

10.1 SETTLEMENT INSETS - BICKNOLLER

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Quantock Hills AONB ¹ (LC/2)
Landscape Character Area:	Doniford Stream and Quantock Fringe ² (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.1.1 The village of Bicknoller stands at the foot of the Quantock Hills within the designated AONB.³ From Bicknoller and Weacombe the Hills rise steeply to the north-east while land to the south dips towards Doniford Stream. Tributaries of this stream flow alongside several streets within the village. The settlement pattern takes the form of a compact village core made up of historic buildings from which four main limbs of twentieth century development radiate outwards. It is surrounded mainly by higher quality Grades 1 and 2 agricultural land, although to the east there is average quality Grade 3 land which quickly gives way to poorer quality Grade 5 land on the Quantocks⁴. Historically, Bicknoller would have grown about the junction of four unclassified roads leading to Chilcombe, Williton, Crowcombe, West Quantoxhead and Kilve. Modern development along Church Lane and, to a lesser extent, Dash Woods Lane links the built-up area of Bicknoller with the A358.

Settlement Policy

10.1.2 In Policy SP/1 Bicknoller is classified as a Small Village. There are relatively few services within the village, but it is situated less than two miles from the Rural Centre of Williton. For this reason, coupled with the facts that the existing settlement stands on relatively level ground and is well screened by trees, Bicknoller might be a suitable location for further development on a limited scale. It is generally accepted, however, that any development should be within the development limits of the village and should take the form of either infilling, or redevelopment or conversion.

Population and Housing

10.1.3 The parish population increased steadily from 317 in 1971⁵ to 369 in 1991⁶, and at the time of the 2001 Census the population had risen further to 371.⁷ The built

¹ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; HMSO; 1956

² WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

³ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁵ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1971: England and Wales: County Report: Somerset Part II; HMSO; 1975

⁶ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; 1991 Census: County Report: Somerset Part 2; HMSO; 1993; ISBN 0 11 691489 0

⁷ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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area of Bicknoller has expanded considerably over the inter-war and post-war periods from its original centre to the north, with a ribbon development of detached dwellings along Trendle Lane and more intensive development between the Church and the A358, including Parsons Close and Combe Close.

- 10.1.4 In order to protect the character of the surrounding countryside, minimise the loss of agricultural land and facilitate the economic provision of services, any further residential development should be contained within the defined village limits, as shown on the Inset Map. Furthermore, proposals for new agricultural development should have due regard to the design requirements of Policy BD/6.
- 10.1.5 For the period of the Plan, the development limits have been drawn to include the existing built-up area and the properties on the south side of Trendle Lane where early post-war ribbon development has been intensified. However, the site allocated for housing development in Policy H/I of the Watchet/Williton Interim Local Plan⁸ has been deleted. There were fears that it would result in a greenfield development on the periphery of the main built-up area of the village, which could in turn establish a precedent for further development. This does not affect the current outstanding permission for one bungalow off Combe Close.

Employment

- 10.1.6 Bicknoller has developed as a dormitory and second home/retirement settlement, although it still has a residual agricultural function.

Shops and Services

- 10.1.7 There are limited facilities in the village including St. George's Church, the Bicknoller Inn and car park, and village hall with adjacent seating and children's play area. The mobile library service visits the village fortnightly. The village contains a combined Sub-Post Office and Stores following the conversion of a disused barn next to the Village Hall in 1995. Bicknoller is served by the Minehead-Taunton bus which stops on the A358 by the Church Lane junction.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.1.8 It is the core of the village that possesses the most distinct charm on account of its compact nature and the large number of buildings in local stone and other vernacular materials. The buildings front onto internal roads which are roughly arranged in a square, and each road terminates in a T-junction with a central island. The narrow winding access roads have experienced considerable ribbon development, albeit of relatively low density.

⁸ West Somerset District Council; [Watchet/Williton Interim Local Plan](#); West Somerset District Council; 1981

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- 10.1.9 Although Bicknoller does not warrant Conservation Area status⁹ due to the significant amount of post-war development in the village, there are several groups of attractive cottages and larger properties within its core. Of these, seven are listed for their special architectural and/or historic interest and St. George's Church is a Grade I listed building.¹⁰ Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged. It is important that any new development respects and reflects the character of these buildings where appropriate. In particular, attention will be paid to the design on all aspects of new development, whether visible from the public highway or not.
- 10.1.10 The village has several trees, groups and individuals, which are of high amenity value and are protected by Tree Preservation Orders¹¹ (see Policy TW/1). However, that is not to say that the other trees within the village are not of equal importance. Several are quite excellent specimens and collectively they help screen the village from outlying areas.
- 10.1.11 Some improvements have been made to the - front of the village hall, including the provision of seating and children's play facilities. The substantial area of land to the rear of the village hall is presently used for car parking and would benefit from some environmental improvements and landscaping, which would improve visual amenity in this part of Bicknoller.

⁹ H.M. Government; Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Chapter 9 (as amended); HMSO; 1990; ISBN 0 10 540990 1

¹⁰ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Bicknoller, Crowcombe, East Quantoxhead, Holford, Kilve, Stogursey, Stringston and West Quantoxhead) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

¹¹ H.M. Government; Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Chapter 8 – Part VIII (as amended and associated secondary legislation); HMSO; 1990; ISBN 0 10 540890 5.

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10.2 SETTLEMENT INSETS – BROMPTON RALPH

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification: Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:
Landscape Character Area: The Brendon Fringe¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.2.1 Brompton Ralph is a small village in a relatively isolated location on the eastern fringes of the Brendon Hills, approximately 4 miles north of high ground surrounded by gently rolling open countryside. Most of the housing is sheltered as the land on which it stands slopes eastwards to the Vale of Taunton, while St. Mary's Church dominates an area of high ground to the north. On all sides, but to the south, the agricultural land is of average Grade 3 quality.² South of Brompton Ralph the land is of poorer Grade 4 quality.³ Access is gained from the B3188 via narrow steep-sided lanes.

Settlement Policy

- 10.2.2 Although small in size, Brompton Ralph has perhaps a higher service function than several settlements in more accessible parts of the Plan area and therefore defined as a Small Village (Policy SP/1).
- 10.2.3 There are adequate facilities in the village to accommodate some additional population, but problems may arise in providing public utilities. There are no sewage treatment works serving the village and Local Authority septic tanks are currently discharged into the water course. In addition, the approach roads to the settlement, particularly from the B3188 Watchet-Wiveliscombe road, are narrow and poorly aligned, therefore, a significant increase in traffic using these roads would be unacceptable.
- 10.2.4 Because of the constraints on further development in Brompton Ralph including its location within The Brendon Fringe Landscape Character Area,⁴ the development limits have been drawn tight about the built village. Should the demand exist there may be sites within this area capable of being developed, but any development will need to respect the size, function and relative inaccessibility of the village.

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

³ *ibid.*

⁴ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; *op. cit.*

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10.2 SETTLEMENT INSETS – BROMPTON RALPH

Population and Housing

- 10.2.5 In 1981 there were 160 people resident in the parish⁵ and in 2001, 218.⁶ Despite this recent rise in the population, over the last century it has significantly reduced from a peak of 360 in 1891.⁷
- 10.2.6 There has been very little new housing within the village itself. Since 1974 only two properties have been constructed; a bungalow on land adjacent to The Villa and, more recently, a two-storey detached dwelling on land adjoining The Old Forge. However, a number of applications have been approved for extensions to existing properties which were specifically for elderly dependants, and there has been limited development elsewhere in the Parish.
- 10.2.7 The style of housing in Brompton Ralph generally falls into one of two categories. Firstly, along the higher banks of the main street, there are terraced properties with painted render and slate or tiled roofs. While set lower down from these are detached properties of varying building materials. New building design should incorporate features and materials appropriate to the building's location.

Employment

- 10.2.8 Brompton Ralph is, and appears to always have been, an agricultural settlement although it is sufficiently close to the Rural Centre of Wiveliscombe (in Taunton Deane) for residents looking for alternative employment opportunities. Cridland Farm is a working farm which neighbours the Church. A poorly sited modern farm building obstructs a fine view out across open farmland from the village green. Although such buildings reflect the village's agricultural function, careful consideration needs to be given to the siting of additional buildings (see Policies A/I and BD/6).

Shops and Services

- 10.2.9 A building constructed in 1901 houses the post office/stores. This is the only shop in the village, although to the rear of St. Mary's Church is a well-used village hall and there is also a chapel in the village. Due to its proximity to Wiveliscombe, these facilities are considered adequate for a settlement the size of Brompton Ralph.

⁵ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

⁶ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

⁷ Williton Rural District Council; Census data by Parish, 1891 – 1951; Williton Rural District Council;

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Environment and Conservation

- 10.2.10 Three of the buildings within Brompton Ralph are listed for their special architectural or historic interest, the oldest of which is Odwell Cottage whose origins date back to the 1500s and possibly earlier.⁸ St. Mary's Church and Brendon Cottage were built in the fifteenth and sixteenth century's respectively.⁹ Those structures which have also merited listing include a pair of unidentified memorials in St. Mary's churchyard, the remains of the churchyard cross on the village green, and a cast iron hand pump which can be found to one side of the village street. Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged.
- 10.2.11 St Mary's Church not only stands in a large churchyard, but fronts on to the village green. The residents have taken the initiative to create something of a 'churchyard garden' by planting individual trees and beds of flowering plants. The scheme includes those species typically found in the grounds of a Church and in the area generally, for example Rowan, Holly, Silver Birch and Beech. The village green provides an important open space within the village and its wild unkempt appearance is most appropriate in this upland area.
- 10.2.12 The main street which runs the length of the village appears to have cut into the underlying rock which is exposed in places and adds to the character of this windswept rural settlement. Its appearance would be damaged by the provision of accesses and accompanying visibility splays.
- 10.2.13 The existing trees in the village represent an important feature of the landscape which the Local Planning Authority considers should be substantially maintained (see Policy TW/1).

⁸ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Exmoor National Park/Somerset (Parishes of Brompton Ralph, Brompton Regis, Brushford, Clatworthy, Dulverton, Huish Champflower, Skilgate and, Upton) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1986.

⁹ *ibid.*

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10.3 SETTLEMENT INSETS - BRUSHFORD

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Exmoor National Park Periphery (LC/1)
Landscape Character Area:	The Southern Flanks of Exmoor ¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.3.1 Brushford is a larger than average village situated in the south west of the Plan area, about two miles south of Dulverton. To the north-east it is bounded by Exmoor National Park² and the B3222 Bampton to Dulverton road. Brushford lies in the valley of the Brockey River and the River Barle flows to the east. The surrounding countryside is made up of a series of hills, which are dissected by wooded valleys. East and west the valleys are Grade 4 agricultural land, with Grade 3 elsewhere.³

Settlement Policy

10.3.2 Policy SP/1 defines Brushford as a Village. Whilst Brushford is something of a dormitory settlement to Dulverton, it does have fewer physical and vehicular constraints to development. Although a specific site has not been allocated for residential development, it has adequate facilities in terms of mains services and local schools at Dulverton to accommodate further small-scale development.

Population and Housing

10.3.3 Brushford had a parish population of about 480 in 1981.⁴ It has since grown and in 2001 was recorded as being 535.⁵

10.3.4 There has been considerable residential development in recent years, which has altered Brushford's character from a small, loosely knit, linear settlement to that of a relatively compact suburban village, catering mainly for retirement and as a dormitory settlement. Most residential development has taken place along Brushford New Road, a straight spine road which has a number of short access roads leading off from it. To the north development takes the form of inter and post-war housing estates, while to the south the dwellings are large, detached and of a higher standard of design. Any new housing should be of good design and incorporate an appropriate level of traditional local features in keeping with the Southern Flanks of Exmoor Landscape Character Area.⁶

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² H.M. Government; National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; HMSO; 1949

³ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁴ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

⁵ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

⁶ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; op. cit.

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- 10.3.5 There is evidence of new building along the northern side of Ellersdown Lane, originally built to provide access to dwellings on its southern side. Due to the width and alignment of this road any further development will be resisted.

Employment

- 10.3.6 Local employment is provided by a builders merchants at Brushford Cross, Carnarvon Arms Garage and a number of small agricultural contractors. The Three Acres Country House also offers employment opportunities. South of the built village is an area of land adjoining a coal depot. This site, about 1.5 acres, is presently in agricultural use and is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land.⁷ It has long been earmarked for small-scale light industry, provided that improvements are made to visibility to the B3222, and Policy E/I continues that allocation.

Shops and Services

- 10.3.7 Brushford has a good range of community facilities, and any shortfalls are met by the neighbouring Rural Centre of Dulverton.⁸ It has a garage and adjoining shop selling farm supplies, village hall and church. A doctors surgery is held at the village hall once weekly, and a community bus runs each Friday from Brushford to Minehead.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.3.8 Brushford has limited historic value and has experienced a large amount of post-war development. The oldest and most attractive part of the village lies around the 13th century church of St Nicholas.⁹ This is the only building currently listed within the village, but the parish has a number of buildings noted for their architectural and historic interest. It is believed that the Church probably stands on the foundations of a former Norman Church, of which there remains the font. Records have been found dating back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1 which make reference to the oak tree in the churchyard. Now riven, crippled and propped up, it still makes a fine sight when in leaf - The main part of the churchyard is east of The Old School House, and connected to the Church by a path. Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged.
- 10.3.9 The District Council has recently provided a new multi-sports area on land adjacent to the Youth Club to help give wider sporting options in the village.

⁷ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; op. cit.

⁸ Exmoor National Park Authority; Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2001 – 2011 (Adopted 2005); Exmoor National Park Authority; 2006

⁹ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Exmoor National Park/Somerset (Parishes of Brompton Ralph, Brompton Regis, Brushford, Clatworthy, Dulverton, Huish Champflower, Skilgate and, Upton) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1986.

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10.3 SETTLEMENT INSETS - BRUSHFORD

- 10.3.10 A small area, south of the Youth Club, is one of the few open areas in the village. It provides a valuable amenity area in an otherwise built-up frontage along Brushford New Road. It was safeguarded from development in the Dulverton Area Local Plan (West Somerset Parishes)¹⁰ and it is considered that the policy should continue in this Plan (see Policy R/5).

POLICY BRU/1: Important Amenity Area

The land south of the Youth Club, Brushford, as shown on the Inset Map, will be retained as an important amenity area.

- 10.3.11 Access to the countryside is provided by several public footpaths with marked routes to Dulverton and a circular walk of Brushford.
- 10.3.12 Unlike many villages in the Plan area where trees form an important feature of the townscape for screening purposes, the topography of the local area is such that Brushford is not visually intrusive and it may be preferable in landscape terms to open up the best views, both in and out, of the settlement by the judicious thinning of some of the trees.

¹⁰ Somerset County Council and West Somerset District Council; Dulverton Area Local Plan - West Somerset Parishes; Somerset County Council; 1984; ISBN 0 86183 012 1

10.4 SETTLEMENT INSETS – CARHAMPTON

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Character (LC/3) Coastal Zone (CO/1)
Landscape Character Area:	Central West Somerset ¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.4.1 Carhampton is located on the A39 between Minehead and Williton within the Central West Somerset Landscape Character Area.² The core of the village is scattered along the A39 frontage principally between Winsors Lane and St. John the Baptist Church. From this core, Carhampton has seen a steady expansion of development principally to the south and east towards Eastbury Farm. A handful of old properties exist on Winsors Lane and Park Lane, and modern development has taken place within the limits of these highways either by way of infill or planned development, such as that at Carantoc Place. Agricultural land to the east and west of Carhampton is of good Grade 2 quality, while to the north and south is poorer Grade 3 land.³ The traditional orchard within the village is an important fragment of Somerset's once thriving cider making industry.

