sup> Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics West Somerset (Local Authority): People and Society: Population and Migration: Resident Population Estimates, All Persons 2008; Office for National Statistics; 2009; (data-set)

<sup>66</sup> Somerset County Council; Somerset Areas at April 1<sup>st</sup> 1985; Somerset County Council; 1985

<sup>67</sup> Audit Commission; Strategic Housing Services West Somerset District Council: Local Authority Housing Inspection Report – January 2008; Audit Commission; 2008.

<sup>68</sup> South West Regional Assembly; RSS: The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; South West Regional Assembly; 2006

<sup>69</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Corporate Plan – 2007 Onwards; West Somerset Council; 2007.

<sup>70</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Corporate Plan 2009 – 2012; West Somerset Council; 2009.

**West Somerset Council Community Priorities (2009 - 2012)**

- **Economic Development and Tourism:** - To promote and strengthen the local economy of West Somerset through imaginative use of available funding streams and opportunities for partnership working;
- **Housing:** - To provide better access and availability of housing that fits the diverse needs of local people;
- **Community:** - To improve the health and well-being of local people through promoting a healthier lifestyle and improving access and availability of leisure facilities for the community;
- **Environment:** - To protect the natural environment of West Somerset and encourage local people to play their part in environmental sustainability and waste management, and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### **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 Plan<sup>71</sup> 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 (DEFRA) 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 Vulcan Road Key Site project and, New Horizons hospital development in Minehead.

### **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

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<sup>71</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset Council; 2008.

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the use of different geographical areas outside of West Somerset. This also explains why, in some cases, data might not be recorded for 2008/9 but a few years earlier.

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 boundary<sup>72</sup>. 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 5,000.

Indicator	West Somerset	South West England	England
Population Size	35,500	5,209,200	51,446, 200
Age Structure	See Graph 1		

Table 1 Contextual Indicators: Population

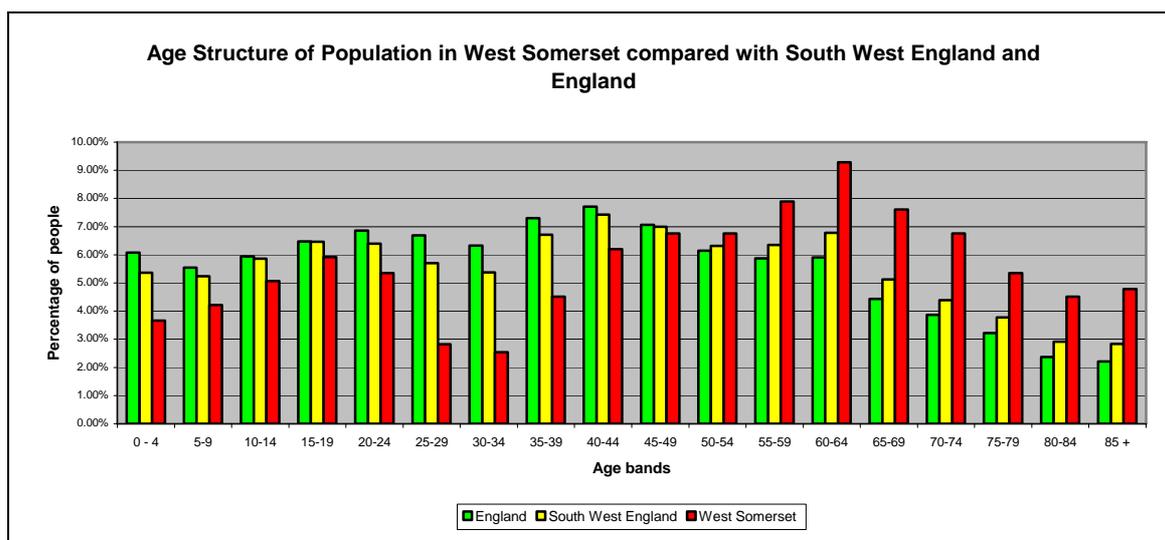
Source: ONS Mid Year Population Estimate 2008<sup>73</sup>

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.

<sup>72</sup> H.M. Government; National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; HMSO; 1949.

<sup>73</sup> Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics West Somerset (Local Authority): People and Society: Population and Migration: Resident Population Estimates, All Persons 2008; Office for National Statistics; 2009; (data-set).

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Graph 1

Source: ONS Mid Year Population Estimate 2008<sup>74</sup>

## 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%)
<b>See Graph 2</b>			

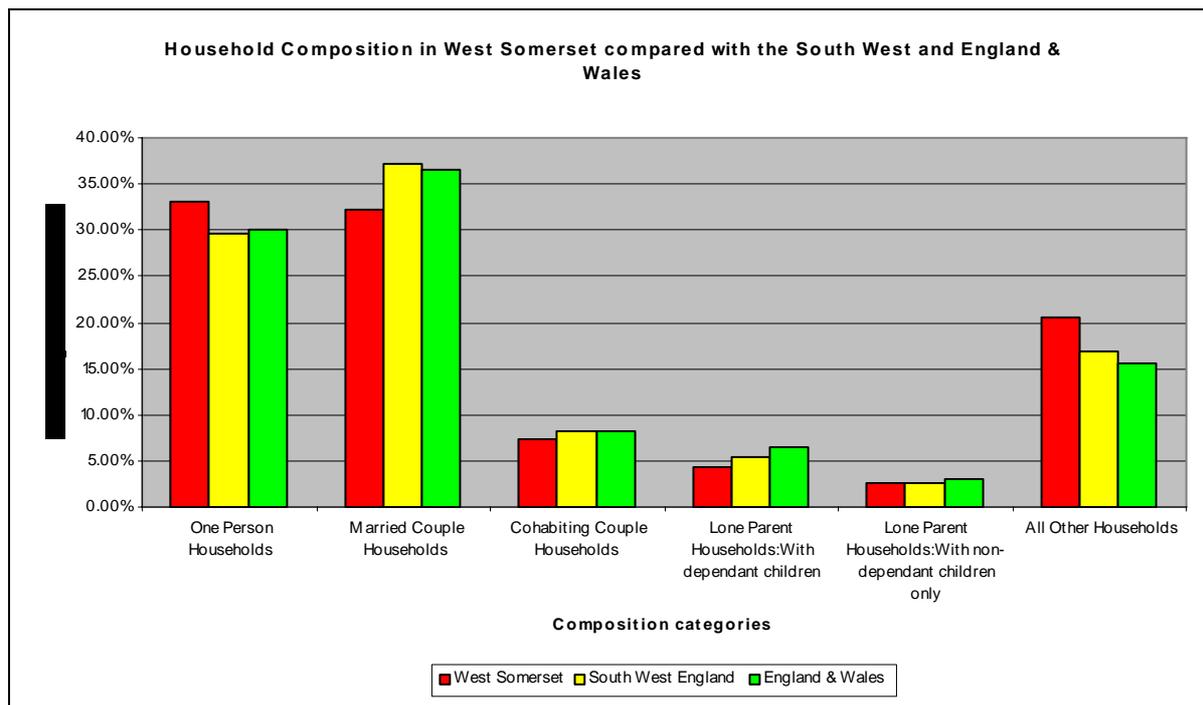
Table 2 Contextual Indicators: Households

Source: Census 2001<sup>75</sup>

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Office for National Statistics; *Census 2001*; HMSO; 2003

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Graph 2

Source: Census 2001<sup>76</sup>

4.16 A housing needs survey in West Somerset in 2008<sup>77</sup> revealed that the household characteristics in the district appeared to be diverging significantly from the data comparisons obtained from the 2001 Census.<sup>78</sup> The findings revealed that the number of single person households had increased in both numeric and proportionate terms to 5,630 and 34.33% respectively and that pensioners comprised 63.32% of this group. Households with two adults and no children occupied 47.95% of the housing stock, whilst family households, including children (lone parent and two adult), accounted for only just over 2,900 (17.73%) of the total occupied dwelling stock. The two housing market assessments both concluded that the future composition of households in West Somerset was going to be increasingly skewed toward single and two adult households, especially pensioners up to 2026.<sup>79,80</sup> This is expected to have significant implications in respect of the provision of housing that may be needed particularly in respect of specialist and sheltered housing for the elderly.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Fordham Research Ltd.; Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessments Report 2: Analysis of Household Survey Data for West Somerset Council | Final Report, February 2009; Somerset Housing Market Partnership; 2009.

<sup>78</sup> Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; *op. cit.*

<sup>79</sup> Somerset Housing Market Partnership; Somerset Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Partnership: Methodology for Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments – July 2008; Somerset Housing Market Partnership; 2008

<sup>80</sup> Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Partnership; 2008

## Dwellings

- 4.17 The proportion of second homes in West Somerset, at 6.28%<sup>81</sup> far exceeds that for the region and England and Wales. This is not unexpected as the high quality of the local environment acts as a pull factor to urban dwellers and given that, in the past house, prices were lower than average, making such properties affordable. This particularly applies to those who are relatively 'cash-rich' in comparison, such as those taking retirement and/or originating from higher house-price areas such as Greater London and the South-East region. The high level of second home ownership places upward pressure on house prices in the District. The situation is most acute on Exmoor and there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that those who are unable to buy a second home in the National Park are displaced to looking at those areas immediately adjoining it including the district's largest settlement, Minehead. This is seen as having a detrimental impact on the indigenous local population who are finding it difficult to step on to the housing ladder and remain in the area. This is demonstrated in the high affordability ratios in the district that have been identified in a number of different studies over the years including those by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2003<sup>82</sup> and 2004,<sup>83</sup> and the two Housing Market Assessments completed in 2008<sup>84</sup> and 2009.<sup>85</sup>
- 4.18 Vacant dwellings in West Somerset as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 are, proportionately, slightly higher than the regional rate and almost the equivalent to the national rate, although these latter two are based on much older information. The increase reflects the changes that were beginning to be felt in the housing market at the time. It is accepted that a small proportion of housing will always be vacant at any point in time and this is in respect of turnover as properties are bought & sold and/or tenants move from one property to another. The guidance on producing Strategic Housing Market Assessments<sup>86</sup> acknowledges that up to 3.0% of housing stock being vacant at any one point in time is necessary in order for the market to function and, the West Somerset rate is only just above this level.

Indicator	West Somerset	South West	England & Wales
Total number of dwellings	c.17,000 (at 2007)	2,185,966	22,538,641
% Second homes	6.28 % (1042) (at 2007)	1.8% (38,381)	0.6% (150,718)
% Vacant properties	3.12% (531) (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 Records<sup>87</sup>; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Assessment<sup>88</sup> Census 2001<sup>89</sup>

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> 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

<sup>83</sup> Wilcox, S.; Affordability Differences by Area for Working Households Buying their Homes – 2003 Update; Joseph Rowntree Foundation; 2004

<sup>84</sup> Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula; op.cit.