Settlement Policy

10.4.2 The range of facilities in Carhampton and the size of the village (compared to other villages in the Plan area) suggests that it is a suitable location for further development.

10.4.3 Blue Anchor began to develop as one of a number of holiday resorts along this coast. Limited permanent building has occurred, but seasonal visitors to its caravan parks provide a substantial input into the local economy of Carhampton. Blue Anchor is too far from the main body of Carhampton to be considered for inclusion within its established limits. The lack of facilities and small number of dwellings within Blue Anchor indicates that further development would be inappropriate, and that there is no justification for its designation as a separate village.

Population and Housing

10.4.4 Carhampton expanded quite considerably during the 1960s and 1970s. Its growth has since slowed allowing for a period of consolidation. In 1981 the parish population stood at 890⁴ rising to 992 in 2001.⁵ A majority of modern

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² *ibid.*

³ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁴ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

⁵ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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developments are of satisfactory design and have incorporated features of the village, particularly at Orchard Close where the building design may be simple but their grounds are well landscaped and a stream runs along the roadside.

- 10.4.5 Carhampton could accommodate more development in the final phase of the plan period. Two sites were previously allocated for development in the consultative report, within the village limits at Townsend. Further development on large sites will depend upon the longer-term construction of the A39 Carhampton bypass; (post - 2006) which forms part of a potential West Somerset Strategic Access package⁶ within the Somerset Local Transport Plan.⁷ Specific proposals will be assessed against Policies SP/3, BD/1 and BD/2.

Employment

- 10.4.6 There are limited employment opportunities within the village. Employers are generally found in Minehead, Watchet and Williton. In line with the concept of sustainability, the Local Planning Authority wishes to encourage small scale business development within the larger villages such as Carhampton. Policies E/2 and E/3 set out the criteria against which any proposal will be assessed.

Shops and Services

- 10.4.7 Carhampton enjoys a good range of community facilities; a post office, general stores, fortnightly mobile library service, Methodist Church, St. John's Church, village hall, public house and recreation ground. It is also on the main bus route to Williton and Minehead. Its service function does not appear to have suffered as a result of its proximity to Minehead.
- 10.4.8 The A39 through the village is winding with narrow footways in places. Road-users find difficulty in emerging from side roads and the driveways of properties bordering the A39, owing to the volume of traffic, the sub-standard alignment and inadequate visibility. Should the bypass be constructed, the existing A39 will become a local distributor road serving primarily local needs.
- 10.4.9 The Highways Authority have long standing plans to construct a bypass. In the past schemes in other areas have received a higher priority but the route has been safeguarded in the Minehead Area Local Plan.⁸ Further progress will depend on the provision of adequate resources at the appropriate time and the relative priority of the scheme compared with all others throughout the county, however it is still possible that the road will be built during the period of this Plan.⁹

⁶ The scheme was re-appraised, along with others as part of a new system of transport planning introduced with Local Transport Plans – see Para. 7.20. It was still being reviewed at the time of the adoption of the Joint Structure Plan Review and is included in the West Somerset Strategic Access Route scheme referred to in para. 7.41 (to Policy 55) of that document.

⁷ Somerset County Council; Delivering Integration: The Local Transport Plan for Somerset 2001 – 2006; W.S. Atkins; 2001 and successor documents

⁸ West Somerset District Council; Minehead Area Local Plan; West Somerset District Council; 1989

⁹ The scheme was re-appraised, along with others as part of a new system of transport planning introduced with Local Transport Plans – see Para. 7.20. It was still being reviewed at the time of the adoption of the

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10.4 SETTLEMENT INSETS – CARHAMPTON

Environment and Conservation

- 10.4.10 There are 30 listed buildings within Carhampton, including the Church of St. John the Baptist which was originally built in the fourteenth century.¹⁰ It is reputed to have the largest churchyard in the county and includes a right of way which is thought to be the original cart-road. Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged.
- 10.4.11 Due to the extent of new development and considerable alteration to the original fabric of the settlement, it is thought inappropriate to designate a conservation area within Carhampton. The village does, however, display some unique features which should be preserved. For example, the front gardens of properties along Winsors Lane are situated on the opposite side of the road to the houses. They are open plan and form a strong visual amenity which can be enjoyed by residents and the public alike. These plots should not be allowed to become infill sites. Also, of particular importance, is the historic orchard in the centre of the village, the land is an important amenity area (see Policy R/5).

POLICY CAR/1: Important Amenity Areas

The Local Planning Authority will retain the following important amenity areas in Carhampton, as shown on the inset map:-

- (i) Land East of Winsors Lane;**
- (ii) Orchard, High Street.**

- 10.4.12 The playing field adjoining the recreation centre is used for both cricket and football. There are footpaths leading out from the village to the open- countryside and beach at Blue Anchor. These facilities generally satisfy the demand for outdoor recreation. There is, however, a recognised need for a small passive amenity area in the central part of the village which should be provided if and when the opportunity arises.
- 10.4.13 From Carhampton views south-east extend to Dunster Mount and beyond, and views east take in open countryside rising to form the Brendon Hills. Carhampton also has a good number of trees, these will be retained and managed wherever possible (see Policy TW/1).

Joint Structure Plan Review and is included in the West Somerset Strategic Access Route scheme referred to in para. 7.41 (to Policy 55) of that document.

¹⁰ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Carhampton, Cutcombe, Luccombe, Luxborough, Minehead Without, Timberscombe, Treborough, Withycombe and, Wootton Courtney) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1985.

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10.5 SETTLEMENT INSETS - CROWCOMBE

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Quantock Hills AONB ¹ (LC/2)
Landscape Character Area:	Doniford Stream and Quantock Fringe ² (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.5.1 Crowcombe is situated on the lower slopes of the Quantocks, within the designated AONB,³ midway between Minehead and Taunton. It is a linear village and the road along which it lies joins up with the A358 at either end. The original structure of the village was of a dispersed nature with groups of buildings fronting the long village street, separated by open spaces. Over time much of its characteristic, open nature has been lost as a result of considerable pressure for development which has been accepted as infilling, nevertheless the village still has two distinct parts. Crowcombe is surrounded by average quality Grade 3 agricultural land on all sides except to the north, where there is poorer quality Grade 4 land.⁴

Settlement Policy

10.5.2 Crowcombe is designated as a Village in Policy SP/1. Not only is it of sufficient size to merit village status but the range of services available indicates that there may be the potential for further residential development. However, particularly its location within the AONB,⁵ but also the extent of recent development permissions and the limited overall dwelling requirement of the Plan leads the Local Planning Authority to the conclusion that new development should be restricted to infilling, conversion or redevelopment within a tightly drawn development limit boundary. Furthermore, it is very important that the open land in the middle of the settlement remains undeveloped in order to retain the village's distinct two-part character.

Population and Housing

10.5.3 In 2001 the resident population of Crowcombe Parish was 477,⁶ compared to 367 in 1981.⁷ The Parish has a scattering of smaller settlements but strict policies control their development, therefore it can be assumed that Crowcombe has

¹ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; HMSO; 1956

² WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

³ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁵ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

⁶ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

⁷ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

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accommodated the majority of recent residential development and will continue to do so, in a very limited way, for the period of the Plan. The design and siting of development will be carefully considered at an early stage in the planning process.

Employment

10.5.4 Crowcombe originally functioned as an agricultural village but has since developed as a dormitory settlement and place of retirement. As a result there is little employment within the village itself. Crowcombe Court Residential Home employs a workforce of approximately 20 and the Quantock Wine Cellars operates from a converted outbuilding of Grime's Farm.

Shops and Services

10.5.5 Facilities offered by Crowcombe include a post office/general stores, the Carew Arms Public House, Church of the Holy Ghost, the First School and playing field, village hall, recreation ground and cricket ground. The mobile library service calls at the village fortnightly. There is a free public car park in the southern part of the village, and the Taunton-Minehead bus stops on the A358 close by, some services making a daily detour through the village itself.

Environment and Conservation

10.5.6 Crowcombe was once, as its medieval market cross shows,⁸ a place of some importance at the junction of a hill crossing and a road leading from Taunton to the coast. The village contains properties of mixed type and age. Twenty-four buildings and structures are listed for their architectural and/or historic interest including Church of the Holy Ghost and Crowcombe Court, which are both Grade 1 Listed.⁹ Opposite the Church, which is mainly fourteenth Century, between the road and a car park and a few yards from the old market place is the Church House, built in 1515. Crowcombe Court, a large brick mansion built in the early part of the eighteenth century, is also a good example of its period.¹⁰ Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged.

10.5.7 Due to the 'historic buildings' piecemeal arrangement and recent infilling it is felt that no part of Crowcombe warrants conservation area status, however efforts to improve and enhance the appearance of the village will be encouraged.

10.5.8 Crowcombe has three sites of archaeological importance; the Village Cross, and Church House and Pound are both Scheduled Ancient Monuments¹¹ to which Policy AH/1 applies. The third area of archaeological importance is that

⁸ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Bicknoller, Crowcombe, East Quantoxhead, Holford, Kilve, Stogursey, Stringston and West Quantoxhead) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Somerset County Council; Somerset Historic Environment Record: Record 34617 – Village Cross, East of Carew Arms, Crowcombe; Somerset County Council; 1983

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10.5 SETTLEMENT INSETS - CROWCOMBE

surrounding the Church and stretching northwards into woodland which is subject to the provisions of Policy AH/2.

- 10.5.9 The most important views include the view southwards from Grime's Farm, and those views of Crowcombe Court from the Village road and from the A358. These views should be preserved to retain the village's visual links with the open countryside and Quantock Hills.
- 10.5.10 There are several important tree groups within and surrounding the village. These enhance amenity and will be protected in accordance with Policy TW/1. Towards the eastern end of village the buildings back onto the A358 and the noise from this road is quite intrusive, but trees act as a buffer to this noise and may even reduce air pollution levels.

Cemetery

- 10.5.11 The existing churchyard of the Church of the Holy Ghost has capacity for only a few years. It is considered that additional land should be allocated for cemetery purposes. For convenience, land should adjoin the existing churchyard although any extension would impinge upon the parkland associated with Crowcombe Court. However, on balance, a marginal loss of that land for this important community use appears to be the only acceptable alternative.

POLICY CRO/1: Extension to Cemetery

Land adjoining the Church of the Holy Ghost, Crowcombe, as shown on the inset map, is allocated for Cemetery purposes.

10.6 SETTLEMENT INSETS – DUNSTER MARSH

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Character (LC/3) Coastal Zone (CO/1)
Landscape Character Area:	Blue Anchor Bay ¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

- 10.6.1 The village of Dunster is made up of two distinct parts. The area south of the A39 is within Exmoor National Park² and subject to planning policies set out in the Exmoor National Park Local Plan.³ The area north of the A39 is outside the National Park and within the Plan area. This part of Dunster lying to the seaward side of the main road is known as The Marsh. It is said that The Marsh was once the Avill Estuary and used as a sea-port,⁴ however it has since silted up and activities have moved to Minehead and Watchet.
- 10.6.2 Despite being divided by the A39 both parts of the village complement each other and are linked by a pedestrian subway. Dunster Marsh lies on high quality Grade 2 agricultural land with average quality Grade 3 land to the northeast and south and poorer quality Grade 4 land to the north-west.⁵

Settlement Policy

- 10.6.3 Dunster Marsh is identified as a Village in the Plan for planning purposes (Policy SP/1). Accordingly, a development limit boundary is drawn around the settlement.

Population and Housing

- 10.6.4 The resident population of Dunster Parish rose from 846 in the 1980's⁶ to 854 in 2001⁷ with new development at Bridges Mead and Haven Close in Dunster Marsh.

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² H.M. Government; National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; HMSO; 1949

³ Exmoor National Park Authority; Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2001 – 2011 (Adopted 2005); Exmoor National Park Authority; 2006

⁴ Somerset County Council; Somerset Historic Environment Record: Record 16620 – Possible Medieval Harbour, The Hawn, Dunster Beach; Somerset County Council; 2003

⁵ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁶ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3 (*The Census does not usually disaggregate data below Ward and/or Parish level, therefore the population data available refers to both Dunster village and Dunster Marsh*).

⁷ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set) (*The Census does not usually disaggregate data below Ward and/or Parish level, therefore the population data available refers to both Dunster village and Dunster Marsh*).

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10.6 SETTLEMENT INSETS – DUNSTER MARSH

- 10.6.5 Because of its designation as a Heritage Settlement⁸ and a Conservation Area,⁹ residential development in Dunster and in the National Park¹⁰ has, and will continue to be, limited to infilling.
- 10.6.6 Dunster Marsh is outside the conservation area, since it is principally comprised of relatively modern development, and not subject to the same level of control.
- 10.6.7 The village has the potential to provide for a measured level of additional housing development during the plan period. Appropriate sites may provide a suitable alternative to further growth on the southern edge of Minehead, but at a close enough distance of 1.5 miles from Minehead Enterprise Park to make journey times for shopping and services relatively convenient.
- 10.6.8 In addition, alternative transport modes to the car already serve the village in terms of cycleway and bus service along the A39 route into Minehead and a seasonal railway service from Dunster Station on the West Somerset Railway. The new housing will support provision of additional local services and facilities which presently do not exist, and are referred to below.

POLICY DM/1: Mixed-Use Development

Residential development at Higher Marsh Farm, Dunster Marsh, will be permitted subject to the following requirements:

- (i) **The design and layout of the development will observe the principles in Policy BD/2 and will provide for:-**
- (a) Public house/village shop or other appropriate community facility;**
 - (b) a number of live/work units as a proportion of the open market housing secured by a Section 106 Planning Obligation;**
 - (c) a recreation field and picnic area on Land South of Marsh Lane; and,**
- (ii) **The provision of related highway improvements including the provision of a footpath and cycle link along Marsh Lane to its junction with the A39 road.**

In considering the wider community and infrastructure requirements for the development of Site 7 regard will be paid to Policies H/5, PO/1 and T/14.

⁸ Somerset County Council; *Somerset Structure Plan: Report of Survey*; Somerset County Council; 1975.

⁹ Somerset County Council; *Dunster Conservation Area (as amended)*; Somerset County Council; 1973.

¹⁰ H.M. Government; *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949*; *op. cit.*

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10.6 SETTLEMENT INSETS – DUNSTER MARSH

Employment

- 10.6.9 Apart from the former Loxhole Saw-Mill site, employment opportunities are concentrated in various forms of services, trades and shops in Dunster village. Minehead Enterprise Park is considered to be the most appropriate location for business development and is a short distance from Dunster Marsh.

Shops and Services

- 10.6.10 Limited facilities are provided in the Marsh Street area including a mobile library service (fortnightly). However, Dunster village has a post office, various shops, visitor centre, St Georges Church, first school, doctors surgery, village garden, public toilets, two public car parks, sports field, hotels, public houses and restaurants. Dunster Marsh shares the local services provided within Dunster village.
- 10.6.11 As part of the development proposals for Higher Marsh Farm the Local Planning Authority will seek the conversion of the existing farmhouse or traditional buildings associated with it into a public house/village shop or will provide some other such appropriate community facility as a community hall. In addition, contributions for new recreation facilities will be sought in association with the housing scheme, which include the provision of a local recreation field and the provision of a local picnic area.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.6.12 Within the Marsh Street area a few buildings originate before and during the 18th century, more date back to the 19th century, but the majority have been built in the post war period. The older buildings front onto Marsh Street and are clustered about Higher Marsh Farm at the junction with Marsh Lane and Station Road.
- 10.6.13 In 1874 the West Somerset Railway was extended to Minehead from Watchet.¹¹ The line crossed The Marsh and a station was built.¹² The railway has had mixed fortunes and is presently operated as a private concern by the West Somerset Railway Association who run steam hauled trains in addition to diesel during the summer months. Historically the train carried holiday-makers, many of these stayed in the chalets on Dunster Beach, 'mini homes from home' which bring nostalgic memories of idyllic holidays. These are still in use today and should be protected in their traditional form.

¹¹ Minehead Railway Company; The Minehead Railway Act 1871; H.M.S.O.; 1871.

¹² Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Carhampton, Cutcombe, Dunster, Luccombe, Luxborough, Minehead Without, Timbersombe, Treborough, Withycombe and Wootton Courtney) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1985.

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10.6 SETTLEMENT INSETS – DUNSTER MARSH

- 10.6.14 The extensive areas of surrounding woodland and groups of specimen trees are an integral part of the landscape. Much of this agricultural land and woodland is in the ownership of the Crown Estate and therefore exempted from Tree Preservation Orders,¹³ but attempts will be made, where necessary, to retain as many as possible. Any development proposals will however be assessed against the provisions of Policy LC/3 and impact on the Blue Anchor Bay Landscape Character Area.¹⁴

¹³ H.M. Government; Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Chapter 8 – Part VIII (as amended and associated secondary legislation); HMSO; 1990; ISBN 0 10 540890 5

¹⁴ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; op. cit.

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10.7 SETTLEMENT INSETS – HOLFORD

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Small Village .(SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Quantock Hills AONB ¹ (LC/2)
Landscape Character Area:	The Quantock Vale ² (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.7.1 Holford is an attractive village set in an AONB at the foot of the Quantock Hills,³ approximately midway between Williton and Bridgwater. The compact northern part of the village straddles the A39 while development is more dispersed along the minor roads of Holford Glen to the south. Holford is surrounded by average quality Grade 3 agricultural land to the north and east, whilst to the south and west land is generally poor quality Grade 5 land or not in agricultural use.⁴

Settlement Policy

10.7.2 Holford offers a limited range of services and facilities to be classified as a Small Village and is defined as such in Policy SP/1, the potential and, more importantly, desirability for further development is limited and would be detrimental to its visual character. Consequently further development within Holford will be strictly limited to within the limits defined on the Inset Map. The development limits are drawn tight about the main built up area of the village, and exclude the dispersed development which extends south and west towards Hodders Combe. Any consolidation of development or coalescence into ribbon development will need to be resisted at all costs.

Population and Housing

10.7.3 The Parish of Holford is fairly large and includes the settlements of Holford and Dodington. Its population rose by almost 25% from 247 in 1981⁵ to 302 in 2001,⁶ and this increase appears to have been evenly distributed throughout the Parish. Recent development in Holford has taken the form of infilling within the northern part of the settlement but an open structure has been retained in Holford Glen.

¹ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; HMSO; 1956

² WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

³ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁵ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

⁶ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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10.7 SETTLEMENT INSETS – HOLFORD

- 10.7.4 To the west of the A39 there has been development in the inter and post-war years, although there is little of recent origin. Southwards, through the village, there has been isolated infilling but the open structure of Holford has been maintained. It is to the east of the A39 that the most modern development has taken place in the form of a District Council housing scheme.
- 10.7.5 There are fairly considerable environmental constraints on further development and several recent proposals for residential development have been refused and/or dismissed on appeal generally on one or more of the following grounds:-
- (i) most of the village is within the AONB;⁷
 - (ii) the stream in the valley is an important habitat for rare plant species;
 - (iii) development along the A39 is potentially hazardous as it is a major highway;
 - (iv) peripheral development outside the designated village boundary would be divorced from the existing community.

Employment

- 10.7.6 Holford functions as an agricultural community, a dormitory for Bridgwater and also a retirement settlement.

Shops and Services

- 10.7.7 Facilities offered by Holford include St. Mary's Church, a recently rebuilt village hall and parking area, the Plough Inn public house, post office/general stores and tea room, repairs garage and filling station and a cricket field. The mobile library service visits the village every fortnight. Several Bed and Breakfast establishments operate within the village. A Youth Hostel and two large hotels, Combe House and Alfoxton Park, are located close by.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.7.8 Seven of the properties in Holford plus St. Mary's Church and the partially restored Pound are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest.⁸ Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged. In addition, there are several groups of attractive cottages interspersed by distinctive open spaces along Holford Combe. The south and west of the village are bound tightly by the Quantock Hills SSSI⁹ and the historic village core is regarded as being of archaeological importance.

⁷ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

⁸ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Bicknoller, Crowcombe, East Quantoxhead, Holford, Kilve, Stogursey, Stringston and West Quantoxhead) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

⁹ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

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10.7 SETTLEMENT INSETS – HOLFORD

- 10.7.9 The Holford Conservation Area¹⁰ includes only part of the village since most is within the AONB¹¹ and a conservation area would only duplicate some of the legislative controls. Similarly an SSSI¹² offers more statutory protection to an area than conservation area designation. The principal reason for designating a conservation area is to control development within built-up areas and although it is entirely reasonable to include whole or parts of villages (and the open spaces within them) it is inappropriate to include tracts of open countryside and woodlands.
- 10.7.10 The Conservation Area¹³ extends from Winsors Farm north-east along Holford Combe. It forms part of the historic village core which is considered to be of archaeological interest. It incorporates St. Mary's Church and four other listed buildings,¹⁴ groups of attractive cottages and larger detached properties. Also included are important open spaces and mature trees between building groups which contribute to the special character of Holford (see Policies CA/1-CA/3).
- 10.7.11 The Bowling Green is a registered village green, the status of which protects it from development.
- 10.7.12 Included within the village limits are significant open areas to the north of the Church (an old orchard) and to the south of the Rectory. It is considered that any development in these areas would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the Conservation Area¹⁵ and the village in general (see Policy R/5).

¹⁰ West Somerset District Council; Holford Conservation Area Designation, 14th November 1990; West Somerset District Council; 1990.

¹¹ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ West Somerset District Council; Holford Conservation Area Designation, 14th November 1990; op. cit.

¹⁴ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Bicknoller, Crowcombe, East Quantoxhead, Holford, Kilve, Stogursey, Stringston and West Quantoxhead) (as amended); op. cit.

¹⁵ West Somerset District Council; Holford Conservation Area Designation, 14th November 1990; op. cit.

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10.8 SETTLEMENT INSETS – HUISH CHAMPFLOWER

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification: Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:
Landscape Character Area: Brendon Fringe¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.8.1 Huish Champflower is a linear village situated in the valley of the River Tone. The village street contains older dwellings in the local style near St. Peter's Church, but post-war development comprises modern bungalows and two-storey dwellings. The buildings are set against the lower, well-wooded slopes of the Brendon Hills. The village is built upon average quality Grade 3 agricultural land which, in all but a westerly direction, becomes Grade 4 a short distance from its periphery.²

Settlement Policy

10.8.2 Since the early part of the 1980s it has been the Local Planning Authority's policy to permit infilling and a small courtyard of houses has been built to the rear of Manor Farm. All new building has been within the development limits of the village, as defined on the Inset Map, and this policy will be upheld for the period of the Plan. Apart from St. Peter's Church, Huish Champflower has no shops or services of its own but relies on those offered at Wiveliscombe. The village's poor infrastructure will restrict development to that which is needed to meet local needs and cannot be better met elsewhere.

Population and Housing

10.8.3 Huish Champflower was recorded as having a parish population of about 210 in 1981.³ In March 1982 there were no sites with planning permission for housing within the village, and only permission for one dwelling in the parish as a whole. The Dulverton Area Local Plan (Exmoor Parishes and West Somerset Parishes)⁴ allocated land which could accommodate 8 dwellings. The plots to either side of the main street north of the Castle Inn have been developed, and The Barton development was completed in 1987, which accounts for the increase in population to 240 by 2001.⁵ In order to provide housing suitable for local people and in keeping with the village's character, any further buildings on this site will

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

³ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; ; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

⁴ Somerset County Council and West Somerset District Council; Dulverton Area Local Plan - West Somerset Parishes; Somerset County Council; 1984; ISBN 0 86183 012 1

⁵ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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10.8 SETTLEMENT INSETS – HUISH CHAMPFLOWER

need to be of a similar design. The development limits have only been slightly amended in this Plan to include the whole site taken up by The Barton.

- 10.8.4 The village street is fronted by development for about a mile. A small detached group of buildings has developed west of the village, near the old school, however this area is excluded from the development limits of the village which should avoid the extension of this group.

Employment

- 10.8.5 There is a small engineering firm operating from within the village.

Shops and Services

- 10.8.6 In common with many rural settlements the level of facilities in Huish Champflower has declined with the loss of the village school and post office, and more recently, the suspended trading of the Castle Inn. It does, however, have a village hall and St. Peter's Church.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.8.7 St. Peter's is a fifteenth Century Church that underwent considerable restoration work in 1875. This Grade 1 listed building occupies a commanding, elevated position within the village core and is a prominent local landmark.⁶ The only other listed building in the village is Gauth House, a converted farmhouse, which is a good example of the local carpenters craft.⁷ Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged.
- 10.8.8 Although many of the older buildings form a tight knit community, there are important open spaces within the settlement. These spaces are important to the visual character of the village and will be protected (see Policy R/5).
- 10.8.9 Similarly there are tree groups in and around the village which make a significant contribution to its character and setting. These will be subject to Policy TW/1.

⁶ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Exmoor National Park/Somerset (Parishes of Brompton Ralph, Brompton Regis, Brushford, Clatworthy, Dulverton, Huish Champflower, Skilgate and, Upton) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1986.

⁷ *ibid.*

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10.9 SETTLEMENT INSETS – KILVE

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Quantock Hills AONB ¹ (LC/2) Coastal Zone (CO/1)
Landscape Character Area:	Doniford Stream and Quantock Fringe ² (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.9.1 Kilve is located approximately 5.5 miles east of Williton and 12 miles west of Bridgwater. The village lies within the Quantock Hills AONB.³ The older part of the village is grouped around the junction of A39 and Sea Lane. The area known as Higher Hill has developed and now forms a small hamlet within the parish about half a mile to the east. The land around Kilve is mainly average Grade 3 agricultural land.⁴

Settlement Policy

10.9.2 Further development at Kilve will be contained within the development limits of the village. In order to reflect the built character of the village, any development will need to be low-density and should incorporate features local to the area.

Population and Housing

10.9.3 The population of the parish of Kilve had fallen from 388 in 1981⁵ to 378 in 2001.⁶

10.9.4 Post war development has taken place along Sea Lane, including a local authority housing development. Millands Lane has now been developed with a total of 18 properties. The properties have been built with a mixture of brick and render finish with slate roofs.

10.9.5 Proposals for residential development have been refused on sites along Sea Lane, which is regarded as being unsuitable for increased vehicular use.

10.9.6 A cul-de-sac development of 8 houses was built in Putsham Mead on the south side of the A39 in the early 1980s and the development limits have been drawn immediately to its east.

¹ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; HMSO; 1956

² WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

³ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁵ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

⁶ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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10.9 SETTLEMENT INSETS – KILVE

- 10.9.7 Higher Hill has seen a considerable amount of residential development in recent years despite there being no facilities in the immediate vicinity. This area will be treated as comprising part of the open countryside and further development will be strictly controlled.

Employment

- 10.9.8 The village, originally an agricultural community, has now also become a dormitory area. The village's largest employer, Kilve Court Residential Education Centre, has approximately 30 people on the staff. It is situated on the south side of the A39 and is run by the Education Department of Somerset County Council. The Centre caters for groups of young people aged 6-18 who attend residential courses. These courses cover academic, environmental, artistic and general studies as well as physical activities. The centre also works with school, youth and adult groups which are self-programming.

Shops and Services

- 10.9.9 There is a Post Office/Stores in the centre of the village on the A39. A bakery operated in the village until 1993. There is a village hall, the Hood Arms Hotel, St Mary's Church and for the tourists a tea garden. There is a free public car park with a capacity of 21 cars in the centre of the village. Bridgwater serves as the main shopping centre, with Watchet, Williton, Stogursey and Nether Stowey as the nearest local centres.
- 10.9.10 There are no areas of public open space or a children's playground, but there is an amenity area, established in 1977, principally for visitors at Kilve Pill. This site is almost a mile away from the centre of the village further towards the sea, and includes Kilve Cricket Ground and a car park with public toilets and footpaths along the coast which is an SSSI.⁷ The village is served by the Bridgwater/Watchet bus route which has stops on the A39.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.9.11 The village of Kilve is set in an attractive landscape, however, the main area of historic interest in Kilve is the area around the Pill, a landing point for boats dating back to the Middle Ages,⁸ and the remains of the Chantry. The area is also of recreational value and part of it is a site of archaeological interest.⁹
- 10.9.12 No part of Kilve is considered to warrant Conservation Area status,¹⁰ however the village does include a number of older buildings of good architectural style.

⁷ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

⁸ Somerset County Council; Somerset Historic Environment Record: Record 33281 – Kilve Pill Harbour, Kilve (as amended); Somerset County Council; 1983

⁹ Somerset County Council; Somerset Historic Environment Record: Record 34540 – Kilve Chantry, Kilve; Somerset County Council; 1985.

¹⁰ H.M. Government; Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Chapter 9 (as amended); HMSO; 1990; ISBN 0 10 540990 1

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10.9 SETTLEMENT INSETS – KILVE

Any new development will need to have regard to the design of existing buildings in the vicinity of the site and will, where appropriate, have pitched gable ended roofs with brown tiles. The walls will be finished in local natural stone, suitable colour-washed rendering or brick.

- 10.9.13 In 1985 the Kilve Pill Conservation and Amenity Project was undertaken jointly by the District and County Councils in an attempt to maintain and enhance the site and improve its tourist potential. The Project Report outlines the individual components in the area and suggests ways in which these can be improved and enhanced. These include:-
- (a) repairs to the historic buildings and structures such as the Chantry and Oil Retort;
 - (b) the provision of interpretative material for visitors about these buildings and features of geological or ecological interest;
 - (c) the carrying out of additional tree planting, in particular around the car park;
 - (d) the promotion and encouragement of the maintenance of the network of footpaths both along the coast and in the surrounding 'countryside'.¹¹
- 10.9.14 Additional tree planting has subsequently been carried out around the picnic and car parking area and an information board provided on the Oil Retort. However, there is no other interpretative material as yet at the Pill or the Chantry. The Chantry and other structures are overgrown and in need of basic repair work in order to help conserve them. The area between the Chantry and the car park also requires landscaping as proposed in the Project Report.¹² Therefore, it is important that enhancement work is pursued as outlined in the report.
- 10.9.15 Kilve lost its wealth of elm trees through disease, however there are other trees of different species which the Local Planning Authority will seek to retain. Strict controls will be placed on the felling or endangering of any trees which are of high amenity value and may be affected by any future development (see Policy TW/1).