<sup>85</sup> Fordham Research Group Ltd.; Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas: Strategic Housing Market Assessments - Final Report; Somerset Housing Market Partnership; 2009.

<sup>86</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government; Strategic Housing Market Assessments Practice Guidance Version 2 (August 2007); Communities and Local Government Publishing; 2007.

<sup>87</sup> West Somerset Council; Council Tax Records 2006/07; West Somerset Council; 2007 (dataset – not publicly available)

<sup>88</sup> Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula; op. cit.

<sup>89</sup> Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; op. cit.

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4.19 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, primarily Magna West Somerset, but also Falcon Housing and other Registered Social Landlords (RSL's). This explains the above average ownership of dwellings by this group of housing landlords when compared with national figures. This high percentage share of the housing stock is encouraged in order 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 2004<sup>90</sup>

## Crime

4.20 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 limited police resources having to cover a much more 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

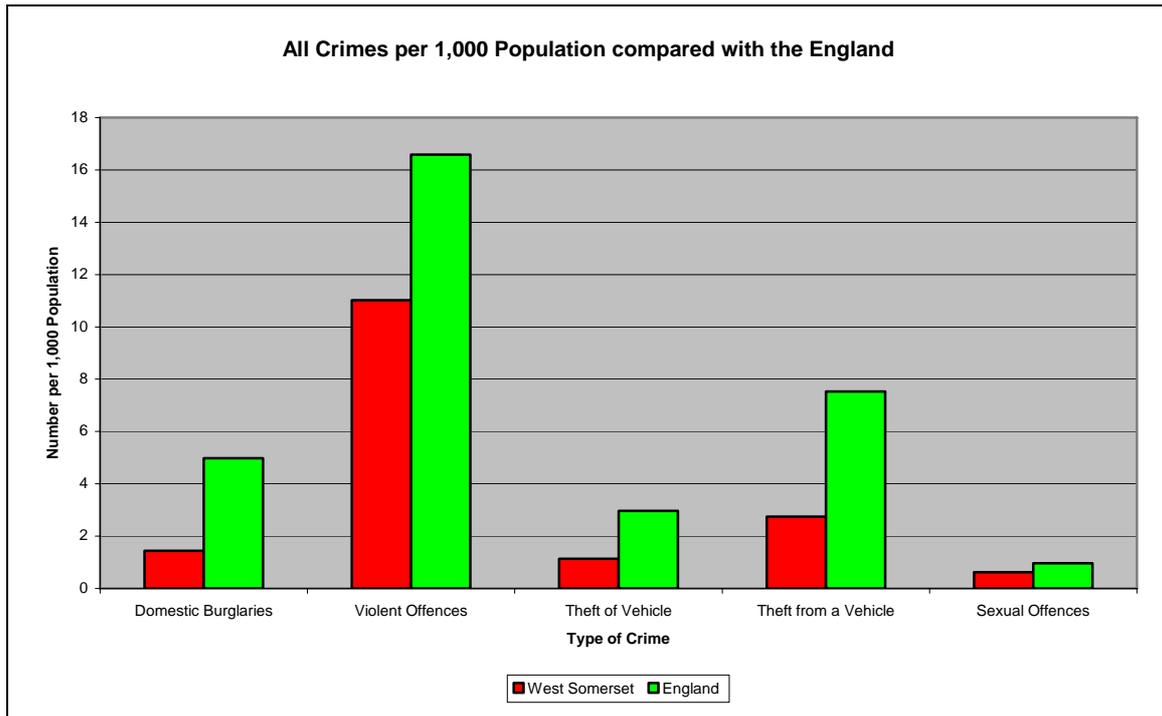
Table 5 Contextual Indicators: Crime – All Crimes per 1,000 population

Source: Home Office 2007/8<sup>91</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Audit Commission; Housing Stock by Tenure, 2004; Audit Commission; 2004

<sup>91</sup> 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 2007/8<sup>92</sup>

4.21 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. The public’s perception of crime in an area can remain much higher than the statistics show the case. Serious and violent crime may occur less frequently in rural areas but when they do, the reporting brings them into much sharper relief in the minds of the public due to the relative rareness when compared with more urbanised areas.

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 2004/05<sup>93</sup>

**Social**

4.22 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. Also, two other significant employment sectors in the district, retail and social-care are increasingly providing employment in the area but these are also characterised by providing relatively low wages and/or an emphasis on using part-time labour. 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

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Home Office; British Crime Survey 2004/05; Home Office; 2005 (dataset).

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data from the Northern Peninsula Housing Market Assessment study that identified 6.28% of the total housing stock being second homes, far higher than its national equivalent<sup>94</sup>. The average house price to average earnings ratio data (and its lower quartile equivalents) 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 2008<sup>95</sup> linked with the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2008<sup>96</sup> suggests that the ratio of average house price to average individual earnings in West Somerset could be as high as 9.42:1.<sup>97:98</sup> 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.<sup>99</sup> This is a significant increase on the data collected by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2002<sup>100</sup> and 2003<sup>101</sup> 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.

- 4.23 Only two of the top 25% of the most deprived wards in England can be found in West Somerset<sup>102</sup>. 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 within larger settlements in the district, which provides an opportunity to concentrate efforts on improving these two areas. The LDF process 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 2004<sup>103</sup>; ODPM 2004<sup>104</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula; op.cit.

<sup>95</sup> 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)

<sup>96</sup> 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)

<sup>97</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government; Housing Statistics: Live Tables on Housing Market and House Prices: Table 581 Housing Market: Mean House Prices Based on Land Registry Data, by District, From 1998 – 2009Q1; Department for Communities and Local Government; 2009; (data-set)

<sup>98</sup> Office for National Statistics; 2008 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) Analysis by Place of Residence by Local Authority: Table 8.7a Annual Pay – Gross (£) for All Employee Jobs: United Kingdom 2008; Office for National Statistics; 2009 (data-set)

<sup>99</sup> 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)

<sup>100</sup> Wilcox, S.; Can Work – Can't Buy: Local Measures of the Ability of Working Households to Become Home Owners; op. cit.

<sup>101</sup> Wilcox, S.; Affordability Differences by Area for Working Households Buying their Homes – 2003 Update; op. cit.

<sup>102</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Indices of Deprivation 2004; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; 2004 (dataset)

<sup>103</sup> Wilcox, S.; Affordability Differences by Area for Working Households Buying their Homes – 2003 Update; op. cit.

<sup>104</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Indices of Deprivation 2004; op. cit.

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## Health

4.24 The life expectancy for West Somerset is above the average for the United Kingdom, and recent data indicates that the district has the highest average age of population in the whole of England at 51.9.<sup>105</sup> 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. In addition to this it is recognised that as people get older so they are likely to be in greater need of social. The Northern Peninsula Housing Market Assessment study identified the threshold age as being around 75, depending on circumstances.<sup>106</sup> With forecast increased longevity of the population's lifespan, this will put increasing pressure on health and social-care services in the future and this is being reflected in the increase in number and size of residential and nursing homes in the area.

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 2006<sup>107</sup> and 2001<sup>108</sup>

## Economy

4.25 The unemployment rate, as represented by the Claimant Count for Job Seekers Allowance, for West Somerset was similar to that of the region, at 2.5%, and below that for the United Kingdom which was 4.0% at the end of the AMR reporting period.<sup>109</sup> The narrower based claimant count is used in preference to the ILO figures<sup>110</sup> as the latter, although a composite of a three month period is based on sample data, which when disaggregated to the West Somerset scale and level, becomes highly questionable in terms of statistical reliability. Although the claimant count data is a positive indication for West Somerset's economy, the average earnings per week (by residence),

<sup>105</sup> Office for National Statistics; Ageing in the UK: Median Age (1992 – 2031) by Local Authority – West Somerset; Office for National Statistics; 2009 (data-set)

<sup>106</sup> Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula; op.cit.

<sup>107</sup> 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)

<sup>108</sup> Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; op. cit.

<sup>109</sup> Office for National Statistics; NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics: Labour Market Profile West Somerset – Total JSA Claimants: All People Claiming JSA – West Somerset March 2009; Office for National Statistics; 2009 (dataset)

<sup>110</sup> Hastings, et. al.; Development of Improved Estimation Methods for Local Area Unemployment Levels and Rates, in:

Labour Market Trends, Vol. 111 No.1, January 2003, pp. 37 - 43; Office for National Statistics; 2003; ISSN 1361 4819

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at £420.60, is significantly lower than the national equivalent of £491.00.<sup>111</sup> 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/or seasonal industries such as agriculture, retail, social-care 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.

- 4.26 These issues were recognised by the public regeneration agencies active in the area in the Western Somerset Economic Development & Access Strategy<sup>112</sup> 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<sup>113</sup> and Labour Force Survey.<sup>114</sup> These showed that at the end 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. At the end of the AMR reporting period, West Somerset Council was awaiting the final version of an economic development strategy document to update parts of the 2002 study.<sup>115</sup>
- 4.27 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 2007<sup>116</sup>. 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 was £64,000<sup>117</sup> and therefore, the benefits of being registered for VAT are not deemed to be economically attractive to the owner and operator. No comparable later data is available for

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<sup>111</sup> Office for National Statistics; NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics: Labour Market Profile West Somerset – Earnings by Residence (2009); Office for National Statistics; 2009; (dataset)

<sup>112</sup> EDAW; Western Somerset Economic Development & Access Strategy; West Somerset District Council; 2002.

<sup>113</sup> Ashton, K. and Kent, K.; Annual Population Survey Household Data Sets, in: Economic & Labour Market Review Vol. 2 No. 10, October 2008, pp. 44 – 51; Office for National Statistics; 2008; ISSN 1751 8334.

<sup>114</sup> Barnes, W. et. al.; Making Sense of Labour Force Survey Response Rates, in: Economic & Labour Market Review Vol. 2 No. 12, December 2008, pp. 32 – 42; Office for National Statistics; 2008; ISSN 1751 8334.

<sup>115</sup> EDAW; Western Somerset Economic Development & Access Strategy; op. cit.

<sup>116</sup> 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)

<sup>117</sup> Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform; UK Business: Activity, Size and Location 2007; National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS); 2008.

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2008 at the time of writing. 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 county<sup>118</sup>. 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%<sup>119,120</sup>), 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)	2.5%	1.3%	4.0%
VAT Registered Businesses	Registrations	95 (5.7%)	8.9%
	De-registrations	100 (6.0%)	6.6%
	Total Stock	1660	159,670
			1,673,830

Table 9 Contextual Indicators: Economy

Source: Nomis 2009<sup>121</sup> and 2007<sup>122</sup>

## Environment

4.28 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 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 (AQMAS)	0	124

Table 10 Contextual Indicators: Environment

Sources: Environment Agency 2007<sup>123,124</sup> WSC 2006<sup>125</sup> & DEFRA 2007<sup>126</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Somerset County Council; Somerset Structure Plan Review: Background Paper – Supplementary Information on Matters 1 – 8; Somerset County Council; 1997.