¹¹ Somerset County Council and West Somerset District Council; Kilve Pill Conservation and Amenity Project Report; Somerset County Council; 1985.

¹² *ibid.*

10.10 SETTLEMENT INSETS – MINEHEAD

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Town (SP1)
Landscape Conservation:	Coastal Zone (CO/1)
Landscape Character Area:	Blue Anchor Bay ¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

- 10.10.1 The town of Minehead is situated on the coast in the north-east of the Plan area. Until the end of the eighteenth Century Minehead's economy was based primarily on agriculture and local fishing/port activity. Its history as a holiday resort began over a Century ago. The Bristol and Exeter Railway extended its branch line from Watchet in 1874 increasing Minehead's appeal.² This line is now privately owned and operated by WSR. Access is principally by the A39 and connecting roads.
- 10.10.2 The Butlin's holiday resort already one of the largest of its kind in Europe, has established itself as an all-year-round facility. Major facility improvements have been undertaken over the past decade. This programme included the creation of a new family entertainment centre with new branded, restaurants, bars and shops and complete refurbishment of all chalet accommodation on the site.
- 10.10.3 Apart from being a popular holiday destination, Minehead also has the recognised role of residential and service centre for West Somerset. The town has a prominent setting in the countryside. To the north-west, the upper part of North Hill falls within the Exmoor National Park³ which is subject to stringent planning controls.⁴ The land immediately surrounding the settlement is generally of average Grade 3 agricultural quality.⁵

Settlement Policy

- 10.10.4 Minehead is the principal town in the Plan area and, as identified in Structure Plan Review Policy STR2,⁶ it will function as the location for a wide range of activities compatible with its role, character and size and will develop consistent with other policies of the Structure Plan⁷ and this Local Plan.

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² Minehead Railway Company; The Minehead Railway Act 1871; H.M.S.O.; 1871.

³ H.M. Government; National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; HMSO; 1949

⁴ Exmoor National Park Authority; Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2001 – 2011 (Adopted 2005); Exmoor National Park Authority; 2006

⁵ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁶ 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

⁷ *ibid.*

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10.10 SETTLEMENT INSETS – MINEHEAD

Population and Housing

- 10.10.5 The location and character of Minehead is attractive to tourists and residents alike. In 2001 it had a resident population of 11,699 which,⁸ during the peak holiday season, can rise to nearly 25,000. Statistics for the last 20 years show that persons of retirement age largely account for the steady rise in Minehead's resident population and in 2001 formed 34% of the population.⁹
- 10.10.6 Minehead as a resort underwent considerable growth in the 1800's, however, most of the town has developed during the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries. The most recent development has taken place off Seaward Way. This road's construction has improved local traffic movements and unlocked land for residential and business development.
- 10.10.7 Of the 141 dwellings for which sites must be found in the Plan area, almost 26% have been allocated in Minehead (see Policy H/I). The main site is located west of Seaward Way. This is in line with the Local Planning Authority's planning policy to seek to maintain a clear gap between Minehead and Dunster Marsh.

Employment

- 10.10.8 The employment base of Minehead is currently dominated by the tourism industry. The health care sector is a secondary source of employment, reflected in the growth of nursing and residential care homes within the town. The 2006 Annual Business Inquiry showed that the distribution, hotel and catering sector accounted for 55% of employment in Minehead compared with c.3% of jobs in the manufacturing sector.¹⁰
- 10.10.9 As a direct consequence of its dependence upon tourism, the town suffers the problem of seasonal unemployment. In August 2006, unemployment was 2.3% (125 people) compared to the regional and national averages of 1.6% and 2.5% respectively. In the winter months total unemployment in the town increases significantly.¹¹
- 10.10.10 The Local Planning Authority will adopt a policy of principally directing business development towards Minehead which should aid the strengthening and diversification of the town's economic base. Proposals for business development will be subject to Policies E/I-E/3 and E/6.
- 10.10.11 The Minehead Area Local Plan¹² made provision for employment land linked to the construction of Seaward Way. Part of this land allocation has been used for

⁸ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

⁹ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3 and, Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; op. cit.

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics; Annual Business Inquiry 2006; NOMIS; 2007

¹¹ Office for National Statistics; Neighbourhood Statistics – Worklessness: Key Out of Work Benefits – Job Seekers, Oct 2005 – Sep 2006; Office for National Statistics; 2006 (*aka.* = *Claimant Count*).

¹² West Somerset District Council; Minehead Area Local Plan; West Somerset District Council; 1989

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10.10 SETTLEMENT INSETS – MINEHEAD

the development of the Tesco foodstore (formerly, Somerfield) and Aquasplash. Two sites are allocated in this Plan within Minehead Enterprise Park, east of Vulcan Road and south of Brunel Way (see Policy E/1).

10.10.12 The Enterprise Park although being the District's main employment area for industrial/service users offers only a mixed quality environment by modern standards. Certain areas of the Enterprise Park at Mart Road and Vennlands are blighted by vacant plots and an untidy visual character with variable quality of building design. The Council is keen to improve the overall quality of the working environment and introduce appropriate measures, although the Enterprise Park has a number of private owners. For example, planting and soft landscaping can be used to great effect to lessen the impact of larger parking areas, service yards and similar features. (See Policy BD/5).

POLICY MINE/1: Minehead Enterprise Park Enhancement

The Minehead Enterprise Park will be a priority area for an environmental improvement scheme in terms of existing sites including enhancement of estate roads, footpaths, car parks and other outside facilities.

10.10.13 In July, 1994 an independent consultant was commissioned by the Minehead and West Somerset Development Forum (of which West Somerset District Council is a member) to produce an Economic Regeneration Strategy for Minehead.¹³ The Strategy contained an action plan of inter-linking economic, social, environmental and transportation projects to boost the local economy.

10.10.14 Future economic trends suggest Minehead being increasingly dependent upon the tourism and service sector which, with the exception of Butlins, is characterised by small businesses which require support if they are to thrive in an increasingly competitive world.

10.10.15 Among the key sectors of opportunity highlighted within the report are:

- (i) Within the tourism sector the town is well positioned to exploit the growing demand for short-break and activity holidays, not just focused on Butlins, but also on the surrounding countryside of Exmoor and West Somerset,
- (ii) the care sector, which reflects Minehead's attractiveness as a retirement centre, and
- (iii) craft and retail businesses which could be further developed to exploit the opportunities arising from visitor expenditure.

Shops and Services

10.10.16 Minehead's status as the principal service centre for the Plan area is reflected in the importance of its retail sector. The principal shopping area covers The

¹³ West Somerset District Council et. al.; *An Economic Regeneration Strategy for Minehead: Final Report*; West Somerset District Council; 1995 (aka. *The Pielda Study*).

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10.10 SETTLEMENT INSETS – MINEHEAD

Avenue (part), The Parade, Friday Street, Bampton Street (part), Blenheim Road (part) and Park Street.

- 10.10.17 To meet the requirements of Structure Plan Review Policy 22¹⁴ and, in order to improve the competitiveness and functioning of the existing town centre, the Local Planning Authority will adopt a positive approach to town centre management and will support initiatives to upgrade and enhance the shopping environment (see Policy SH/1).
- 10.10.18 The Minehead Town Transport Study,¹⁵ completed in 2002 provides an integrated land use/transport framework for future initiatives in parallel with the Local Plan. This Study looked in detail at such issues as pedestrian enhancements, cycle routes, public transport potential and car parking policy within an established sustainable policy context. (See also paragraph 7.21 - 23).
- 10.10.19 Most of the residential areas of Minehead are easily accessible to the town centre and the Alcombe local centre. It is, therefore, unlikely that there is a need for a local shop to provide a 'top-up' facility. If, however, such a need is proven, a proposal to build a new shop or change the use of an existing building to a shop will be subject to Policy SH/3.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.10.20 Protection and enhancement of Minehead's character as an Outstanding Heritage Settlement¹⁶ is provided by Structure Plan Review Policy 11¹⁷ which requires that priority be given to Conservation Areas at Quay Street, Higher Town and Wellington Square and, Alcombe Village. In conjunction with the District's Local Plan preparation, the Local Planning Authority has approved the following extensions to its Conservation Areas in Minehead:-
- (i) Wellington Square Conservation Area to include Blenheim Road and Gardens, part of the Esplanade, the Railway Station and Beach Hotel, Warren Road (West), the Avenue, Selbourne Place and a further section of Bampton Street, Glenmore Road (North) and Tregonwell Road;
 - (ii) Quay Street Conservation Area to include Blenheim Cottages;
 - (iii) Higher Town Conservation Area to include the lower slopes of North Hill,
- and, the creation of a new conservation area at Whitegate Road.¹⁸

¹⁴ Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

¹⁵ Somerset County Council; Somerset County Council Town Transport Strategies: Minehead; Somerset County Council; 2002

¹⁶ Somerset County Council; Somerset Structure Plan: Report of Survey; Somerset County Council; 1975.

¹⁷ Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

¹⁸ West Somerset District Council; Revision and Extension to, Quay Street, Higher Town, Wellington Square and Alcombe Conservation Areas, Minehead and Designation of Whitegate Road Conservation Area, Minehead, July 2003; Somerset County Council; 2003.

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10.10 SETTLEMENT INSETS – MINEHEAD

- 10.10.21 The fifteenth Century Church of St. Michael's is on North Hill, which rises almost 900ft out of the sea. This, together with the harbour area, is the older part of the town.^{19,20} Most of the properties in and around Wellington Square date from the eighteenth century and Alcombe Village, once a village in its own right, has become a suburb of Minehead. As well as including a large number of listed buildings,²¹ the four Conservation Areas of Minehead²² take in those areas of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged. Proposals within conservation areas will be subject to Policies CA/1 - CA/5.
- 10.10.22 The Minehead branch, closed by British Rail in 1971,²³ was re-opened again in 1976 as the West Somerset Railway, and under steam and diesel runs regular and special trips for the 20 mile journey between Minehead and Bishops Lydeard, making it the longest privately owned stretch of railway in the country. Although the Local Planning Authority is unable to secure the Railway's long term future, the track bed will be protected by Policy T/12.
- 10.10.23 An outline feasibility study was considered by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) in 2000 to evaluate the options for upgrading a connection of the West Somerset Railway at Norton Fitzwarren, to passenger standards. The requirement to upgrade arose from an expectation of potential growth in the charter train business and other, longer-term, additional services which would be likely to exceed the existing Health and Safety Executive (HMRI) limit of six return passenger trains a year. The proposal would allow trains from the Minehead branch line to run over the main line into Taunton Station.
- 10.10.24 The Minehead Sea Defences Scheme, has reduced the problems of tidal flooding in the town, providing protection for a 1% risk (1 in 100 years) event and limiting the degree of flooding in more severe events.²⁴ These structures will reduce the risk of flooding from high tides for more than 100 houses and businesses, 2000 chalets and 300 caravans at Butlins Resort.
- 10.10.25 The completion of the Scheme has allowed improvement of views to the Bristol Channel for both residents and visitors, by raised sections of Promenade and new viewing points along Warren Road.

¹⁹ Somerset County Council; Somerset Historic Environment Record: Record 33771 – Medieval Town, Minehead; Somerset County Council; 1984.

²⁰ Somerset County Council; Somerset Historic Environment Record: Record 33775 – Medieval Quay Site, Minehead; Somerset County Council; 1984.

²¹ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Area of Minehead) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1994.

²² West Somerset District Council; Revision and Extension to, Quay Street, Higher Town, Wellington Square and Alcombe Conservation Areas, Minehead and Designation of Whitegate Road Conservation Area, Minehead, July 2003; op. cit.

²³ Ministry of Transport; British Railways Board Public Notice – Transport Act 1962: Passenger Services Taunton – Minehead (Ref. RB 3/4/082 dated 15th October 1970); British Railways Board; 1970.

²⁴ Department for Communities and Local Government; Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (PPS 25) ,Annex D: The Sequential Test and Exception Test; The Stationary Office; 2006; ISBN 0 11 753974 0

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10.10 SETTLEMENT INSETS – MINEHEAD

POLICY MINE/2: Leisure Activities on The Esplanade and Warren Road

Development proposals will be permitted for leisure-related uses of buildings and open spaces on the esplanade and Warren Road sea front areas that accord with the following categories:

- (i) landscaped gardens,**
- (ii) active leisure facilities,**
- (iii) open space,**
- (iv) promenade enhancement features,**
- (v) car parking**

and which conform with Policies BD/2, R/5 and TO/2.

10.10.26 In addition the District Council and other partner organisations envisaged a wider Seafront Enhancement Scheme to complement the new Sea Defences; subject to support from the European Regional Development Fund. The Scheme has provided a more coherent Promenade between the Harbour and Warren Road. Design details incorporated new lighting, street furniture and paving behind the new sea wall. Improved 'green links' between the Sea Front and town centre have extended existing landscaped/ amenity areas providing greater physical integration between these key parts of Minehead..

10.11 SETTLEMENT INSETS – MONKSILVER

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Exmoor National Park Periphery (LC/1)
Landscape Character Area:	The Brendon Fringe ¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.11.1 Monksilver is a small, compact village situated on the eastern edge of Exmoor National Park² in the shadow of the Brendon Hills. The National Park boundary follows the route of the B3188 which passes through the settlement. It is the eastern part of the village which falls within the Plan area and will be subject to the policies of this Plan. The older core of the village is comprised of small cottages grouped around Front Street and Back Way, overlooked by the Church. A majority of buildings front the narrow village road apart from a local authority housing estate at Sunny Bank, built shortly after the war, and more recently four old persons bungalows at Pond Orchard. Agricultural land to the east is good quality Grade 2, to the north and west it is generally Grade 3, and to the south it is Grade 4.³

Settlement Policy

10.11.2 Despite its inclusion in the list of Small Villages in Policy SP/1, its location and limited facilities do not make it an appropriate location for development, other than that required to meet genuine agricultural or other local needs which cannot be met in a recognised settlement elsewhere. However, taking into account the physical characteristics of the village, the development limit is drawn to allow the potential for a very modest development of housing.

Population and Housing

10.11.3 The Parish has a small, declining population⁴ which supports all but a few facilities within the village. However, the Rural Centre of Williton lies 3.5 miles to the north. The applications received have generally been for alterations to existing buildings.

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² H.M. Government; National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; HMSO; 1949

³ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁴ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3 and Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set) (*The Census does not usually disaggregate data below Ward and/or Parish level, therefore the population data available refers to both parts of Monksilver village/Parish*).

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10.11 SETTLEMENT INSETS – MONKSILVER

10.11.4 Approval will not be given for proposals outside the recognised village limits. Monksilver is set in open countryside of great landscape value so any development would be detrimental to the visual amenities of this attractive rural area and would set a precedent for further residential development which the Local Planning Authority may find difficult to resist. Furthermore, infill development within the village will only be allowed on plots which do not form important open spaces.

Employment

10.11.5 Local employment is almost exclusively associated with agriculture and forestry, while Williton offers a wider range of employment opportunities. The vast majority of employed people commute to their place of work.

Shops and Services

10.11.6 Monksilver's village shop and post office closed in the late 1970s and its remaining facilities are restricted to All Saints Church and the Notley Arms public house. There is a twice weekly bus service to the Williton doctors surgery, and the mobile library makes fortnightly visits to the village. A new community hall has been constructed on a site lying a quarter of a mile east of Monksilver within the Parish of Stogumber, In addition to Monksilver, this hall serves the communities of the neighbouring Parishes of Elworthy and Nettlecombe. Facilities of this kind are of great importance to the social life of rural communities and, as is this case, can sometimes only be provided in sparsely populated parishes by joint action.

10.11.7 The B3188 carries a considerable volume of traffic, particularly during the summer months.⁵ Residents have voiced their concern over the use of this road by lorries; there have been occasions when large vehicles have failed to negotiate the sharp bends at either end of the village. The Local Planning Authority, jointly with the National Park Authority, hopes to address this problem through discussion with the Highway Authority, looking particularly at the possibility of a weight restriction.

Environment and Conservation

10.11.8 Since Monksilver has seen very little modern development it has retained its traditional character. The village's most notable features include the stream running through its centre, the pleasant juxtaposition of colour-washed and natural stone cottages, the Notley Arms, groups of trees and high hedgebanks. The Church of All Saints, built in the thirteenth century, stands on slightly higher ground to the west of Front Street and is a repository of both beauty and interest.⁶

⁵ Somerset County Council - Environment Directorate; Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011; Somerset County Council; 2006.

⁶ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Elworthy, Monksilver, Nettlecombe, Old Cleeve, Sampford Brett, Stogumber and Williton) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

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10.11 SETTLEMENT INSETS – MONKSILVER

- 10.11.9 There are nine listed buildings within the village,⁷ and the majority of these are in the Plan area including for example, Half Moon Cottage which is late medieval in origin. In 1675 it was recorded as the Ram Inn and by 1785 was known as the Half Moon Inn. It ceased to be an inn around 1860 when the Notley Arms was built. Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged.

⁷ *ibid.*

10.12 SETTLEMENT INSETS – OLD CLEEVE

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	
Landscape Character Area:	Central West Somerset ¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.12.1 Old Cleeve is a small, relatively compact village situated on the western slopes of Cleeve Hill which gives way to the Pill Valley. The B3191 lies 1.5 miles north of the village and the A39 a mile to the south. Class 3 roads provide access to and from these. The older buildings are generally clustered around St Andrews Church, which dates from the 15th Century and is on the site of an older church.² During the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries the village has experienced considerable infilling and expansion, a notable example being the Memorial Cottages which were built in 1947 for use by the elderly as a memorial to those local residents who served in the Second World War. The village is set in a special landscape area, and surrounded by average quality Grade 3 agricultural land with an extensive area of higher quality Grade 2 land a quarter of a mile to the west.³

Settlement Policy

10.12.2 Since Policy SP/1 identifies Old Cleeve as a Small Village it is subject to Structure Plan Review Policy STR 5.⁴ A recent village survey revealed Old Cleeve has already accommodated a surprising amount of post-war development and that there is limited scope for further development due to such factors as amenity, access and provision of public services. The Local Planning Authority has redrawn the village's development limits to include the eight bungalows at Dairylands on the north west edge of the village, and proposes to provide for locally-generated housing needs through infilling, conversion or redevelopment.

10.12.3 Chapel Cleeve, which includes Cleeve Park, is set too far away from Old Cleeve to be considered for inclusion within its village limits. The lack of facilities and small number of permanent dwellings within it indicate that further development would be inappropriate, and that there is no justification for its designation as a village.

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Elworthy, Monksilver, Nettlecombe, Old Cleeve, Sampford Brett, Stogumber and Williton) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

³ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁴ 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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10.12 SETTLEMENT INSETS – OLD CLEEVE

Population and Housing

- 10.12.4 Old Cleeve village has experienced considerable residential development since the 1960s. The Parish of Old Cleeve is large, stretching as far south as the junction of the B3224 and B3190 on Exmoor and northwards to the coast. Since the 1960s, the number of people resident in the Parish has grown significantly and it can be assumed that this increase is attributable, in part, to development in Old Cleeve and in Cleeve Park, which has established itself as a residential area although the chalets were originally designed for holiday use.
- 10.12.5 The Local Planning Authority considers that a continuation of this pattern of growth in Cleeve Park would be at the expense of the environment and would exacerbate highway problems. The character of Cleeve Park results from its location in the grounds of Chapel Cleeve House, the small size of the chalets and the informality of the woodland setting. It is agreed that proposals to extend the area of living space of existing chalets would increase the visual impact of the development in the open countryside and be incompatible with other policies of the Plan.

POLICY OC/1: Development at Cleeve Park

Development in the form of further chalet provision or extensions to the living area of existing chalets at Cleeve Park will not be permitted.

- 10.12.6 An old orchard in the centre of the village provides an important physical feature worthy of preservation and enhancement. This orchard provides a unique balance between buildings and open space within the village. Views into the site are enjoyed by neighbouring properties and by people using the village's main street. The site is a well used amenity orchard with a Management Committee.

Employment

- 10.12.7 Old Cleeve retains a residual agricultural role with Old Cleeve Farm on its northern outskirts. A former Tannery site at Linton, a quarter of a mile to the west of Old Cleeve may provide a valuable future source of small scale local employment. Today, as is the case with many villages in the Plan area, Old Cleeve is essentially recognised as being a retirement settlement with a high proportion of residents aged 65 and over.⁵

Shops and Services

- 10.12.8 Since the closure of the Post Office/General Stores, the facilities in Old Cleeve are limited to St Andrews Church, the Church Room and Lysaght Club and Old Cleeve community hall. This is a well-maintained licensed club with a large membership made up of people from the surrounding villages.

⁵ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

10.12 SETTLEMENT INSETS – OLD CLEEVE

Environment and Conservation

10.12.9 Old Cleeve's character is that of a relatively unspoilt traditional English village with 23 of its buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest.⁶ These buildings follow the triangular pattern of the internal roads, and most have rendered or colour-washed walls and thatched roofs. Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged. The more modern buildings within the village are generally in keeping with their older neighbours.

10.12.10 A large part of the historic core of the village has been identified as a Conservation Area, and Policies CA/1 to CA/3 apply in this area. Within this wider policy framework, which also includes building design, proposals for new development in Old Cleeve should have regard to the following local characteristics:-

- (i) the vernacular building style of one and a half or two-storey properties and the use of traditional materials, including natural stone, rendered and colour-washed walls, often with hipped thatched or gabled slate roofs;
- (ii) the importance of natural stone walls to the character of the village street scene. These are mainly threatened by decay or collapse or by their removal, lowering or setting back from the street frontage to provide visibility splays for new development;
- (iii) the dominance of older properties abutting or almost abutting the village street. Modern development often of single-storey dwellings has been set back from the road and consequently contributes little to the village scene;
- (iv) the retention of open spaces important to the character of Old Cleeve and which allow views to the coast, the fringes of Exmoor and surrounding countryside.

10.12.11 A number of older properties within the village have large well-tended gardens which are enclosed by low stone walls. Apart from the church yard and Old Cleeve Orchard, the village is devoid of public open space and the layout enable passers by to share in the enjoyment of what is essentially private space.

10.12.12 Towards the outskirts of Old Cleeve the high roadside hedgebanks form an interesting feature worthy of preservation. The village has very few verges, and these hedges go part way to making up for this since they are alive with small mammals, birds and plants.

⁶ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Elworthy, Monksilver, Nettlecombe, Old Cleeve, Sampford Brett, Stogumber and Williton) (as amended); op. cit.

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10.13 SETTLEMENT INSETS –SAMPFORD BRETT

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	
Landscape Character Area:	Central West Somerset ¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.13.1 The village of Sampford Brett is located less than a mile south-east of Williton in the valley of Doniford Stream. The A358 runs north of the settlement and Class 3 roads of poor width and alignment link Sampford Brett with neighbouring settlements to the south. The main street, which was widened in 1891, has the greatest number of older properties fronting onto it. More recently, development has taken place to the south and north-west of this street. The village is set in Central West Somerset Landscape Character Area² and is surrounded by high quality Grades 1 and 2 agricultural land to the north, south and west, with average quality Grade 3 land to the east.³

Settlement Policy

10.13.2 Sampford Brett is considered to be a Small Village in planning terms (see Policy SP/1). Between 1960 and 1974 the two estates of Brett Close and Croft Meadows were constructed, since which time there has been further limited growth in the form of infilling. Development of a relatively large scale is considered to be inappropriate due to physical constraints and the limited range of facilities available in the village.

Population and Housing

10.13.3 In 1807 the Parish population was recorded as 180 but reached its peak of 280 in 1867.⁴ At the time of the 2001 Census 288 people were resident in the Parish,⁵ of which a third were aged 65 and over. The development limits of Sampford Brett are drawn tightly around the built-up area and include the two cul-de-sac developments south of the main street. Despite their being recent developments they have succeeded in blending with the older, historic properties of Sampford Brett. Close attention has been paid to the design and construction of buildings, and their visual impact has been softened by the planting of trees, shrubs and creepers. However, there is very little scope for new development of any kind, including infilling.

10.13.4 The dwellings along Sampford Rocks are not recognised as being within the village. There is currently one outstanding outline permission for residential development on land between Pendray House and Crossways, however further

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² *ibid.*

³ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁴ Williton Rural District Council; Census data by Parish, 1891 – 1951; Williton Rural District Council;

⁵ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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10.13 SETTLEMENT INSETS –SAMPFORD BRETT

peripheral development will be strongly resisted to avoid coalescence with development along Tower Hill, Williton.

Employment

10.13.5 Sampford Brett has a long history as an agricultural centre. Both Francis Farm and Manor Farm operate within the village, and the settlement is bounded on every side by agricultural land. Opportunities for the provision of additional employment are scarce, and residents of working age generally look to Williton and beyond for employment.

Shops and Services

10.13.6 The limited range of facilities in Sampford Brett is countered to a certain extent by the village's proximity to Williton, a recognised Rural Centre. The school closed in 1933, followed by the general store/post office and public house. The remaining facilities include St. George's Church, the village hall and filling station/repairs garage on the A358.

Environment and Conservation

10.13.7 The main street of Sampford Brett is flanked by nineteenth Century buildings and a few modern infill developments. Eleven properties plus St. George's Church are listed for their special architectural and/or historic interest,⁶ and the village core is considered to be of archaeological value. Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged, while Policies AH/2 and AH/3 will apply to developments within the area shown to be of archaeological importance.

10.13.8 There are several important views, both from within and out of the village, which make a significant contribution to its character. From the banks of Doniford Stream which flows east of the village, there are picturesque views of the neighbouring settlement of Woolston and beyond. These views should not be obstructed, nor should the two settlements be allowed to coalesce. People passing through the village are treated to glimpses of landscaped private land. This stimulates the public's interest in the village, whilst respecting its residents' rights to privacy.

10.13.9 A number of prominent tree groups contribute significantly to the amenity of the village, and will be subject to the provisions of Policy TW/1. The churchyard is the only area of green open space within the village and by its character will probably support many valued species of flora and fauna.

⁶ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Elworthy, Monksilver, Nettlecombe, Old Cleeve, Sampford Brett, Stogumber and Williton) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

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10.14 SETTLEMENT INSETS – SKILGATE

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification: Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:
Landscape Character Area: The Brendon Fringe¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.14.1 Skilgate is a small isolated village on the southern slopes of Haddon Hill. It is set approximately 3 miles from Upton and 6 miles from Dulverton and Bampton, and all the roads leading from the settlement are narrow and very poorly aligned. The village's most notable quality is that it has remained largely unaltered during the last Century. It has seen a small amount of post-war development and this has been concentrated about the road junction in the village core. The village is built on the descent to the valley of a tributary of the River Bathern. Land within the village is Grade 3 agricultural land with Grade 4 all around.² Skilgate Wood is a County Wildlife Site described as a broadleaved semi-natural woodland with areas of conifer plantation (see Policy NC/2).

Settlement Policy

10.14.2 Policy SP/1 defines Skilgate as a Small Village, however, as is the case for a number of small villages in the Plan area, there is limited scope for development. Any development should take the form of infilling, conversion or redevelopment.

Population and Housing

10.14.3 The Parish population of Skilgate was 96 in 2001³ and remained unchanged from the 1981 Census.⁴ Since 1974 there have been two detached dwellings built in the village (permission was granted in 1986), however in recent years applications have more often been refused. An example is the application made to develop the field opposite John the Baptist's Church. The grounds for refusal were that this open space contributes greatly to the character of Skilgate, which is a loose-knit group of houses, and further ribbon-type development would be contrary to the established form and layout of the village. Policy R/5 will continue to safeguard this site from development.

Employment

10.14.4 Apart from a livestock and general haulage business, Skilgate is basically an agricultural settlement with Townsend Farm and Pitt Farm within the village, and Court Place Farm outside the village limits.

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

³ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

⁴ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

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10.14 SETTLEMENT INSETS – SKILGATE

Shops and Services

10.14.5 Although the fabric of the village remains unchanged, Skilgate has not escaped the general trend in declining rural services. A private dwelling is all that remains of the post office and the nearest service centre is some 6 miles away, although there is a garage and public house at the neighbouring settlement of Upton.

Environment and Conservation

10.14.6 St. John's is the Parish Church of Skilgate. It, along with four other buildings and structures, is listed and subject to Policies LB/1 and LB/2.⁵ According to records, none of the buildings date back to any earlier than the nineteenth century apart from the Church, which has features dating from the fourteenth century (see Policies AH/2 and AH/3).

10.14.7 The open structure of the village will be retained, and development impinging on the more important open areas resisted (see Policy R/5). Views out of the village are pleasant despite it being in a valley and relatively enclosed.

10.14.8 Retaining hedges and natural stone walls in the village have been protected as part of development control and this will become policy in Skilgate as with many other villages in the Plan area.

⁵ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Exmoor National Park/Somerset (Parishes of Brompton Ralph, Brompton Regis, Brushford, Clatworthy, Dulverton, Huish Champflower, Skilgate and, Upton) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1986.

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10.15 SETTLEMENT INSETS – STOGUMBER

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification: Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:
Landscape Character Area: Doniford Stream & Quantock Fringe¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.15.1 Stogumber lies in a sheltered valley at the foot of the Brendon Hills about 3.5 miles south-east of Williton. It is a relatively compact village approached by minor roads of restricted carriageways which, together with the topography of the area, impose considerable constraints on new development. Much of the village is designated as a Conservation Area² within which there are numerous listed buildings. It is set in the Doniford Stream and Quantock Fringe Landscape Character Area³ and has average quality Grade 3 agricultural land on all sides but to the north, where a narrow belt is of a poorer, Grade 4, quality.⁴

Settlement Policy

10.15.2 There is a recognised need for a certain amount of residential development to help maintain a thriving community and secure the future of the school and other facilities. However, this should be carried out in such a way as to retain the existing character of the village and protect its physical environment. Poorly sited and designed modern development may have an adverse impact on the very high quality landscape setting and/or conservation area.

10.15.3 The Local Planning Authority will permit residential development in accordance with Policy SP/3 including infilling on suitable plots throughout the village. The development limits of Stogumber have been drawn to:-

- (i) incorporate areas of land excluded from the surrounding countryside;
- (ii) confine development to within the existing built up area.

Population and Housing

10.15.4 In 2001 a total of 608 persons were resident in the Parish.⁵ Stogumber has undergone a moderate amount of residential expansion in recent years with Local Authority developments at Deane Close and Station Road/Slade Close, and a private cul-de-sac development known as Sawpits Close.