<sup>119</sup> Office for National Statistics; Annual Business Inquiry: Annual Employment Survey Employee Jobs (Workplace-Based), 2001; National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS); 2003 (dataset)

<sup>120</sup> Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; op. cit.

<sup>121</sup> Office for National Statistics; NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics: Labour Market Profile West Somerset – Total JSA Claimants: All People Claiming JSA – West Somerset March 2009; op. cit.

<sup>122</sup> 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.

<sup>123</sup> Environment Agency; Rivers of Good Biological Quality in England and Wales 1990 to 2006; Environment Agency; 2007 (dataset)

<sup>124</sup> Environment Agency; Rivers of Good Chemical Quality in England and Wales 1990 to 2006; Environment Agency; 2007 (dataset)

<sup>125</sup> West Somerset Council; Air Quality Review and Assessment: Updating and Screening Assessment 2006; West Somerset Council

<sup>126</sup> 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)

## Transport

- 4.29 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.
- 4.30 The data for the mode taken to travel to work is perhaps supported by the data for the distance travelled to work. As noted 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%).<sup>127</sup> 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. This is consistent with work undertaken by Roger Tym & Partners for the South West Regional Assembly in respect of the role and function of settlements. This research showed that West Somerset's largest town, Minehead, also had one of the highest self-containment factors at 78% in terms of resident working population and place of work.<sup>128</sup>

	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>West Somerset</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>
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

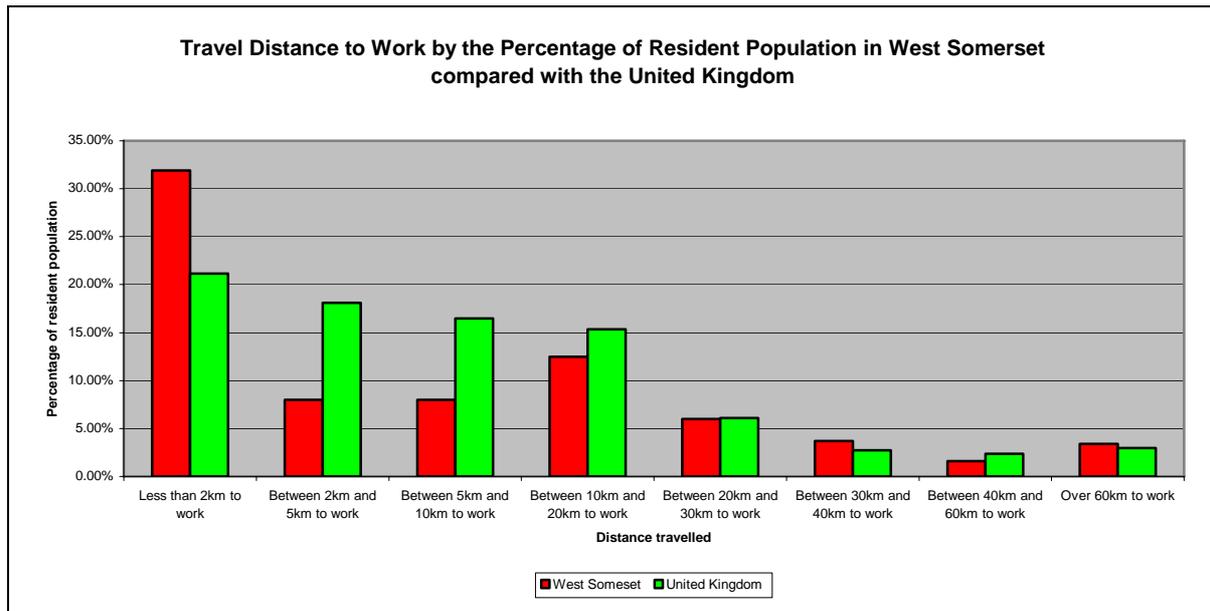
Source: ONS 2001<sup>129</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset: Distance Travelled to Work – Workplace Population (UV80); Office for National Statistics; 2003 (dataset)

<sup>128</sup> Roger Tym & Partners; South West Regional Assembly: Functional Analysis of Settlements – Final Report, April 2005; South West Regional Assembly; 2005

<sup>129</sup> Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset: Distance Travelled to Work – Workplace Population (UV80); Office for National Statistics; 2003 (dataset)

4.31 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 2001<sup>130</sup>

## Education

4.32 The percentage of 15 year old pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE's at grades A\* to C or equivalent in West Somerset in 2008 is the same as the previous year but lower than the corresponding proportions for Somerset and England.<sup>131</sup> This is a reversal of the situation two years previously<sup>132</sup> 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 currently achieved by use of the Planning Obligations Codes of Practice SPG.<sup>133</sup> This is due to be replaced by a more flexible Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that is being developed by the Council and is due to be adopted by the end of 2009.

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families; Achievement and attainment Tables: Secondary School (GCSE and Equivalent) 2008 – West Somerset Community College; Department for Children Schools and Families; 2008 (dataset)

<sup>132</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Annual Monitoring Report 2006/7; West Somerset Council; 2007

<sup>133</sup> RPS Group Plc; West Somerset Planning Obligations Codes of Practice: Revised Draft; West Somerset District Council; 2005

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<b>Indicator</b>	<b>West Somerset</b>	<b>Somerset</b>	<b>England</b>
Percentage of 15 year old pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE's at grades A* to C or equivalent	55%	60%	65%

Table 12 Contextual Indicator: Education

Source: DCFS 2009<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families; Achievement and Attainment Tables: Secondary Schools (GCSE and Equivalent) 2008 – West Somerset Community College; op. cit.

## **5 Implementing Local Development Framework Policies**

- 5.1 During 2008/9, the West Somerset Local Development Framework was not progressing to the timescales set in the second revision to the Local Development Scheme (LDS).<sup>135</sup> This was partly 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.<sup>136</sup> The resource issue was partially resolved by the appointment of a second policy planner to the LDF team, although this person did not take up the position until mid-December 2008. Also, during the course of the AMR reporting period, The Government published new legislation and guidance in the form of the Planning Act 2008<sup>137</sup> (and associated Regulations<sup>138</sup>) and a revision to PPS 12. The first of these amended the format of production of Local Development Framework documents and necessitated revisions to the recently approved revised LDS. Negotiation with Government Office for the South West (GOSW) for a further revision to the LDS took place towards the end of the AMR reporting period, resulting in a third revised document that was approved by them in April 2009, just outside the period covered by this report.<sup>139</sup>
- 5.2 The West Somerset District Local Plan and its policies were automatically 'saved' under the three year saving period provided for under the 'transitional arrangements'.<sup>140</sup> The Local Planning Authority 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, during the reporting period of this AMR. Following negotiation with GOSW most of the policies were saved indefinitely, where they were still regarded as consistent with extant national and regional policy. A Direction on behalf of the Secretary of State was issued on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 confirming this.<sup>141</sup>
- 5.3 Shortly after gaining approval for the first revision to the LDS<sup>142</sup>, 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

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<sup>135</sup> West Somerset District Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; West Somerset Council; 2008..

<sup>136</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset Council; 2008.

<sup>137</sup> H.M. Government; The Planning Act 2008 (Chapter 29); The Stationary Office; 2008; ISBN 0 10 542908 1

<sup>138</sup> H.M. Government; The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 (Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 1371); The Stationary Office; 2008; ISBN\_0 11 081762 0

<sup>139</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; West Somerset Council; 2009.

<sup>140</sup> 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

<sup>141</sup> Government Office for the South West; Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Direction Letter in Respect of Policies in the West Somerset District Local Plan Saved Beyond 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009; Government Office South West; 2009.

<sup>142</sup> West Somerset District Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – July 2006; op.cit.

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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. In the context of this advice, and following the publication of the amended legislation,<sup>143,144</sup> the latest revision to the LDS contained only details relating to the production of the West Somerset LDF Core Strategy. The Council also decided at the start of 2009 to produce a Planning Obligations SPD to replace the existing Planning Obligations Codes of Practice.<sup>145</sup> In order not to divert resources from the LDF Core Strategy, this work was issued to outside consultants, Cushman & Wakefield to produce and was due to be adopted by the end of 2009.

- 5.4 At the start of the AMR review period 2007 PPS 3: Housing<sup>146</sup> 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).<sup>147</sup> 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 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 guidance<sup>148</sup> on the form and content of the SHMA studies and these were completed during the course of the AMR reporting period in December 2008<sup>149</sup> and February 2009.<sup>150</sup>
- 5.5 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.

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<sup>143</sup> H.M. Government; The Planning Act 2008 (Chapter 29); op. cit.

<sup>144</sup> H.M. Government; The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 (Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 1371); op. cit.

<sup>145</sup> RPS Group Plc; West Somerset Planning Obligations Codes of Practice: Revised Draft; West Somerset District Council; 2005

<sup>146</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government; Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS 3); The Stationary Office; 2006; ISBN 0 11 753976 7.

<sup>147</sup> South West Regional Assembly; The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; South West Regional Assembly; 2006.

<sup>148</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government; Strategic Housing Market Assessments: Practice Guidance – Version 2 (August 2007); Communities and Local Government Publications; 2007.

<sup>149</sup> Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula; Northern Peninsula Housing Market Partnership; 2008

<sup>150</sup> Fordham Research Group Ltd.; Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas: Strategic Housing Market Assessments - Final Report; Somerset Housing Market Partnership; 2009.

### **Core Output Indicators**

5.6 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, B2, and/or B8.	0.0 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	0.0%
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

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5.7 A limited amount of employment land was developed during the 2008/9 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 200sq.m. of gross floorspace created for activities within the B Class of uses (B1, B2 and B8) identified in the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987<sup>151</sup>. These Classes cover uses such as; B1 – Commercial Office, Research & Development and, Light Industry, B2 - General Industrial and, B8 - Storage & Distribution centres. The two larger projects that were completed during the reporting year comprised six industrial starter units on a former car-park adjoining Minehead railway station and, a purpose built unit for a local glazing company on the Mart Road Enterprise Park in Minehead.

5.8 The first of these completions comprised six units of varying size in terms of floorspace in two blocks of three units each. The structures were built to the latest energy efficiency and sustainability standards and were built using a combination of public sector and European Union funding. The six units provide over 850sq.m. (9,000 sq.ft.) of industrial floorspace and extend the range of provision within the town. The development also included the provision of a new turntable for the West Somerset Railway, an important

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<sup>151</sup> 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

heritage and tourism attraction in the town, a café and improved car parking arrangements for the new industrial units, railway station and the public. The second significant addition to the mix of employment uses was the completion of a be-spoke industrial unit of just over 200 sq.m. floorspace (gross) for a local company. This was built on land that had previously formed part of the landscaping for older industrial units that had been built in the 1990's. At the end of March 2009 a total of 6.0 Hectares of land identified for industrial development in the West Somerset District Local Plan<sup>152</sup> remains allocated but undeveloped and uncommitted at the end of the AMR reporting period.