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² West Somerset District Council; Stogumber Conservation Area Designation Order; Somerset County Council; 1975.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁵ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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10.15 SETTLEMENT INSETS – STOGUMBER

10.15.5 Despite small-scale modern developments and single dwelling infilling, much of the traditional character of the village remains and is relatively unspoilt. It is critical that any new development, particularly on sites located within or close to the Conservation Area,⁶ pays attention to the established character of the village and is not detrimental to the visual amenity of Stogumber.

Employment

10.15.6 A small repair garage has closed and apart from a limited number of jobs in the service sector that include holiday accommodation, agriculture is the main employer.

Shops and Services

10.15.7 Facilities within Stogumber include St. Mary's Church, a school and playing field, post office/general stores, village hall, youth club, cricket ground and the White Horse public house. The mobile library service calls at the village every fortnight. The range of services available suggest that the village is a suitable location for a certain amount of further development, and indeed their futures may come to depend on it.

Environment and Conservation

10.15.8 In common with many of the historic settlements in Somerset, Stogumber has grown incrementally over many centuries. In recognition of its special architectural and historic interest, a large part of the village was designated as a Conservation Area in 1975.⁷ This centred around the Church and the historic properties along High Street. It is in this area that most of the Parish's statutory listed buildings are situated including several thatched cottages, the Rectory and St. Mary's Church which is listed as Grade 1.⁸ Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged. A large part of the historic village core of Stogumber is identified as being of archaeological interest (see Policies AH/2 and AH/3).

10.15.9 In order to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area,⁹ Policies CA/1-CA/5 will be applied. These policies are consistent with the guidance given in Structure Plan Review Policy 12.¹⁰ Within this wider policy framework, which also includes Building Design, proposals for development in Stogumber should have regard to the following local characteristics:-

- (i) The use of vernacular building styles and materials of either two storey properties with white rendered walls, gabled slate or clay tiled roofs and

⁶ West Somerset District Council; Stogumber Conservation Area Designation Order; op. cit.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Elworthy, Monksilver, Nettlecombe, Old Cleeve, Sampford Brett, Stogumber and Williton) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

⁹ West Somerset District Council; Stogumber Conservation Area Designation Order; op. cit.

¹⁰ 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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10.15 SETTLEMENT INSETS – STOGUMBER

black paint work, bargeboards and lintels, or 1.5-storey thatched properties with natural stone walls and face brickwork stacks;

- (ii) The position of many older cottages abutting or almost abutting the village street and often separated from the road itself by a narrow strip of cobbles;
- (iii) The larger imposing properties set well back from the street and generally fronted by substantial natural stone walls which in themselves are important to the character of the village. These walls are under threat of removal or being lowered or set back from the street frontage in order to provide satisfactory visibility splays;
- (iv) The street scene is dominated by St. Mary's Church and surrounding mature trees which is located on slightly higher ground than most of the village.

10.15.10 Stogumber is fortunate in that relatively few enhancement measures are required as a priority within the Conservation Area,¹¹ although there are certain disfiguring overhead cables and supporting poles and on-street car parking. In addition the large stone wall between Station Road and the Church Yard is in a poor state of repair.

¹¹ West Somerset District Council; Stogumber Conservation Area Designation Order; *op. cit.*

10.16 SETTLEMENT INSETS – STOGURSEY

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification: Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:
Landscape Character Area: The Quantock Vale¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.16.1 The large village of Stogursey lies amidst gently rolling country which extends from the Quantock Hills to the River Parrett. It is situated some 8.5 miles north-west of Bridgwater and 9 miles east of Watchet and Williton. The village underwent a period of considerable residential expansion in the 1960-70s, at the time that Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Station was built on the shores of Bridgwater Bay about 3 miles to the north, however it has retained the essential features of the small medieval settlement from which it grew. The village is surrounded by average quality Grade 3 agricultural land with some high quality Grade 2 land to the west.²

Settlement Policy

- 10.16.2 There is some potential for further development within Stogursey. The range of services and facilities available is adequate to cope with some additional population. However, in order to protect the character of the surrounding countryside, minimise the loss of agricultural land and facilitate the economic provision of services, any further development should be contained within defined limits, shown on the Inset Map.
- 10.16.3 An opportunity to provide new community facilities in association with limited residential development to the east of the village has been identified (See Policy H/I - Site 5). Development of the site will be conditional upon provision of an element of affordable housing in accordance with Policy H/4. Likewise contributions being agreed from the developer with the District and Parish Councils to allow for provision of a burial ground, public car parking and toilets, as shown on the inset map.
- 10.16.4 Due consideration will have to be given to Policy AH/3 prior to development of the site, in terms of its status as an area of high archaeological potential and location within the Stogursey Conservation Area.³

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

³ West Somerset District Council; Stogursey Conservation Area Designation Order (as amended); Somerset County Council; 1974.

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10.16 SETTLEMENT INSETS – STOGURSEY

POLICY SY/1: Residential Development, Land East of St. Audries Close

The Local Planning Authority will permit residential development east of Park View and St Audries Close, Stogursey subject to the following requirements:-

- (i) the design and layout of the development site will be set against the principles established in Policy BD/2 and CA/1 and will make provision for highway junction improvements between Priory Hill, Church Street and Farringdon Hill Lane

* As shown on the Stogursey Settlement Inset Map

- (ii) provision of affordable housing will be sought in negotiation with developers

(When considering the wider community and physical infrastructure requirements for development of Site 5, regard will be given to Policies PO/1, H/4, R/4, T/14 and need for a burial ground, public car parking/toilets)

POLICY SY/2: Community Facilities

Land east of Park View, Stogursey is allocated for public car parking/toilets and burial ground as shown on the Stogursey Settlement Inset Map.

Population and Housing

10.16.5 During the period between the end of the sixteenth Century and the 1960s residential development was comparatively small, but the impact of the Hinkley Point Power Station brought about a considerable expansion on the northern side of the village. The modern semi-detached houses and bungalows erected in over a short period of time contrast sharply with the older properties in the original part of the village.

10.16.6 In 2001 the population of the Parish of Stogursey was 1273⁴ compared to 1188 a decade earlier.⁵ This figure is likely to remain relatively constant over the Plan period.

Employment

10.16.7 The major employer located closest to Stogursey is Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Station. In addition, Bridgwater offers further employment opportunities.

⁴ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

⁵ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; 1991 Census - County Report: Somerset (Part 2); HMSO; 1993; ISBN 0 11 691489 0

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10.16 SETTLEMENT INSETS – STOGURSEY

10.16.8 Apart from employment relating to agricultural activities, Stogursey does have a small number of local firms mainly located in High Street and Castle Street. The development of new business will be subject to Policies E/2, E/3 and E/5.

Shops and Services

10.16.9 Stogursey provides a wide range of facilities and services including St. Andrew's Church, a primary school and playing field, a village hall and adjoining youth club building, and recreation ground. There are five shops, a post office, a garage/filling station, a restaurant, two public houses and a mobile library service (fortnightly). The village is served by a regular bus service to Bridgwater and by a daily service to Taunton. There is no off-street public car park in the village, but roads are generally of sufficient width to cope with a moderate amount of on-street parking.

Environment and Conservation

10.16.10 Because of its special architectural and historic interest, Stogursey has been defined in Structure Plan Review Policy 11⁶ as one of about forty Outstanding Heritage Settlements in the county. Consequently, priority will be given to enhancement and other appropriate measures to protect its character.

10.16.11 Much of the older part of Stogursey is contained within a Conservation Area designated in 1974⁷ and subsequently extended in 1977.⁸ The limits of this go south to include the remains of a Norman Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument⁹ (see Policy AH/1), and east to Stogursey Primary School which is a fine example of Victorian Gothic architecture. A further thirty-five buildings in Stogursey are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest including the recently repaired St. Andrew's Well.¹⁰ Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged.

10.16.12 It is important that new development particularly on sites which are located within or close to the Conservation Area¹¹ or vicinity of listed buildings have regard to the traditional vernacular character, scale and style of building in Stogursey. Policies CA/I-CA/5 will apply to all development proposals within the Conservation Area. However, it is considered appropriate that additional features detailed below are taken into account when considering proposals to attempt to ensure that satisfactory integration is achieved with the older properties.

⁶ 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

⁷ West Somerset District Council; Stogursey Conservation Area Designation Order (as amended); op. cit.

⁸ West Somerset District Council; Revision to Stogursey Conservation Area Designation Order; Somerset County Council; 1977.

⁹ English Heritage; County List of Scheduled Monuments: Somerset; English Heritage; 1996

¹⁰ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Bicknoller, Crowcombe, East Quantoxhead, Holford, Kilve, Stogursey, Stringston and West Quantoxhead) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

¹¹ West Somerset District Council; Stogursey Conservation Area Designation Order (as amended); op. cit.

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10.16 SETTLEMENT INSETS – STOGURSEY

- 10.16.13 The traditional style of building in Stogursey is one of compact cottages, mostly two-storey, with rendered colour-washed walls and tiled or slate roofs. There are four cottages at the corner of Lime Street and High Street which are thatched but this is the exception in the village. Roofs generally are of normal pitch with face brick work chimneys, the windows tend to be small casements with glazing bars. Many of the older properties are closely linked and the building line adjoins the footpath or street, others have a small front garden space fronted by natural stone walls.
- 10.16.14 Previous plans have examined ways in which the special character of Stogursey¹² could be enhanced. Opportunities for this, whilst initiated by the Local Planning Authority, also depend on the understanding, agreement and cooperation of individuals and agencies following the preparation of an enhancement scheme. The Local Planning Authority will, where possible, make finance available for such schemes designed to enhance the area.
- 10.16.15 The repairs to St. Andrews Well are an example of an enhancement scheme carried out jointly by the County, District and Parish Councils with the aid of grants. Other areas identified for possible enhancement include the Castle, Mill and Old Market Square, War Memorial and surrounding area. Somerset County Council have prepared an Enhancement Scheme for the Old Market Square, following consultation with the local community, which was implemented in 1998.
- 10.16.16 The footpath from the High Street along Castle Street to the Castle is at present in a poor state of repair and would benefit from resurfacing, parts paved and the steps repaired. The natural stone wall along the western side of the footpath is also poorly maintained with gaps in places being filled by corrugated iron sheets, brick and concrete block. To the east of the footpath is the early eighteenth century Old Mill, Mill House and Waterwheel (all listed as being of Special Architectural and Historic Interest).¹³ These and the remains of the iron bound waterwheel in particular could benefit from further restoration work and enhancement. The Castle is now let for holidays by The Landmark Trust.
- 10.16.17 Much of the village's charm lies in the closed vistas of its streets, ancient monuments, historic buildings and village square. These views from within the village and those stretching out over the surrounding landscape will be protected (see Policy R/5).
- 10.16.18 There are several important tree groups within and on the outskirts of the village, for example development along Farrington Hill Lane is well screened by a belt of trees. These, along with individual trees of high amenity value will be subject to Policy TW/1.

¹² West Somerset District Council; Stogursey Interim Settlement Policy; West Somerset District Council; 1979

¹³ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Bicknoller, Crowcombe, East Quantoxhead, Holford, Kilve, Stogursey, Strington and West Quantoxhead) (as amended); op. cit.

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10.16 SETTLEMENT INSETS – STOGURSEY

School Playing Field

10.16.19 Currently, Stogursey Primary School has no playing field and pitch appropriate to statutory requirements. Pupils have to use the village playing field across the main village road which is not a satisfactory arrangement. Land to the south of the school is, therefore, allocated for that purpose.

POLICY SY/3: Primary School Playing Field

Land to the south of Stogursey Primary School is allocated as a school playing field.

10.17 SETTLEMENT INSETS – UPTON

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification: Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:
Landscape Character Area: The Brendon Fringe¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.17.1 Upton straddles the B3190 about 11.5 miles south of Watchet and 6 miles north-east of Dulverton. It is bounded to one side by the River Haddeo and to the other by the wooded lower slopes of the Haddon Hills. In the early 1980's, it was planning policy to resist development which would in turn lead to the consolidation of scattered development, and would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the area. Although today Upton is still essentially a fragmented village, in recent years it has seen more development in the form of infill which has given rise to its coalescence. Surrounding agricultural land is of average Grade 3 to poor Grade 4 quality.²

Settlement Policy

10.17.2 Upton is defined as a Village in Policy SP/2. However, it is set within a particularly attractive landscape and much of the village is prominent when viewed across the valley to the north. It is considered that proposals which would represent an undesirable extension of ribbon development along the B3190 would be prejudicial to the visual amenities of the area. In addition, despite the expressed desire for further housing in the area, such development would clearly be contrary to the overriding objective of sustainability. The development limit boundary is, therefore, drawn tightly around the core of the existing village.

Population and Housing

10.17.3 Upton had a Parish population of 156 in 2001³ and considerable new building has taken place during the 1990's. There has been redevelopment of existing housing sites, premises have changed their use to dwellings, and new buildings have been constructed on previously undeveloped plots. All applications for residential development have, however, been granted approval subject to the carrying out of agreed planting schemes thereby minimising their impact on the landscape.

Employment

10.17.4 There is a garage and workshop at the northern end of the village, however agriculture and increasingly forestry are the main activities of the area.

Shops and Services

10.17.5 Despite Upton having- only a few of the amenities that make up a community - Church, Chapel, village hall, inn and garage, it has seen a substantial amount of new development along its length. The village hall and Lowtrow Cross Inn are

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

³ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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10.17 SETTLEMENT INSETS – UPTON

outside permitted development limits as is the caravan park on land adjoining Oxenleaze Farm, Chipstable. To prevent an increased burden being placed on the facilities and public utilities of the area, development must be kept in check and will be confined to that necessary to meet local needs only.

Environment and Conservation

10.17.6 No part of Upton has been accorded conservation status.⁴ The Church that stands on the main road through the village was built in 1870 and is Grade II listed.⁵ It was re-sited about a mile south of the earlier, fourteenth Century, St. James Church, the remains of which are Grade II* listed.⁶ In the graveyard there are tablets to the Fergusson Davie family who were presumably instrumental in the building of the second Church. Also listed for its historical interest is the milestone with a plaque inscribed with "12 Miles to Watchet".⁷ Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged.

⁴ H.M. Government; Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Chapter 9 (as amended); H.M.S.O.; 1990; ISBN 0 10 540990 1

⁵ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Exmoor National Park/Somerset (Parishes of Brompton Ralph, Brompton Regis, Brushford, Clatworthy, Dulverton, Huish Champflower, Skilgate and, Upton) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1986.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

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10.18 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WASHFORD

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification: Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:
Landscape Character Area: Central West Somerset¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.18.1 The settlement of Washford undoubtedly grew up as a result of Cleeve Abbey.² It is situated at the foot of the Brendon Hills, in Central West Somerset Landscape Character Area,³ approximately 2.5 miles west of Williton beside the A39 to Minehead. The village is built in and up the sides of the Washford River valley, which flows through the settlement. High quality Grade 2 agricultural land adjoins the village to the east and lies half a mile away to the south-west.⁴ The remainder of the village is built upon average quality Grade 3 land.⁵

Settlement Policy

10.18.2 Washford is one of the larger villages in Old Cleeve Parish and the Plan area as a whole. It has grown considerably in recent years particularly on the western side of the river.

10.18.3 Since it is well served by community facilities, Washford is considered to have the scope to accommodate further development without a substantial loss of amenity. Land for housing development may come forward over the Plan period, however such potential will be dependent upon improvements to the A39 and conformity with Policy SP/3.

Population and Housing

10.18.4 The Parish had a total resident population of 1486 in 1981⁶ rising to 1764 in 2001.⁷ This increase is principally attributable to the recent expansion in Washford's housing stock. A relatively large development of open plan bungalows has been constructed off Willow Grove and a cul-de-sac development of houses and bungalows was built along Castle Mead, on the site of a former cattle market. Several other plots have seen residential development accepted as infilling.

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² Somerset County Council; Somerset Historic Environment Record: Record 33918 – Cleeve Abbey, Washford; Somerset County Council; 1984.

³ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; op. cit.

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

⁷ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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10.18 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WASHFORD

- 10.18.5 The A39 is narrow with several sub-standard bends and associated junctions. Its pavements are not continuous making it hazardous for pedestrians, and the village's internal roads are also narrow with poor junctions. There are plans to construct a bypass around Washford which should increase road safety and ease congestion (see Policy T/I). At present the highways network is inadequate to cope with increased traffic and this is a constraint to further development, particularly off Huish Lane. The route of the bypass and the form it will take are still to be confirmed, and it is now unlikely that construction will begin before the turn of the century.⁸
- 10.18.6 Washford has some shops and services to facilitate further infill development and the construction of small groups of housing within the village's defined development limits (see Inset Map). Most of the potential sites will not be suitable until the necessary highway improvements have been completed for reasons of access.

Employment

- 10.18.7 There are limited employment opportunities on offer within the village. It has a repair garage, hairdresser, inn and the agricultural merchant Badcock & Evered operate at Washford Mill. Outside the village Torre Farm markets locally produced traditional cider together with the Tropiquaria tourism attraction. With Washford having a relatively high status in the Plan area's settlement hierarchy, there is the potential for some small scale industrial development, possibly in the form of rural workshop units but unlikely to come before a long-term resolution to the highway problems is achieved (see Policies E/2 – E/4).

Shops and Services

- 10.18.8 A range of facilities are available in Washford including St. Mary's Church, a Methodist Church, Old Cleeve First School with a combined nursery unit, a post office (limited opening hours), a garage, a Village Hall and playing field. Tourist accommodation is provided by Bed and Breakfast establishments in the village. The A39 is used by buses on the Minehead – Watchet - Williton, Bridgwater - Minehead, and Taunton – Minehead routes.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.18.9 At Washford are the remains of Cleeve Abbey, a Cistercian Abbey originally founded in 1188 and later dissolved in 1537. The Abbey is a Grade I listed building⁹ and also a Scheduled Ancient Monument of archaeological value (see Policy AH/1).¹⁰

⁸ The scheme was re-appraised, along with others as part of a new system of transport planning introduced with Local Transport Plans – see Para. 7.20. It was still being reviewed at the time of the adoption of the Joint Structure Plan Review and is included in the West Somerset Strategic Access Route scheme referred to in para. 7.41 (to Policy 55) of that document.

⁹ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Elworthy, Monksilver, Nettlecombe, Old Cleeve, Sampford Brett, Stogumber and Williton) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

¹⁰ English Heritage; County List of Scheduled Monuments: Somerset; English Heritage; 1996

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10.18 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WASHFORD

- 10.18.10 Washford contains few statutory listed buildings as much of the village is of post-war origin. Traditional cottages are principally located around the school along Huish Lane. Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged.
- 10.18.11 Allotments play an important economic and recreational role, especially for those people with no gardens or small gardens. In addition to this they can also have amenity and nature conservation value.
- 10.18.12 The West Somerset Mineral Railway received Parliamentary authorisation to build a railway line from the iron ore mines in the Brendon Hills to Watchet harbour in 1855; completed in 1859.¹¹ By 1910 all mining had ceased and the line became derelict. The Old Mineral Line Trail is a country walk following its route from Watchet to Washford. There are several places of interest along the trail, including The Monks Steps, Washford Station which houses the Somerset and Dorset Railway Museum, and Cleve Abbey.

¹¹ West Somerset Mineral Railway Company; West Somerset Mineral Railway Act 1855; H.M.S.O.; 1855

10.19 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WATCHET

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Rural Centre (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Coastal Zone Periphery (CO/1)
Landscape Character Area:	Central West Somerset ¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

- 10.19.1 The small town of Watchet is situated on the coast of the Bristol Channel between the upland areas of the Brendon Hills to the south and west, and the Quantocks to the east. Its accessible coastline allowed the early development of a port and trade routes, however Watchet Harbour ceased operating on a commercial basis in 1993.²
- 10.19.2 The town is set in an agricultural landscape characterised by undulating topography, red soils and irregular hedged fields. Its historic core is typified by the tight, small scale street pattern and simple vernacular architecture. The more modern development is situated further inland on steeply rising ground. The settlement is served by three roads; B3190 to Bampton, B3191 to Blue Anchor and a C road to West Quantoxhead.

Settlement Policy

- 10.19.3 Watchet is defined as a Rural Centre by Policy SP/1 and in accordance with Structure Plan Review Policy STR3.³ Whilst such settlements are intended to be the focus of development and social and economic activity, new developments will be of a scale and type appropriate to the town.

Population and Housing

- 10.19.4 Watchet was at its most prosperous in the second half of the nineteenth Century with the building of the West Somerset Mineral Railway from the Brendon Hills to Watchet. Much of its housing dates back to this period, although since 1946 five estates have been built. Watchet currently covers an area about four times that of a Century ago, and at the time of the 2001 Census the Parish had a total resident population of 3949.⁴
- 10.19.5 Land has been developed for residential development purposes on the eastern outskirts of the town along Doniford Road. However the opportunity for further residential development is limited due to severe physical constraints. The sea forms an absolute limit for development to the north and inland careful control will be exercised to ensure the character of the Central West Somerset

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² H.M. Government; Harbours, Docks, Piers and Ferries: The Watchet Harbour Revision Order 2000 – Statutory Instrument 2000 No. 1884 (SI 2000 No. 1884); H.M.S.O.; 2000.

³ 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

⁴ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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10.19 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WATCHET

Landscape Character Area⁵ is respected. Also, and perhaps most importantly, the existing highway system is fast approaching its maximum carrying capacity and it is unlikely to be significantly improved during the Plan period.⁶

- 10.19.6 Some minor improvements are planned for Brendon Road but not as to allow further residential development. The main distributor roads of St. Decumans Road, South Road and Liddymore Road are long culs-de-sac with substandard junctions with Doniford Road. Further development off these roads is, therefore, considered inappropriate. The gradient and carriageway width of West Street are substandard. Further development with access directly off Doniford Road is considered unacceptable in all but its most easterly end.

Employment

- 10.19.7 Watchet's economy is unusual for a popular tourist area in that a significant amount of employment is within the manufacturing sector. The town's principal employer is St Regis Paper Co Ltd which has been at Watchet since the seventeenth Century. The depot recycles much of the area's commercial and domestic waste paper, an activity which receives the full support of the District Council. From Cleeve Hill the paper mill is most intrusive, however from within the town itself it has very little visual impact and its peripheral location ensures that it does not place undue strain on the internal roads network.
- 10.19.8 In 2001 18.81% of the population were employed in the manufacturing sector and the rest in the service sector.⁷ Although this level has been significantly reduced during the early years of the 1990's as a result of local closures and cutbacks in workforce. It would be beneficial for Watchet's economy if the town's dependence upon one major employer was reduced and its economic base expanded.
- 10.19.9 The focal point for the overall regeneration programme is the potential offered by a Marina facility that was completed in 2001.
- 10.19.10 It is contained within the eastern half of the Harbour and bounded by a new slipway, impounding wall and two tidal gates providing berths for at least 180 boats.
- 10.19.11 Closely allied to the Marina proposals are the dual considerations of associated Esplanade and East Wharf. Physical enhancements of both areas is a major priority in creating a more vibrant centre of activity for Watchet. (See also Policy T/14).
- 10.19.12 The East Wharf comprises of a site of approximately 1 hectare (gross) with an existing industrial building positioned centrally on the site. (Approximately 557 square metres). The site represents the most significant development opportunity

⁵ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; op. cit.

⁶ Somerset County Council; Delivering Integration: The Local Transport Plan for Somerset 2001 – 2006; W.S. Atkins; 2001 (and successor documents)

⁷ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Key Statistics, Industry of Employment – All People (KS 11A) (Neighbourhood Statistics – Area: Watchet (Ward); ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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10.19 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WATCHET

in Watchet, In the southern corner of the site adjacent to the entrance from Harbour Road is a block of part single and part two-storey buildings; used by the Harbour Master.

- 10.19.13 A development brief prepared by the District Council for this site in June 2005 contains a number of key principles for realising the full potential of its prime location on the waterside. These comprise of the following components:
- Marina-related development on the northern side of the site.
 - Extension of the Esplanade and public access along the Harbour frontage of the site.
 - The existing Industrial Unit reused in the short/medium-term for industrial occupiers including Marina related boat repair.
 - Development of the Harbour frontage on the south side of the site for either residential or leisure uses with a smaller retail component.
 - Potential parking for both Marina related users and the public on the remainder of the site.⁸

POLICY WAT/1: East Wharf Mixed-Use Development

The Local Planning Authority will permit a mixed employment/housing based development scheme with associated community related uses at the East Wharf, Watchet subject to the following:

- (i) the development does not detract from the character and the appearance of the adjoining conservation area and coastal zone**
- (ii) that adequate access, servicing and parking provision is made for the development**
- (iii) provision of a pedestrian link between the harbour frontage of the site to the Esplanade**
- (iv) the development does not preclude new facilities for fishing vessels, pleasure cruise vessels and yachts provided by the marina**
- (v) the development is compatible with other land uses in the area and complements the adjoining Esplanade Enhancement Scheme**

When considering the wider community and physical infrastructure requirements for development of the East Wharf, regard will be given to Policies PO/1 and T/14.

- 10.19.14 The site is identified for potential mixed employment/residential use to make the most of its prominent location and also accords with relevant Policy Guidance in PPS 1.⁹ Allowing a degree of flexibility for suitable use types will help to serve the

⁸ West Somerset District Council; Guidance for Detailed Proposals for East Wharf, Watchet; Donaldsons; 2005.

⁹ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS 1); HMSO; 2005; 0 11 753939 2

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10.19 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WATCHET

interests of achieving a worthwhile regeneration package to meet Council aspirations and those of key funding partners.

- 10.19.15 The juxtaposition of the East Wharf with the surrounding Conservation Area¹⁰ and physical qualities identified, will require special consideration in terms of acceptable design solutions. Regard will be had to Policies BD/2 and BD/5.
- 10.19.16 In order to facilitate the growth of employment opportunities, the Local Planning Authority proposes the allocation of an area of land off Brendon Road for business use (see Policy E/I). The development of the site may be achieved with the assistance of European Commission funding. It is not an ideal site but represents the only real opportunity given the physical constraints referred to above.
- 10.19.17 The bed of the former Mineral Line provides a highly popular footpath for residents and tourists alike. It also forms a useful link with Washford and Cleeve Abbey. The Local Planning Authority will support the provision and/or enhancement of other similar tourist attractions in and around Watchet (see Policy TO/3).

Shops and Services

- 10.19.18 The shops in Watchet cater principally for local or specialist needs and for those of the tourist. The main shopping streets are Swain Street and Market Street with a group of neighbourhood shops in Liddymore Road. Bulk food and comparative shopping is generally undertaken in the larger, better served centres of Williton, Minehead, Bridgwater and Taunton, leaving less mobile residents at a disadvantage. This reflects the recent national trend in retailing towards larger shops with adequate car parking serving a large catchment area. There is, however, a recognised need for local services catering for casual daily requirements and more specialised goods and services.
- 10.19.19 The Local Planning Authority wishes to maintain and, where possible, enhance Watchet's current retail function. A positive approach may be through physical improvements to the shopping environment. Swain Street and Market Streets are within the Watchet Conservation Area¹¹ and paragraph 5.3.5 sets down the Local Planning Authority's intention to prepare enhancement schemes for each of its Conservation Areas as appropriate. Resident on-street parking in West Street causes problems, particularly in summer.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.19.20 The older parts of the town are close to the Harbour and include the shopping and commercial areas.¹² Within this area many buildings essential to the character of the port still exist. Some buildings are listed and most have been

¹⁰ West Somerset District Council; Revision and Extension to Watchet Conservation Area 2003; Somerset County Council; 2003.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Somerset County Council; Somerset Historic Environment Record: Record 34163 – Medieval Town and Port, Watchet; Somerset County Council; 1984.

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10.19 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WATCHET

included in a Conservation Area originally designated in 1975.¹³ The boundary has been drawn to take in the whole of Swain Street and The Esplanade, Market Street, Mill Street and Anchor street and includes, where appropriate, buildings, walls and land abutting thereon. Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged. In order to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area Policies CA/I-CA/5 have been drawn up. These policies are consistent with the guidance given in Structure Plan Review Policy 12.¹⁴

- 10.19.21 A Watchet Esplanade Enhancement Scheme has been prepared by the District Council/Regeneration Partnership which envisages amongst other features:
- A new performance stage/bandstand on the western side of the Esplanade.
 - Re-alignment and replacement of street lighting, reflecting the Promenade area and additional feature lighting.
 - New paving to fix and link the stage/ bandstand to the rest of the Esplanade and surrounding buildings.
 - New seating to help define the performance space, the promenade area and along the length of the Esplanade.
- 10.19.22 The scheme will also improve the existing network of public pedestrian ways in the town. These ways provide valuable means of access to different parts of Watchet and offer attractive glimpses of gardens and other amenity spaces. The Council is currently building on this opportunity to provide a number of future Town Trails.
- 10.19.23 Relevant funding is being sought from the Arts Lottery Fund, Greater Exmoor Leader II Project, Rural Development Commission and Wessex Water.
- 10.19.24 It is important that new development on sites within or close to the Conservation Area have regard to the traditional vernacular character, scale and style of existing buildings. The individual buildings for the most part are modest two-storey structures and with only a few exceptions are all rendered with predominately slate roofs. These simple buildings derive their interest from the close built small-scale street pattern which is characterised by many changes of direction within each street and subtle variations in building lines. Any new development will need to integrate satisfactorily into this town scape.
- 10.19.25 The Local Planning Authority proposed to review and extend the Conservation Area in consultation with the public as adoption of the Local Plan progresses and this was achieved in 2003.¹⁵

¹³ West Somerset District Council; Watchet Conservation Designation Order (as amended); Somerset County Council; 1975.

¹⁴ Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

¹⁵ West Somerset District Council; Revision and Extension to Watchet Conservation Area 2003; op. cit.

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10.20 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WEST QUANTOXHEAD

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Quantock Hills AONB ¹ (LC/2) Coastal Zone (CO/1)
Landscape Character Area:	Central Quantocks ² (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.20.1 West Quantoxhead, generally known as St. Audries, is situated south of the A39 along the mid-slopes of the Quantock Hills. From West Quantoxhead this range of hills runs approximately 13 miles south-east to Thurloxton. Watchet and Williton are located 3 miles to the north-west and south-west respectively. The village is wholly within the Quantock Hills AONB³ and derives its character more from the setting than from its physical form. It has very few traditional style buildings, and is largely comprised of twentieth Century developments that follow the triangular road pattern and extend further out into the open countryside. West Quantoxhead is bounded to the south by high quality Grade 1 agricultural land and by Grade 3 land to the west and north.⁴ The land to its east is densely wooded and not in agricultural use.