- 5.9 Two further projects in Minehead took important steps towards fruition. Although not within the narrow definition of employment uses as set out in national guidance,<sup>153</sup> both developments will provide significant and alternative employment options for the local population whilst extending and/or providing services and facilities that will enhance the town's attraction. The first of these was the granting of planning permission for 'Minehead Eye', a c. 1000sq.m. leisure development. This will provide leisure facilities aimed particularly at the youth and young adult part of society including an all-weather covered skateboard venue, recording studio and cyber-café. A facility of this type and aimed specifically at the younger end of the community has been proposed for a number of years, first being suggested as part of the Market and Coastal Town Initiative back in 2001.<sup>154</sup> It will provide an important focus for young residents and visitors to the town and add an alternative covered facility that can be used in inclement weather. The construction of the building commenced outside of the AMR reporting period and is expected to be completed in 2010. The other potential 'employment' provider in the future is likely to be a supermarket development for Morrisons on the under-used car park off Vulcan Road in Minehead. A formal planning application was submitted in April 2009 and will be reported on in the next AMR.

## **Housing**

- 5.10 Under the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (Adopted April 2000)<sup>155</sup>, 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

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<sup>152</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset Council; 2008.

<sup>153</sup> Department of the Environment; Planning Policy Guidance Note 4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms (PPG 4); H.M.S.O.; 1992.

<sup>154</sup> Sustainable Futures; Minehead Market and Coastal Town Initiative: Minehead Community Strategy; Minehead Market and Coastal Town Forum; 2002.

<sup>155</sup> 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

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outcome of this work was presented as part of the draft version of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (RSS)<sup>156</sup>. This will cover the period 2006 to 2026.

- 5.11 At the end of the AMR reporting period, the Regional Spatial Strategy<sup>157</sup> had progressed beyond the Examination in Public (EiP), which had been held between April and July 2007. The Panel appointed to conduct the EiP had published their report and recommendations in January 2008<sup>158</sup> and the Secretary of State had published proposed amendments<sup>159</sup> in the light of the Panels's report and placed them out for 13 weeks of public consultation in July 2008. At the end of the reporting period the final version of the South-West Regional Spatial Strategy was still awaiting publication. As a consequence of revised population projections from the Office of National Statistics<sup>160</sup> 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.<sup>161</sup> The figure for the twenty year period increased from 2,200 in the draft RSS<sup>162</sup> to 2,500 endorsed through the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes.<sup>163</sup> Given the historical record of development in the West Somerset Local Planning Authority area since 1991 (covered below), this revised figure has been used as the basis for the development of the Council's LDF Core Strategy.

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<sup>156</sup> South West Regional Assembly; RSS: The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; South West Regional Assembly; 2006

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> 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.

<sup>159</sup> 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.

<sup>160</sup> Department for Communities and Local government; DCLG Revised 2004-Based National Population Projections; Communities and Local Government Publishing; 2006.

<sup>161</sup> 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.*

<sup>162</sup> South West Regional Assembly; RSS: The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; *op. cit.*

<sup>163</sup> 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.*

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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).	2,239
2a(ii)	Net dwellings for the current year.	120
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).	569
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).	-139

Table 14

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5.12 The number of net dwellings completed since 1991 in the West Somerset local planning authority area is 2,239. This figure exceeds the Annualised Strategic Requirement (1,864 dwellings or 105 per annum) and the overall requirement, as set by the Structure Plan<sup>164</sup>, by 375 dwellings at the end of 2008/9. This implies the average dwelling build rate in the area is well 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 2008/9 shows a continuing fall from the peak year of development on 2006/7. The level of completions for 2008/9 was above the annualised rate in the Structure Plan<sup>165</sup> but just below that set out in RPG 10<sup>166</sup> and the emerging RSS.<sup>167</sup>

5.13 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.<sup>168</sup> However, the total number of approved dwellings during the year has increased from the 117 in 2006/7<sup>169</sup> to 183 with full planning permission plus a further 8 firmly identified through outline approval. Of the number of units which gained full planning permission during the year, 47.0% of these were in one development on the East Wharf at Watchet. They formed part of a larger mixed-use proposal which included commercial and community uses and will result in the regeneration of a

<sup>164</sup> Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> Government Office for the South West; Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10); H.M.S.O.; 2001.

<sup>167</sup> 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.

<sup>168</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Annual Monitoring Report – December 2007; West Somerset Council; 2007

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*

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significant part of the harbour environment around the new marina that was created earlier in the decade. It will also fulfil a major local policy objective for Watchet set out in the Local Plan (Policy WAT/1).<sup>170</sup> The number of dwellings under construction at the end of the reporting period was down on the high figure of the previous year to only 85 in 2008/9. This would appear to be a reflection of the economic downturn that arrived in the UK in 2007 and has resulted in a significant reduction in the demand for housing nationally and locally.

- 5.14 As in previous years, most of the completions have come through in the form of windfall developments on small sites. Only the finishing off of the Strongvox Paddons Field development at Stogursey was of a significant size (> 20 dwelling units). This was one of the few remaining sites allocated in the West Somerset District Local Plan.<sup>171</sup> This was on a greenfield site and this type of development accounted for only 32.5% of the total completions. In this monitoring year 81 dwellings were completed on previously developed land (see Table 17 and para. 5.19). However, over 60% of these comprised conversions of existing buildings and a significant number of the remaining were new dwellings built within gardens of other existing residential units.
- 5.15 Of all the completions 32.5% were not on windfall sites, with the greenfield development at Stogursey being the only allocated site to be developed. 'Windfalls' are developments, the timing and location of which could not have been predicted in advance and incorporated into the local plan and its site allocation process, or small scale (less than 10 units), that they would not have been identified and allocated through the development plan process anyway. At the end of the AMR reporting period three sites remained allocated and undeveloped as identified in Policy H/1 of the Local Plan<sup>172</sup> (see Table 15), 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. The site at Higher Marsh Farm, Dunster has Full planning Permission for 50 dwellings, 10 more than that identified for the site 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.
- 5.16 The impact of large developments, which are unusual in West Somerset, on the housing completions statistics is shown through the last development of over 100 units, 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

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<sup>170</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

<sup>171</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

<sup>172</sup> *ibid.*

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Strategic Requirement during the development phase of the site would be just above annualised average, as set out the Structure Plan, of 105.<sup>173</sup>

- 5.17 The Joint Structure Plan Review<sup>174</sup> set a figure of 2100 dwellings to be met by 2011, and the local planning 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 16) and existing commitments, a total of approximately 569 dwellings is estimated could be built by 2011. If all of these were implemented, this would exceed the Joint Structure Plan Review housing requirement by over 700 dwellings.
- 5.18 As the housing requirement figure in the Structure Plan has already been met before the end of period for which it was provided, the need for an Annualised Residual Rate is no longer required. However, as development is an on-going process, the annualised average rate of development in the emerging RSS<sup>175</sup> has been included in Graph 5, at 125 dwellings per annum. Given the changes to the consenting regime introduced in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004,<sup>176</sup> which, in general, limited new planning permissions to a life of three years, it is difficult to make accurate future development projections beyond three years. The situation is compounded by the erratic nature of housing development in West Somerset, as mentioned earlier, and the high level of small-scale and windfall development that occurs within the area. As a consequence the projections in Graph 5 are limited to three years only. It is acknowledged that PPS 3: Housing<sup>177</sup> requires Local Planning Authorities to ensure that they have a five year supply of land readily available for residential development. It is calculated that in the West Somerset LPA area only 91% of this requirement is available, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009, including existing allocations through the Local Plan and extant planning permissions. In order to address this shortfall, the Council has commissioned work on a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to be carried out and this work is likely to be completed before the end of the next AMR reporting period. This will be consistent with the guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government<sup>178</sup> and an approved methodology endorsed by the Somerset Housing Market Partnership.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

<sup>174</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> 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.

<sup>176</sup> H.M. Government; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: Chapter 5; HMSO; 2004; ISBN 0 10 540504 3

<sup>177</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government; Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3); op. cit.

<sup>178</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government; Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments: Practice Guidance – July 2007; Communities and Local Government Publications; 2007.

<sup>179</sup> Somerset Housing Market Partnership; Somerset Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Partnership: Methodology for Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments – July 2008; Somerset Housing Market Partnership; 2008

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<b>Policy H/1: Housing Allocation Sites</b>	<b>No. of Units</b>	<b>Expected Completion Date</b>
Rear of North Street, Williton	20	2010/11
Seaward Way, Minehead	36	2010/11
Higher Marsh Farm, Dunster Marsh	40	2010/11
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	

Table 15 Policy H/1 Housing Allocations<sup>180</sup>

<b>Core Output Indicator No.</b>	<b>Core Output Indicator: Housing</b>	<b>Data</b>
2b	Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land.	67.50%
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. (new developments of 5 or more units – exc. conversions)	32.50%
2c (iii)	Percentage of new dwellings completed at above 50 dwellings per hectare	N/A
2d	Affordable housing completions	26

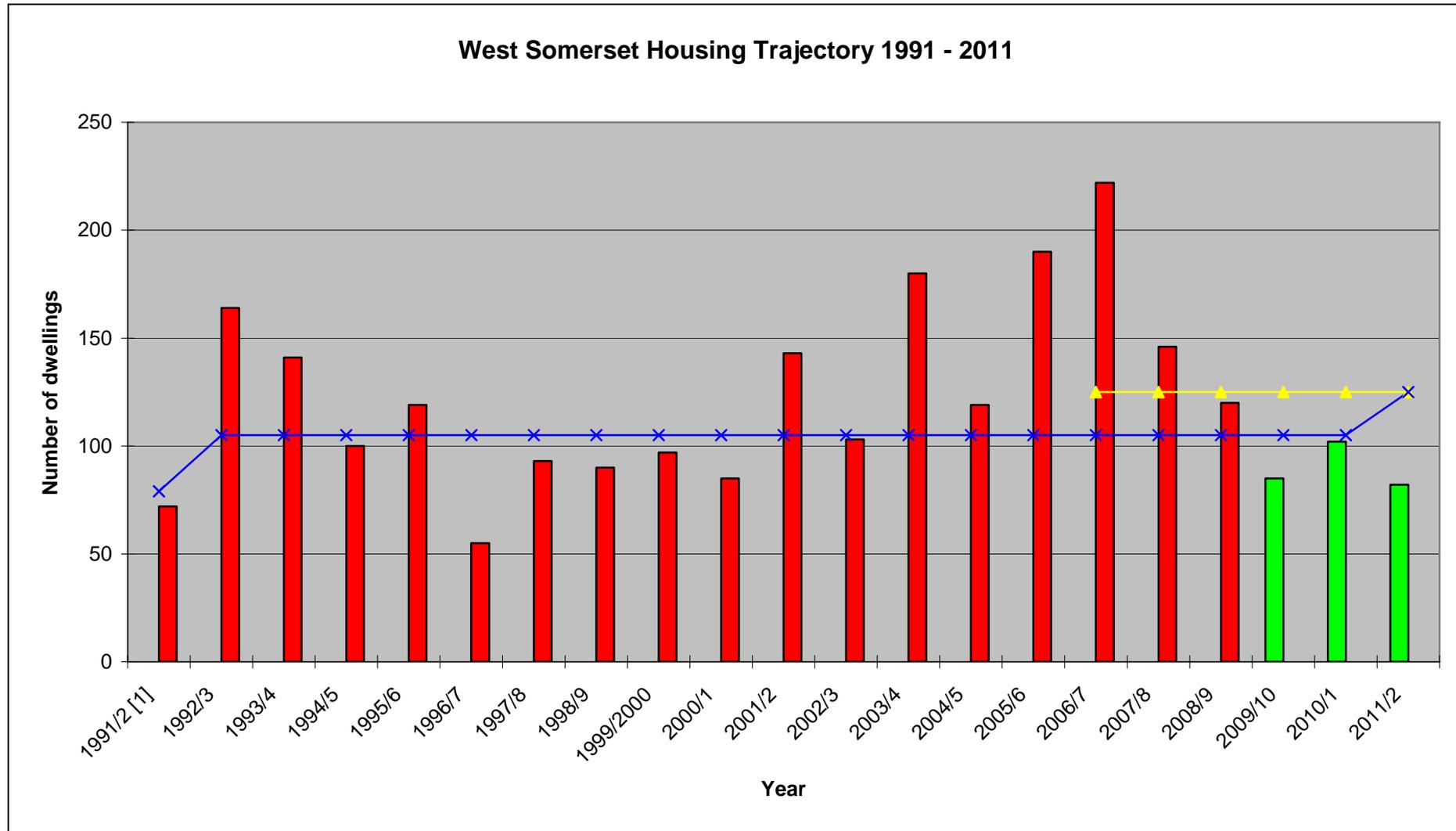
Table 17

5.19 West Somerset usually enjoys a high rate of housing completions on previously developed land. During the AMR reporting period 67.5% 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 Governments target. This outcome correlates with the Settlement Policy SP/5 found in the adopted West Somerset District Local Plan<sup>181</sup>, 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. It is acknowledged that the reliance on conversions and garden development that has contributed to these high rates cannot guaranteed to continue and that large sites will need to be identified to meet the emerging RSS housing requirement. This may result in the re-drawing of some settlement boundaries as part of the LDF Core Strategy Process. As a start towards the identification of future development sites the Council has commissioned work on a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (see para. 5.18)

<sup>180</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

<sup>181</sup> *ibid.*

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x-----x-----x Joint Structure Plan Review annualised average requirement (1991 – 2011)  
x-----x-----x Emerging Regional Spatial Strategy annualised average housing requirement (2006 – 2026)  
 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	120		
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	15		
Cumulative completions	72	236	377	477	596	651	744	834	931	1016	1159	1262	1442	1561	1751	1973	2119	2239		
Cumulative under /over provision	-7	52	88	83	97	47	35	20	12	-8	30	28	103	117	202	319	360	375	270	165
Completions						55	93	90	97	85	143	103	180	119	190	222	146	120		
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	-5		
Cumulative completions						55	148	238	335	420	563	666	846	965	1155	1377	1523	1643		
Cumulative under /over provision						-70	-102	-137	-165	-205	-187	-209	-154	-160	-95	2	23	18	-107	-232

Table 16

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**Notes**

JSPR	Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011 <sup>182</sup>
RPG 10	Regional Planning Guidance for the South West 1996 - 2016 <sup>183</sup>
'	Monitoring year = 01APRxx to 31MARxx (following year)
''	Data collection period = 01JUL91 – 31MAR92
'''	Assumed base date for RPG 10 monitoring = 01APR96

<sup>182</sup> ibid.

<sup>183</sup> 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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- 5.20 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 and reliable figures on development density. As a consequence, only sites involving five or more new dwellings, excluding conversions, on greenfield sites have been analysed. This provides a figure of 32.5% developed at a density of 30 or more per Hectare but this only involves 39 dwellings on 2 sites. 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 120 dwellings completed during the year these were located on 42 separate sites. The overall number of completions is down compared to the previous year, and a notable feature is the fact one site accounted for just under 30.0% of the total.
- 5.21 The number of affordable houses developed in the period 2008/9 was 26, one more than the previous year.<sup>184</sup> The affordable housing element of 14 dwellings as part of the Paddons Field development at Stogursey had been a significant contributor to this total in the previous year. As a consequence of the economic downturn the demand for new dwellings in West Somerset had reduced significantly and the developer sought to reduce its number of unsold new houses by offering some of them to a local Registered Social Landlord. Many of the other units provided via small-scale developments. A promising indication of future provision of affordable housing was the start of construction on 23 units in Alcombe, Minehead which are likely to be completed by early 2010.
- 5.22 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 provides Policy H/4<sup>185</sup> to assist in the delivery of affordable housing. This is supported by the Planning Obligations Codes of Practice that was developed as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)<sup>186</sup>. The SPG is due to be replaced by a planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) at the start of 2010. This has been done in order to update and clarify elements in the original SPG and acknowledge the changes that have occurred elsewhere in respect of affordable housing, especially the requirement for 35% of new residential developments to be affordable as set out in the emerging RSS.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Annual Monitoring Report – December 2008; West Somerset Council; 2008

<sup>185</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> RPS Group Plc; West Somerset Planning Obligations Codes of Practice: Revised Draft; West Somerset District Council; 2005

<sup>187</sup> 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.*

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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 2011	No
Land adjacent Sure Start, Minehead	23	December 2009	Full
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	
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>		

Table 18 Affordable Housing Schemes

5.23 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. This has been supported through evidence provided in the two Strategic Housing Market Assessment studies that were completed in December 2008<sup>188</sup> and February 2009.<sup>189</sup>

## 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

5.24 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.

<sup>188</sup> Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula; op. cit.

<sup>189</sup> Fordham Research Group Ltd.; Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas: Strategic Housing Market Assessments - Final Report; op. cit.

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**Local Services**

<b>Core Output Indicator No.</b>	<b>Core Output Indicator: Local Services</b>	<b>Data</b>
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

5.25 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**

<b>Core Output Indicator No.</b>	<b>Core Output Indicator: Flood Protection and Water Quality</b>	<b>Data</b>
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

5.26 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.

**Biodiversity**

<b>Core Output Indicator No.</b>	<b>Core Output Indicator: Biodiversity</b>	<b>Data</b>
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

5.27 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

- 5.28 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. Almost 75% of the Council's administrative area comprises land subject to environmental protection through designation as a National Park<sup>190</sup> or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.<sup>191</sup> These designations affect the main upland areas within the district which are also the preferred locations of choice for wind turbines due to the higher relative wind speeds that are experienced there. Only one wind turbine permission has been granted in recent years and although implemented its potential output was limited to the residential property to which it was connected. At the end of the AMR reporting period it was not in operation.
- 5.29 There has been interest in utilising the latent energy available in the tidal action of the Severn Estuary as a source of renewable energy. There has been a review of potential options and their locations carried out by central government, initially under the supervision of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR) but more recently promoted by the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC). A number of different methods were being investigated including a barrage, tidal lagoons, tidal fence and tidal reef. Of the ten options that were being reviewed, five had landfall connections in West Somerset. A decision as to the preferred option and its location is expected to be made by the Secretary of State in 2010.

## Other Energy Production

- 5.30 West Somerset has played host to electricity produced by nuclear power since 1957, with power stations located at Hinkley Point in the east of the district. The government has expressed a desire to encourage the development of a new generation of nuclear power stations, partly to replace existing capacity which for many of the existing power stations are coming to the end of their operational lives and, to ensure a security of power supply in the future. One of the potential locations for this new generation of nuclear power stations is at Hinkley Point. During the course of the AMR year the Government put in place the necessary legislation<sup>192</sup> that would facilitate the fast-tracking of planning applications for this and other pieces of key infrastructure, through an independent Panel, that would be required to enable these to be built. The Infrastructure Planning Commission came into

<sup>190</sup> H.M. Government; National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; HMSO; 1949.

<sup>191</sup> National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; HMSO; 1956

<sup>192</sup> H.M. Government; The Planning Act 2008 (Chapter 29); op. cit.

being in October 2009<sup>193</sup> and one of the first applications it is likely to receive is for a twin reactor power station complex at Hinkley Point capable of generating a maximum of 3,300 Giga-watts of electricity. Whilst under the new arrangements, West Somerset Council will not be the determining authority for the main planning applications for this project, it will have a substantial role to play in assisting the process and playing host to the construction of the new power station. The construction is likely to be spread over a period of seven to eight years and will have a significant impact on the eastern part of the district in particular in economic, environmental and social terms during that period. At the end of 2009, this was still an evolving process and more detailed information on the proposal and the process will be commented on in the next AMR.

### **Local Output Indicators**

- 5.31 By the end of this AMR reporting period the West Somerset LDF preparation process had begun with the completion of key elements of the evidence base including two Strategic Housing Market Assessments and their associated Strategic Land Viability Assessments and, a methodology for a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (endorsed by the Housing Market Partnership). A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to provide a process template against which various documents of the LDF would be assessed as being sound in respect of ongoing and continuous community engagement, had been adopted on October 2007. Although a revision to the LDS was approved by GOSW in July 2008, this was subject to further negotiation and revision as a consequence of changed legislation and guidance and was agreed just beyond the end of the AMR reporting period in April 2009. In addition, an Employment Land Review had been commissioned, as was a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, and a Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for both West Somerset and the Exmoor National Park Authority planning areas was approaching completion.
- 5.32 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 LDS<sup>194</sup>. These were not subject to change in the revised LDS when that was subsequently approved in July 2006<sup>195</sup> or the second revision to the LDS<sup>196</sup> 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 Strategy<sup>197</sup> (to replace the Community Plan) and the revised Housing

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<sup>193</sup> 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.

<sup>194</sup> West Somerset District Council; West Somerset Local Development Scheme – July 2006; op.cit.

<sup>195</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – July 2006; op. cit.

<sup>196</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008;

op. cit.

<sup>197</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; West Somerset Council; 2007.

Strategy<sup>198</sup>, 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.