Settlement Policy

10.20.2 As a result of rapid ribbon development and infilling, West Quantoxhead has grown from a collection of farms and houses built about the point at which The Avenue becomes Weacombe Road into a sprawling settlement. For the purposes of the Plan it is defined as a Small Village in Policy SP/1.

10.20.3 While recent developments have been screened from within the village, they are highly intrusive from the lower-lying areas to the west. Furthermore the Local Planning Authority recognises the primacy of the conservation objective of AONB status.⁵ Consequently the Local Planning Authority proposes to restrict further development by the adoption of a development limit line drawn tight to the existing built-up area of the village.

¹ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; HMSO; 1956

² WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

³ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁵ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

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10.20 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WEST QUANTOXHEAD

Population and Housing

- 10.20.4 By 1981 the Parish population had fallen to 291,⁶ but in 2001 it had recovered to a total of 390.⁷ The modern residential developments vary in quality; some are comprised of mixed dwelling types and consideration has been given to hard and soft landscaping, while others are built in styles and materials which are incongruous with their setting.
- 10.20.5 The Local Planning Authority proposes to reinforce its current policy of no new peripheral housing within this area, and any locally generated demand will be met within the village development limits. Affordable housing is a separate issue and may be permitted on an exception site (see Policy H/5).

Employment

- 10.20.6 West Quantoxhead's function is as a retirement settlement and, to a lesser extent, as a dormitory settlement for Minehead, Watchet and Williton. Employment within the settlement includes that provided by the Windmill Inn Public House, the garage and agricultural holdings. Staple Farm is a working farm within the village while just outside a nursery, Cotswolds Hardy Plants Ltd., operates from Wibble Farm.

Shops and Services

- 10.20.7 The services in the village have largely arisen from its arterial position on the A39. These include a garage and the Windmill Inn. The post office/general stores has closed and its business has been transferred to the garage shop. The mobile library service visits the village each fortnight. The Windmill Inn is advertised as having a children's play area but its use is restricted to customers only.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.20.8 There are very few buildings of historic importance within the village. Those that have warranted protection are mainly in the grounds of St. Audries School and include a Victorian Tudor-style mansion and a Church dating back to the same period.⁸ Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings are judged. The landscaped grounds themselves are also recognised as being of historic interest and feature on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England⁹ (see Policy LB/3).

⁶ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

⁷ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

⁸ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Bicknoller, Crowcombe, East Quantoxhead, Holford, Kilve, Stogursey, Stringston and West Quantoxhead) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

⁹ English Heritage; Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England (as amended); English Heritage; 2004

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10.20 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WEST QUANTOXHEAD

- 10.20.9 It is important to protect views looking out of the settlement. Views into the area have been marred by modern development, although the higher slopes are heavily wooded and provide a pleasant backcloth. The Local Planning Authority believes it to be imperative to prevent any further development to the south and southwest of the village along the exposed slopes of the Quantocks.
- 10.20.10 There are several tree groups within the village, particularly along Staple Lane and Weacombe Road, which offer some screening of the village from the outside and these will be protected in accordance with Policy TW/1.

10.21 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WILLITON

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification: Rural Centre (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:
Landscape Character Area: Central West Somerset¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.21.1 Williton is located 1.5 miles south of Watchet It has grown about the junction of the A39 Bridgwater to Minehead road and the A358 from Taunton. The village, the largest in the Plan area, is situated on a relatively flat site in the valley occupied by Doniford Stream, Land to the north, west and south of the settlement gradually rises to form part of the Landscape Character Area of Central West Somerset² and, to the east, the Central Quantocks,³ and agricultural land of varying quality surrounds the village on all sides. At times the highway network is placed under considerable strain, particularly during the holiday season. Both the A39 and A358 are fairly narrow, winding roads with shops and buildings fronting directly onto them as they pass through Williton.⁴

Settlement Policy

10.21.2 Policy SP/1 identifies Williton as being a Rural Centre⁵ and focal point-for selective development and economic and social activity. Nevertheless, there is no presumption in favour of significant growth and it is accepted that a centre because of various physical and policy constraints is not equally suited to all types of development. Williton is the larger of the Plan area's two Rural Centres, and this is reinforced by the wide range of services it offers. The Local Planning Authority proposes, where possible, to sustain and develop those amenities which are available.

Population and Housing

10.21.3 Williton has experienced a significant growth in its population since the 1930s. At the time of 2001 Census a total of 2,574 persons were resident in the Parish.⁶ Despite a levelling out, and possibly a small decrease, in the population the number of households continues to rise as a result of a fall in average household size. Much of the recent development in the village has taken the form of large

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Somerset County Council; Delivering Integration: The Local Transport Plan for Somerset 2001 – 2006; W.S. Atkins; 2001 (and successor documents)

⁵ 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

⁶ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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10.21 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WILLITON

estates which have consolidated the existing pattern of arterial development. The estates are composed of high density housing, however, in some areas, more consideration has been given to the visual texture of building materials and planting has been used to give an increased sense of space.

- 10.21.4 Only a modest amount of new residential development is required in the Plan area, the majority of which is proposed to be directed to Minehead. In accordance with the Plan's objective of achieving sustainable development, it is considered that further development should be located in Williton which would also reinforce its role as a Rural Centre. However, there are a number of constraints to further peripheral expansion, particularly high-grade agricultural land.⁷
- 10.21.5 Two sites have been identified for residential development in the village. Land to the rear of North Street, Site 3, will provide 20 units (see Policy H/I) on the residual allocation area where site assembly may result in development proceeding in the latter part of the Plan period.

Employment

- 10.21.6 As a Rural Centre, Williton is the service centre for surrounding villages and farms. In addition, it is the administrative centre for West Somerset. Located on the north eastern edge of the village is Roughmoor Industrial Estate which established itself in the late 1960s. A significant number of existing units are occupied and house businesses with interests in building construction, engineering, haulage, and office supplies for example. There are some vacant plots but in order to satisfy the projected need for land for business in the Plan area, additional land is allocated to the north of the existing estate (see Policy E/I). A varied service-base of retail businesses, professional services and District Council Offices also contribute towards local employment in the village centre.

Shops and Services

- 10.21.7 The types of shops trading in Williton reflect, in part, its historical role as a service centre for the agricultural hinterland. Not only does it offer a high amount of low order goods, such as food-stuffs, for a settlement of its size but it has other speciality shops. The towns of Minehead, Taunton and Bridgwater are seen to pull expenditure from the village. In terms of convenience expenditure about 58% from residents of Watchet and Williton area is in Minehead and in comparison 23% in the two settlements.⁸
- 10.21.8 It should be noted that the selection of Rural Centres was undertaken in order to complement the pattern of these Towns and to ensure that a majority of the county's population would enjoy reasonable access to a good range of amenities.

⁷ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁸ Donaldsons LLP; West Somerset Retail and Town Centre Study: Final Report; West Somerset District Council; 2005

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10.21 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WILLITON

- 10.21.9 The Local Planning Authority has no direct influence over the investment decisions of retailers. Nonetheless it will attempt to foster and encourage the retention of existing levels of shopping provision in order to maintain Williton's status as a Rural Centre.
- 10.21.10 Williton's services include a post office, various financial institutions, library, health centre, hospital, fire station, police sub-station, first and middle schools, two Churches and a good amount of playing fields and amenity open space. Local Plan Policies R/3 and R/5, and Structure Plan Review Policy 39,⁹ protect important open spaces from development. These policies are applied for example to the recreation ground, children's play areas and informal, often incidental, open spaces throughout Williton.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.21.11 The character and environment of Williton are of good quality. It is set in the Central West Somerset Character Area¹⁰ and bounded by Grade 1, 2 and, 3a agriculture land with the best soils to the south and west.¹¹ To the east there are fine views of the Quantocks and from Tower Hill views extend as far as Wales across the undulating farmland. Careful protection of surrounding open countryside is considered to be a matter of great importance to the Local Planning Authority.
- 10.21.12 The village does not have a designated Conservation Area,¹² however, it contains many Listed Buildings¹³ and several Scheduled Ancient Monuments¹⁴ concentrated around the main roads. These include the Church which was enlarged and restored in 1858, and Townsend House, the former workhouse, dating back to a little earlier. Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged, and Policy AH/1 affords special protection to Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- 10.21.13 Historically, building materials in the village were red sandstone, sometimes rendered, and brick. Roofing materials were slate and thatch. The Local Planning Authority has given some thought to the design of new development in the Plan area, and Policies BD1-BD/7 specifically deal with this issue.
- 10.21.14 Traffic and parking are seen as significant areas of concern by the local community. A bypass has been proposed which it is hoped will relieve congestion and remove heavy goods vehicles, the greatest generators of noise, vibration and smoke within the settlement's core. However, it is unlikely to be constructed

⁹ Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority; Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review – Adopted April 2000; op. cit.

¹⁰ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; op. cit.

¹¹ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; op. cit.

¹² H.M. Government; Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Chapter 9 (as amended); HMSO; 1990; ISBN 0 10 540990 1

¹³ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Elworthy, Monksilver, Nettlecombe, Old Cleeve, Sampford Brett, Stogumber and Williton) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

¹⁴ English Heritage; County List of Scheduled Monuments: Somerset; English Heritage; 1996

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10.21 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WILLITON

within the Plan period and in the meantime the Local Planning Authority will look to develop other traffic management schemes.¹⁵ With regards to car parking, the Local Planning Authority believes existing facilities to be adequate and that the problem is in persuading people to use car parks rather than relying on limited on-street parking.

10.21.15 There are a great number of trees, individual specimens and groups, in and around the village which add to its character. Some are protected by Tree Preservation Orders¹⁶ (see Policy TW/1), however, all should be given due consideration in the future development of the village. In addition to formal public footpaths there are numerous informal tracks used by pedestrians. These increase permeability and people's choice of access, and their existence will be maintained where possible.¹⁷

¹⁵ The scheme was re-appraised, along with others as part of a new system of transport planning introduced with Local Transport Plans – see Para. 7.20. It was still being reviewed at the time of the adoption of the Joint Structure Plan Review and is included in the West Somerset Strategic Access Route scheme referred to in para. 7.41 (to Policy 55) of that document.

¹⁶ H.M. Government; Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Chapter 8 – Part VIII (as amended and associated secondary legislation); HMSO; 1990; ISBN 0 10 540890 5.

¹⁷ H.M. Government; The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Chapter 37 (as amended); H.M.S.O. 2000; ISBN 0 1- 543700 0

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10.22 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WITHYCOMBE

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Exmoor National Park Periphery (LC/1)
Landscape Character Area:	Central West Somerset (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.22.1 Withycombe is a relatively small village, located in a combe to the east of Withycombe Hill. A mill-stream runs northwards through the village. Williton lies 4 miles to its east and Minehead 4.5 miles to the west. The centre of the village has grown around St. Nicholas's Church and extends along the three radial routes of West Street, Lower Street and Higher Rodhuish Road. The older buildings in the core of the village consist mainly of small cottages while a majority of the modern development takes the form of detached and semi-detached dwellings. The A39 is approximately half a mile north of Withycombe and both West Street and Lower Street are linked to this. The village is within the Central West Somerset Landscape Character Area,¹ and is surrounded by agricultural land of varying quality. To its north there is high quality Grade 2 agricultural land, poorer quality Grades 3 and 4 to the east and south, and poor quality Grade 4 to the west.² Part of the village is within the Exmoor National Park³ and the development limits have been drawn to include land only within the Plan area.

Settlement Policy

10.22.2 The character and facilities within the village indicate that Withycombe is possibly an appropriate location for limited development. However, because of the overall need for a modest amount of development, the village boundary has been drawn to provide opportunity for infilling, conversion and redevelopment only. In defining the boundary, regard has been had to the proximity of Carhampton which has a wider range of facilities and is expected to offer greater scope for development. Outside the village's development limits and in open countryside policies will apply (see Policy SP/5), except that which is within the Exmoor National Park where their Local Plan policies⁴ will apply.

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

³ H.M. Government; National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; HMSO; 1949

⁴ Exmoor National Park Authority; Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2001 – 2011 (Adopted 2005); Exmoor National Park Authority; 2006

WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN – APRIL 2006

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals for development will be assessed against all the relevant policies

10.22 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WITHYCOMBE

Population and Housing

10.22.3 The Parish of Withycombe had a total of 299 residents at the time of 2001 Census⁵ compared to 276 in 1991.⁶ This small rise reflects a decade of considerable development in the village. 'Christophers' is a small, well designed development of three buildings off Lower Street which was constructed in the early 1980s. Beside the Old Post Office on West Street there is another sensitively sited and designed mid-1980s development, however the newest buildings are clustered around the ford and Rattle Row. These are a good example of attempts to reflect the old while updating their design for the 1990s.

Employment

10.22.4 Local employment is heavily dependent upon agriculture but there is a garage repairs service behind Brook Cottage on Lower Street. Most employed people commute to their workplace.

Shops and Services

10.22.5 The limited range of facilities available in Withycombe includes St. Nicholas's Church, a Village Hall which was erected in 1924 and plays host to regular events, and the mobile library service (fortnightly). Since the demise of the local post office/general stores, residents have come to rely more heavily on Carhampton, Minehead and Williton as local service centres.

Environment and Conservation

10.22.6 The village reflects the importance of agriculture to the area, particularly in Lower Street where the agricultural buildings of Withycombe Farm and Court Place Farms dominate the street scene. St. Nicholas's Church,⁷ dating back to the thirteenth Century, is located in the heart of the village. The Church's exterior is relatively unattractive, inside, however, it is as good an example of West Somerset medieval design as any to be found in the Plan area.⁸

10.22.7 The charm of the village is to be found in the varying styles of buildings and the fact that much of the recent development has reflected their design, thus lessening their impact. The mill-stream is a feature throughout the village running alongside Higher Rodhuish Road, over the road at Rattle Row, through the back gardens of properties on the eastern side of The Causeway and on along Lower

⁵ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set) (*The Census does not usually disaggregate data below Ward and/or Parish level, therefore the population data available refers to whole of Withycombe Parish*).

⁶ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; 1991 Census County Report: Somerset (Part 2); H.M.S.O.; 1993; ISBN 0 11 691489 0 (*The Census does not usually disaggregate data below Ward and/or Parish level, therefore the population data available refers to the whole of Withycombe parish*).

⁷ Somerset County Council; Somerset Historic Environment Record: Record 34273 – Church of St. Nicholas and Churchyard, Withycombe; Somerset County Council; 1984.

⁸ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Carhampton, Cutcombe, Dunster, Luccombe, Luxborough, Minehead Without, Timbersombe, Treborough, Withycombe and Wootton Courtney) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1985.

WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN – APRIL 2006

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10.22 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WITHYCOMBE

Street. Quaint bridges have been built over the stream at various points along its route to enable access to the properties beyond. The most important tree group which influences the settlement is the ancient woodland to its east. This is a County Wildlife Site and subject to Policy NC/2.

Playground

10.22.8 Within Withycombe there is no play area for children. Planning permission has been granted for such a play area adjoining a new village hall car park. However, it is considered to be prudent to allocate that land as a playground in this Plan in order to provide long-term protection in the event of the current permission not being implemented.

POLICY WIT/1: Playground

Land in Withycombe, as shown on the Inset Map, is allocated as playground.