- 5.33 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 policies<sup>199</sup> 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 new approach has been used, otherwise a slightly different approach has been employed.
- 5.34 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.
- 5.35 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**

- 5.36 The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (adopted 2000)<sup>200</sup> 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 Review<sup>201</sup> 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

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<sup>198</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Council Housing Strategy 2005 – 2008/9 – Updated 2006; West Somerset Council; 2006

<sup>199</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

<sup>200</sup> Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

<sup>201</sup> *ibid.*

the area, to the relevant Local Planning Authorities through their respective local plans<sup>202</sup>. 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 Villages<sup>203</sup>).

5.37 Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR4, STR5 and, STR6<sup>204</sup> 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 Plan<sup>205</sup> the order of the settlement hierarchy within the Local Planning Authority area and the scale of 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.*

5.38 The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy<sup>206</sup> identifies a similar structure for the hierarchy of settlements within the south-west but recognising a higher level of settlement than the Structure Plan's, Towns<sup>207</sup> as the primary location for future development. Whilst West Somerset does not have any settlements of the magnitude of those included in Policy A of the RSS, Strategically Significant Cities and Towns, it does have one settlement that qualifies as a Policy B settlement in Minehead.<sup>208</sup> This latter policy identifies this level of settlement as possessing a wide range of services and facilities and therefore an important focus for population within the town and also for a significant area around it. Watchet and Williton will qualify as Policy C settlements, Market & Coastal Towns,<sup>209</sup> which are smaller towns that have a limited range of services and facilities and a more localised area of influence. The emerging LDF Core Strategy may seek to amend this combination of settlements as it progresses through the process to adoption.

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<sup>202</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; *op. cit.*

<sup>206</sup> 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.*

<sup>207</sup> Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; *op. cit.*

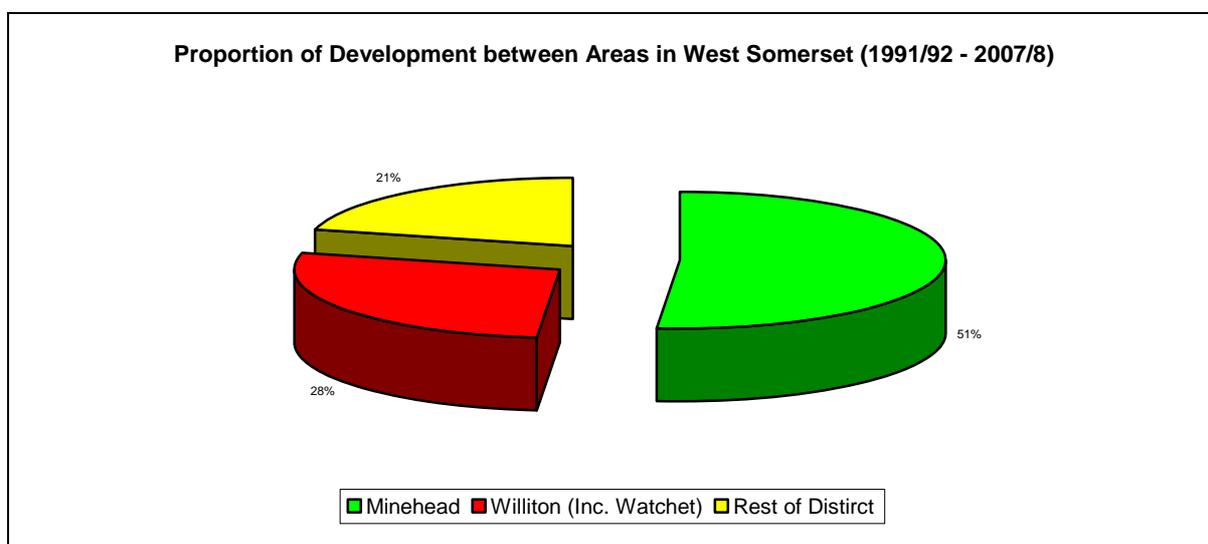
<sup>208</sup> Government Office for the South West; The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes – for Public Consultation, July 2008; *op.cit.*

<sup>209</sup> *ibid.*

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5.39 In simple terms the Objectives are being achieved, as illustrated in Graph 6, with Minehead achieving 51.3% of the share of housing development in the District between 1991/92 and 2008/9. 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' status and role as designated in the Joint Structure Plan Review<sup>210</sup>. Furthermore with just under 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

West Somerset Council 2009

5.40 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 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 last two reporting periods 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 main reason for the high level of development in the smaller settlements has been one development at Stogursey which has been built out during this time. This was a site that was allocated through the Local Plan<sup>211</sup> process on account of the village's proximity to the nuclear power station, which is a major local employer and therefore deemed to be strategically

<sup>210</sup> Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

<sup>211</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

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significant. The three main settlements did still account for around 60% of the total completions.

- 5.41 The outcome of the public examination of the draft RSS<sup>212</sup> 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 Report<sup>213</sup> was published in January 2008 and the Secretary of State's response through Proposed Changes was published in July 2008<sup>214</sup>, during 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 10<sup>215</sup> at 125 dwellings per annum for West Somerset (outside of the Exmoor National Park), and the base date has been taken as 1<sup>st</sup> April 1996. This figure is similar to that which was incorporated in the Secretary of State's proposed amendments to the RSS.<sup>216</sup>
- 5.42 The implications from the monitoring data for the period 1996/7 – 2008/9, 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 twelve 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.
- 5.43 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.

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<sup>212</sup> South West Regional Assembly; RSS: The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 – 2026; op.cit.

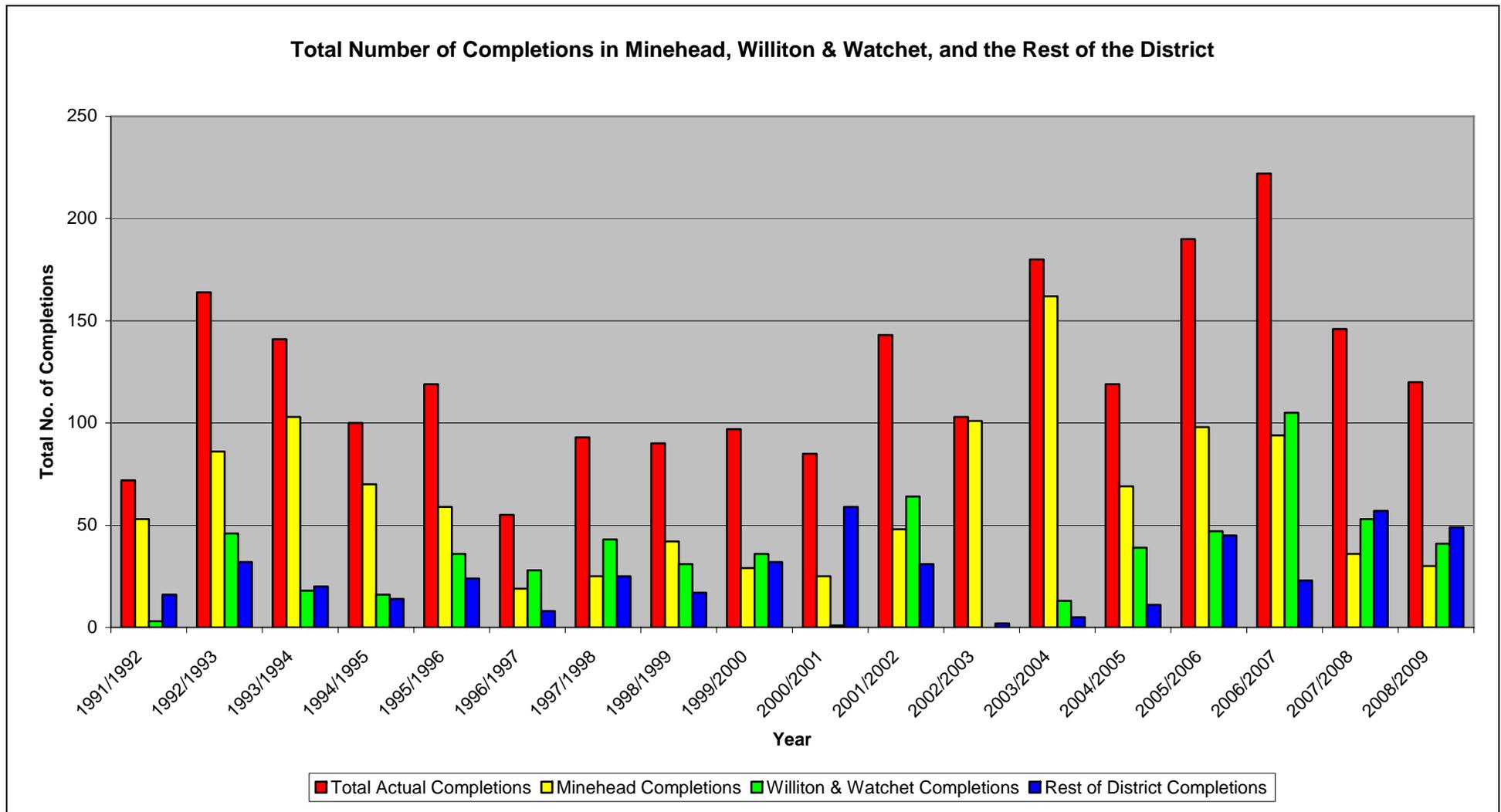
<sup>213</sup> Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public Panel; Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Examination in Public April – July 2007, Exeter: Panel Report; op.cit.

<sup>214</sup> 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.

<sup>215</sup> Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions; Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10); op.cit.

<sup>216</sup> 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.

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Graph 7

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**Distribution of Development in West Somerset 1991/2 – 2008/9**

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Monitoring Year</u>																		<u>Total</u>
	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	
<b>Minehead No.</b>	53	86	103	70	59	19	25	42	29	25	48	101	162	69	98	94	36	30	<b>1149</b>
<b>%</b>	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	25.0	<b>51.3</b>
cumulative No.	53	139	242	312	371	390	415	457	486	511	559	660	822	891	989	1083	1119	1149	-
<b>%</b>	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	51.3	-
<b>Williton &amp; No.</b>	3	46	18	16	36	28	43	31	36	1	64	0	13	39	47	105	53	41	<b>620</b>
<b>Watchet %</b>	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	34.2	<b>27.7</b>
cumulative No.	3	49	67	83	119	147	190	221	257	258	322	322	335	374	421	526	579	620	-
<b>%</b>	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	27.7	-
<b>Rest of LPA area No.</b>	16	32	20	14	24	8	25	17	32	59	31	2	5	11	45	23	57	49	<b>470</b>
<b>%</b>	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	40.8	<b>21.0</b>
cumulative No.	16	48	68	82	106	114	139	156	188	247	278	280	285	296	341	364	421	470	-
<b>%</b>	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	21.0	-
<b>LPA total No.</b>	72	164	141	100	119	55	93	90	97	85	143	103	180	119	190	222	146	120	<b>2239</b>
<b>%</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	<b>100</b>
cumulative No.	72	236	377	477	596	651	744	834	931	1016	1159	1262	1442	1561	1751	1973	2119	2239	-

NB % may not total 100 due to rounding.

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

**Employment Policies: E/1 to E/8**

- 5.44 The adopted West Somerset District Local Plan<sup>217</sup> has a single objective for the employment policies to:
- *Increase the number of permanent jobs offering above average pay for the area.*
- 5.45 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.
- 5.46 Of the 11,500 total employee jobs in 2006<sup>218</sup> 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 2001<sup>219</sup> revealed that over 27% of the residents of the District were self-employed, double the rate for England. By 2008 this proportion of resident working population that was self employed had risen to 38.6%.<sup>220</sup> 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.
- 5.47 Of the employee jobs the average individual earnings per week for full-time employees in the District was £420.60, as shown in Table 25, which is over £70 below the national equivalent of £491.20.<sup>221</sup> 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.

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<sup>217</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

<sup>218</sup> Office for National Statistics; Annual Business Inquiry Employee Analysis 2006: Employee Jobs; National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS); 2007 (dataset)

<sup>219</sup> Office for National Statistics; Census 2001; Office for National Statistics; 2003

<sup>220</sup> Office for National Statistics; NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics: Labour Market Profile West Somerset – Labour Supply: Employment and Unemployment (Apr 2008 – Mar 2009); Office for National Statistics; 2009; (data-set)

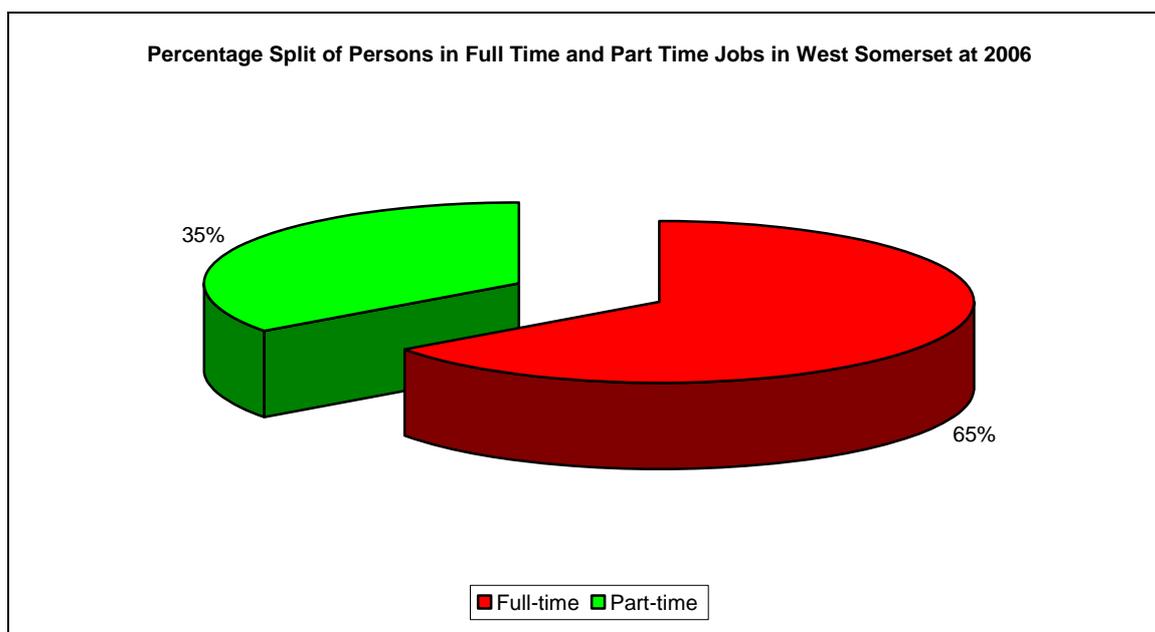
<sup>221</sup> Office for National Statistics; NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics: Labour Market Profile West Somerset – Earnings by Residence (2009); Office for National Statistics; 2009; (dataset)

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	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 2006<sup>222</sup>



Graph 8: Breakdown of Employee Employment in West Somerset

Source: ONS 2006<sup>223</sup>

	West Somerset	UK
Average Earnings per Week (full time workers)	£420.60	£491.20

Table 26: Average Earnings 2006

Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2009

### **Retail Policies: SH/1 to SH/6**

5.48 The adopted West Somerset District Local Plan<sup>224</sup> 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.*

5.49 Data to assist the monitoring of these objectives and associated policies has been taken from the West Somerset Retail and Town Centre Study<sup>225</sup>, adopted in November 2005. This data will act as a good baseline for future monitoring. Difficulties associated with extrapolating the results over the

<sup>222</sup> Office for National Statistics; Annual Business Inquiry Employee Analysis 2006: Employee Jobs; op. cit.

<sup>223</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op. cit.

<sup>225</sup> Donaldsons LLP; West Somerset Retail & Town Centre Study; West Somerset District Council; 2005

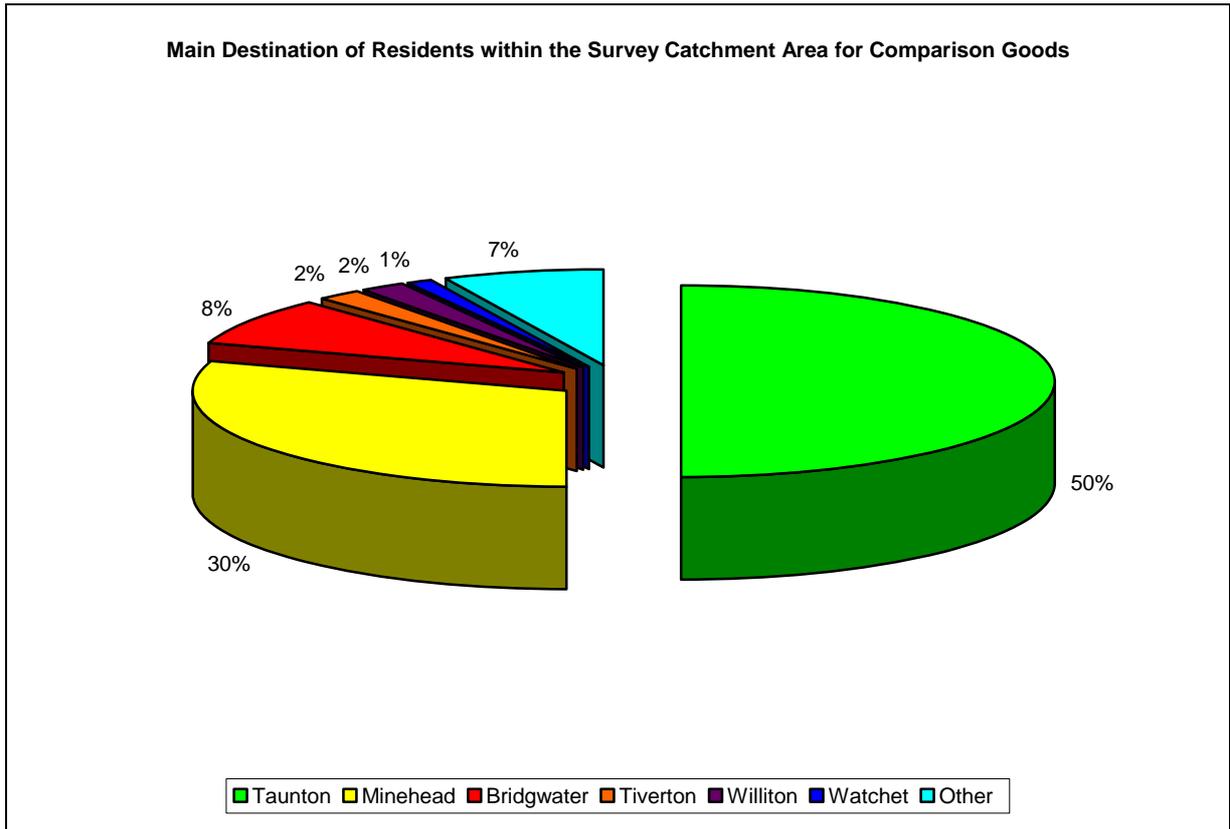
medium to long-term means that it is expected to be revised once every 5 years. Owing to the infrequent nature of retail development in West Somerset, the reliability of such development data over such a long time-scale is not deemed as useful or credible. It is acknowledged that with the passage of time the data contained in the study is becoming increasingly dated and therefore susceptible to challenge. In order to address this a new retail study will have to be commissioned, probably during the next AMR reporting period.

- 5.50 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.
- 5.51 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 Study<sup>226</sup> 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.
- 5.52 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 had considered a variety of retail development options for a site that was in an out-of-centre location at Vulcan Road, Minehead. There had been considerable interest from a number of the national retail companies including the four main supermarket operators. Through a tendering process a development proposal was agreed for a Morrison's supermarket and petrol filling station. A planning application was submitted for this scheme in April 2009, just outside the reporting period of this AMR and will be covered in detail in the next Annual Monitoring Report.
- 5.53 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)<sup>227</sup> 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.

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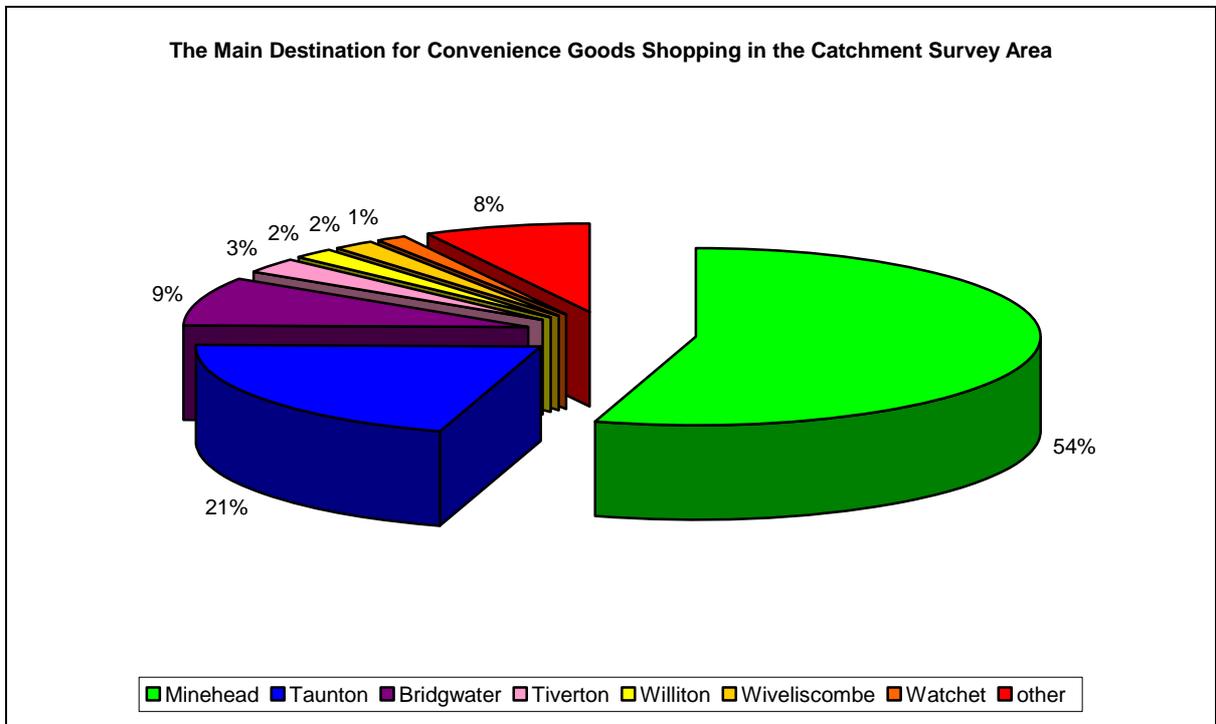
<sup>226</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; *op. cit.*



Graph 9

Source: West Somerset Retail and Town Centre Study<sup>228</sup>



Graph 10: Convenience Shopping Destinations in West Somerset Source: West Somerset Retail and Town Centre Study<sup>229,230</sup>

<sup>228</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> Donaldsons LLP; West Somerset Retail & Town Centre Study; *op. cit.*

<sup>230</sup> *ibid.*

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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 Study<sup>231</sup>

### Housing Policies: H/4

5.54 The adopted version of the West Somerset District Local Plan<sup>232</sup> 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.*

5.55 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 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 Housing<sup>233</sup> 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>1344</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1276</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 28: Number and Percentage of applicants on the housing register requiring specific sized dwellings  
Source: West Somerset Housing strategy 2005-2008/9<sup>234</sup>

<sup>231</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>232</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; *op. cit.*

<sup>233</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>234</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Council Housing Strategy 2005 – 2008/9 – Updated 2006; *op. cit.*

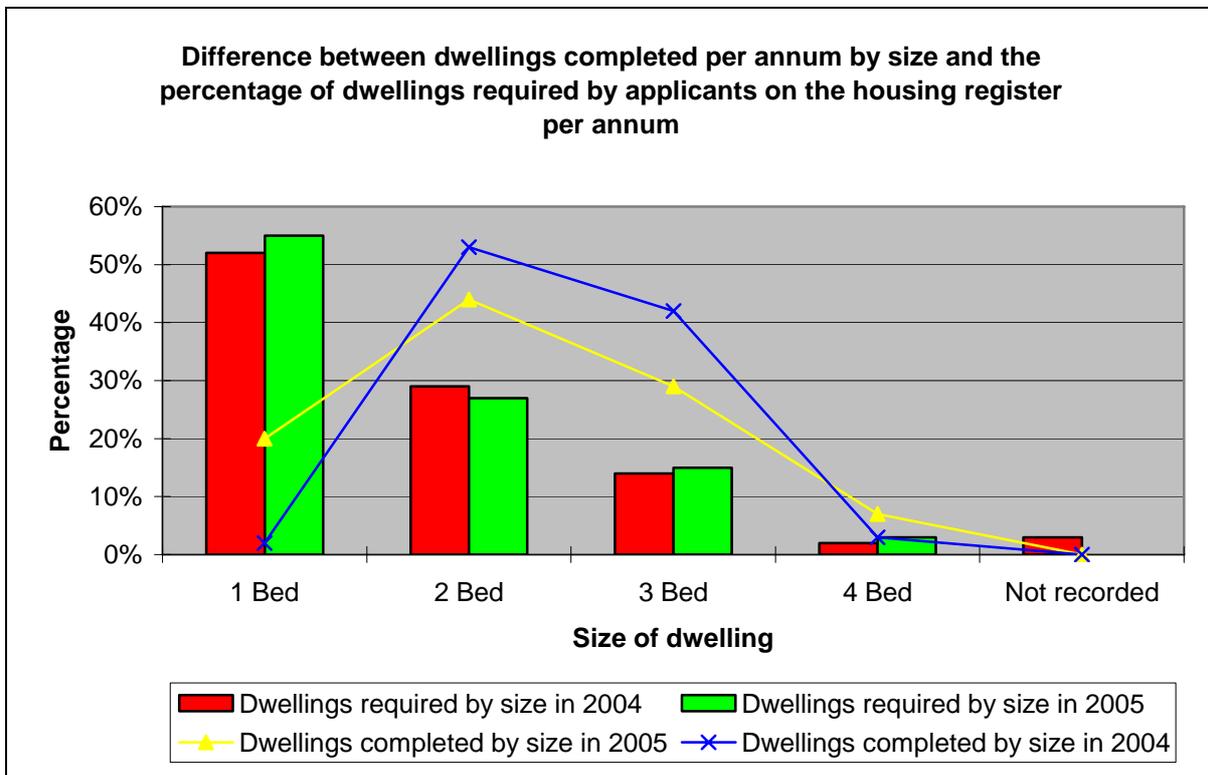
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Size	2004	2005
1 Bed	2%	20%
2 Bed	53%	44%
3 Bed	42%	29%
4 Bed	3%	7%

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

Source: West Somerset Housing Data

5.56 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.



Graph 11

- 5.57 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 (excluding 4 bed dwellings).
- 5.58 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 evolve into ghettos.

### **Community Plan**

- 5.59 In addition to the points raised in paragraphs 5.27 to 5.28, the West Somerset Community Plan<sup>235</sup> was subject to revision during a previous AMR reporting period and has been replaced by the West Somerset Sustainable Communities Strategy<sup>236</sup> 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 objectives and targets set in the Community Plan. The LDS Local Development Documents Profiles<sup>237</sup> 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 Strategy<sup>238</sup> will be used to assist in the forming of spatial objectives and targets.

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<sup>235</sup> West Somerset District Council; West Somerset Community Plan 2004 – 2007; West Somerset District Council; 2004.

<sup>236</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; op. cit.

<sup>237</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; op. cit.

<sup>238</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; op. cit.

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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

- 5.60 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.
- 5.61 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**

- 5.62 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.
- 5.63 At the time of submitting this report, due to the limited progress on the Core Strategy DPD and further revisions to the LDS (approved by GOSW in April 2009)<sup>239</sup>, 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.<sup>240,241</sup> These may be subject to updating and re-appraisal in the future. This should be reported on in greater detail in the sixth AMR.

<sup>239</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; op. cit.

<sup>240</sup> Environ UK Ltd; West Somerset Council Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report; West Somerset Council; 2006.

<sup>241</sup> 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
<b>Discrepancy / Limitation</b>	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.
<b>Remedy</b>	Revise the timescales in the LDS following negotiation with Government Office.
<b>Next Steps</b>	Revised timescales in the LDS approved by GOSW on behalf of the SoS April 2009 <sup>242</sup> .

**Contextual Indicators**

Section	Contextual Indicators
<b>Discrepancy/ Limitation</b>	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.
<b>Remedy</b>	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.
<b>Next Steps</b>	Contact Exmoor National Park Authority with the above suggestion and put any resulting outcome to the CSIP group for consideration.

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<sup>242</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; West Somerset Council; 2009.

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<b>Section</b>	<b>Contextual Indicators</b>
<b>Discrepancy/ Limitation</b>	<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>
<b>Remedy</b>	<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>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<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**

<b>Section</b>	<b>National Core Output Indicators</b>
<b>Discrepancy / Limitation</b>	<p>Some data has not been able to be provided by West Somerset Council.</p>
<b>Remedy</b>	<p>Revise the authority's monitoring system in order for the correct data to be collected for the Indicators.</p>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<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**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Local Output Indicators</b>
<b>Discrepancy / Limitation</b>	The West Somerset District Local Plan was finally adopted in April 2006 <sup>243</sup> . Work has now commenced on identifying Local Output Indicators but these had been partly delayed due to the revision of the Community Plan <sup>244</sup> into the Sustainable Community Strategy. <sup>245</sup> 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.
<b>Remedy</b>	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 approved by GOSW in April 2009 <sup>246</sup> . Following adoption of the Local Plan <sup>247</sup> , the arrival of a new Sustainable Community Strategy <sup>248</sup> 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.
<b>Next Steps</b>	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.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Local Output Indicators</b>
<b>Discrepancy / Limitation</b>	The West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy <sup>249</sup> 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.
<b>Remedy</b>	Assess and integrate Sustainable Community Strategy <sup>250</sup> objectives and targets into DPD objectives, targets and indicators where practical.
<b>Next Steps</b>	Continuing liaison with the Local Strategic Partnership Officer. This will allow continuing integration of the LSP with the LDF and Sustainable Community Strategy <sup>251</sup> , 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.

<sup>243</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; West Somerset Council; 2008.

<sup>244</sup> West Somerset District Council; West Somerset Community Plan 2004 – 2007; West Somerset District Council; 2004.

<sup>245</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; West Somerset Council; 2007.

<sup>246</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; op.cit.

<sup>247</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted April 2006; op.cit.

<sup>248</sup> West Somerset Council; West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2010; op.cit.

<sup>249</sup> ibid.

<sup>250</sup> ibid.

<sup>251</sup> ibid.

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**Significant Effect Indicators**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Significant Effect Indicators</b>
<b>Discrepancy / Limitation</b>	Owing to the amendments to the LDS <sup>252</sup> and DPD timescales contained within it, the Sustainability Appraisal Framework commenced in early 2006 <sup>253</sup> , 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 <sup>254</sup> to be agreed before progressing work to develop the Significant Effects Indicators.
<b>Remedy</b>	Continue background evidence gathering associated with the DPD's but await the outcomes of the Employment Land Assessment, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and an early indication as to the future level and scale of development arising from the emerging RSS Examination in Public <sup>255</sup> and the Secretary of State's proposed amendments <sup>256</sup> as this will influence the development of Significant Effect Indicators.
<b>Next Steps</b>	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 <sup>257</sup> 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.

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<sup>252</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – March 2008; op.cit.

<sup>253</sup> Environ UK Ltd; West Somerset Council Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report; West Somerset Council; 2006.

<sup>254</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; op.cit.

<sup>255</sup> 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.

<sup>256</sup> 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.

<sup>257</sup> 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 version<sup>258</sup>. 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.

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<sup>258</sup> West Somerset Council; Revised West Somerset Local Development Scheme – April 2009; West Somerset Council; 2009.