



WEST SOMERSET CORE STRATEGY OPTIONS PAPER

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1.0 Introduction and context

1.1 The challenge ahead -

There are some great opportunities and also some big challenges facing West Somerset over the next twenty years. The work of protecting, and making the most of its beautiful landscape whilst making it an even better place to live and work is essential. This must be done whilst also taking action to reduce the dangers of climate change and making sure that the right facilities are available to serve the community and also visitors. The Local Development Framework Core Strategy will help to make necessary changes happen effectively and in a way which benefits the community as a whole.

1.2 Replacing the West Somerset District Local Plan:

The West Somerset Core Strategy will set out a vision for the future of the District together with proposals for achieving it; once adopted it will replace the main policies of the West Somerset District Local Plan. Having recently completed the first step in the preparation of the Core Strategy - the identification of the key issues which it will have to address (see section 3.0 below) the next stage is to identify ways in which the issues can be successfully addressed through the development of a range of policy options.

1.3 What are policy options?

They are different ways of addressing the issues identified in the first part of the Core Strategy process. Everyone within the community, and stakeholders with an interest in the area has the opportunity to be involved in the preparation of the Core Strategy. The Council is keen to have wide ranging input about how the key issues identified should be tackled, so please send in your ideas. Practical options will be tested against the objectives in the Council's Sustainability Appraisal as part of a process of refining these into a set of "preferred options" which will be subject to public consultation in the spring of 2010 as the Council's Preferred Strategy. Two other LDF documents, the Statement of Community Involvement Nov 2007 and the Local Development Scheme April 2009 set out more information on how this community engagement will happen.

1.4 How does the Core Strategy work?

The Core Strategy is a statutory planning policy document which sets out what sort of development is appropriate in the various parts of the District. It responds to local issues and opportunities, is based on evidence about how the environment, economy and communities are functioning, local distinctiveness and the objectives of both the Somerset and West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategies, set within the overall framework of national planning policy and regional strategy. In particular it must set out:

- **A spatial vision showing how the area and the places in it should develop** (see para 5.2.1);
- **Strategic objectives for the area based on the key issues identified** (see para 5.2.2);
- **A delivery strategy for achieving these objectives demonstrating how much development is proposed, where, when and how it will be delivered** (see para 5.2.3) and;
- **Clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy** (see para 5.2.4).

Above all, the Core Strategy is about delivering outcomes which make the area a better place to live in, go to school in, do business in, retire in and also where people can enjoy life.

1.5 Evidence:

Much research has already been carried out to support the preparation of the Core Strategy, this is available both on the Council's website www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk and also to inspect at the Council Offices in Williton. The Core Strategy is not limited to land use matters, but can include policies concerning the economy and also social, health and environmental issues. There is also an opportunity to better co-ordinate public investment from a range of public service bodies. The Core Strategy will provide policies for the next 15 to 20 years, so it is very important to get it right.

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2.0 West Somerset District and the Core Strategy area

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2.1 Location and population:

West Somerset District lies on the coast with North Devon District to its west. About two thirds of West Somerset District's land area lies within the Exmoor National Park (which has its own planning authority). However about three quarters of West Somerset's 35,500 population (ONS Mid 2008 estimate) lives outside the National Park within the area for which this Core Strategy is being prepared. [Fig. 1.](#) shows the Core Strategy area set in its context including the major highway links and larger settlements. The location of Hinkley Point power station is also shown. 66% of the Core Strategy area population live in the three main settlements (about 18,000 people).

2.2 The Core Strategy area:

The Core Strategy area comprises: the generally low lying coastal zone between Minehead in the west and the Steart Peninsula in the east, the north western part of the Quantock Hills, to the south part of the Brendon Hills and a further, detached southern area at Brushford in the Barle Valley to the south of Exmoor. The area's geography is complex ranging from the coastal levels parts of which are vulnerable to sea flooding between Blue Anchor and Minehead and at the Steart Peninsula, and the Brendon and Quantock Hills rising to over 300 metres.

2.3 Main settlements:

The largest settlement is the victorian seaside resort town of Minehead with 11,700 population, which is the main service centre for the District, having a community hospital, a sixth form college, middle school and a substantial shopping centre. It is also the location of the substantial Butlins holiday camp, which in the peak holiday season is home to some 5000 visitors at a time. There are two other settlements with a significant secondary service provision role beyond their local area: the historic port of Watchet (4,401) and the rural service centre village of Williton (2,700).

2.4 Land use and economy:

The great majority of the District is in agricultural or forestry use, pastoral farming being a particularly substantial part. The two major sources of employment within the District are agriculture and tourism, in particular the Butlins holiday camp in Minehead. As a consequence of its increasingly ageing population, social care is a growing employment sector, although like tourism and farming it is not particularly well paid. The District's other major tourist attraction is the West Somerset Steam Railway running for over 20 miles between Bishop's Lydeard near Taunton and its western terminus in Minehead linking the three largest settlements in the District by rail for much of the year (although it should be noted that the railway does not provide a public transport service).

2.5 Drainage and flooding:

Much of the Core Strategy area drains through short catchments to the Bristol Channel, however there is land in the south and east of the area which drains into either the Exe or Parrett catchments respectively. Each of the main three settlements have areas affected by a high risk of flooding either from local watercourses, or, in the case of Minehead, also from the sea.

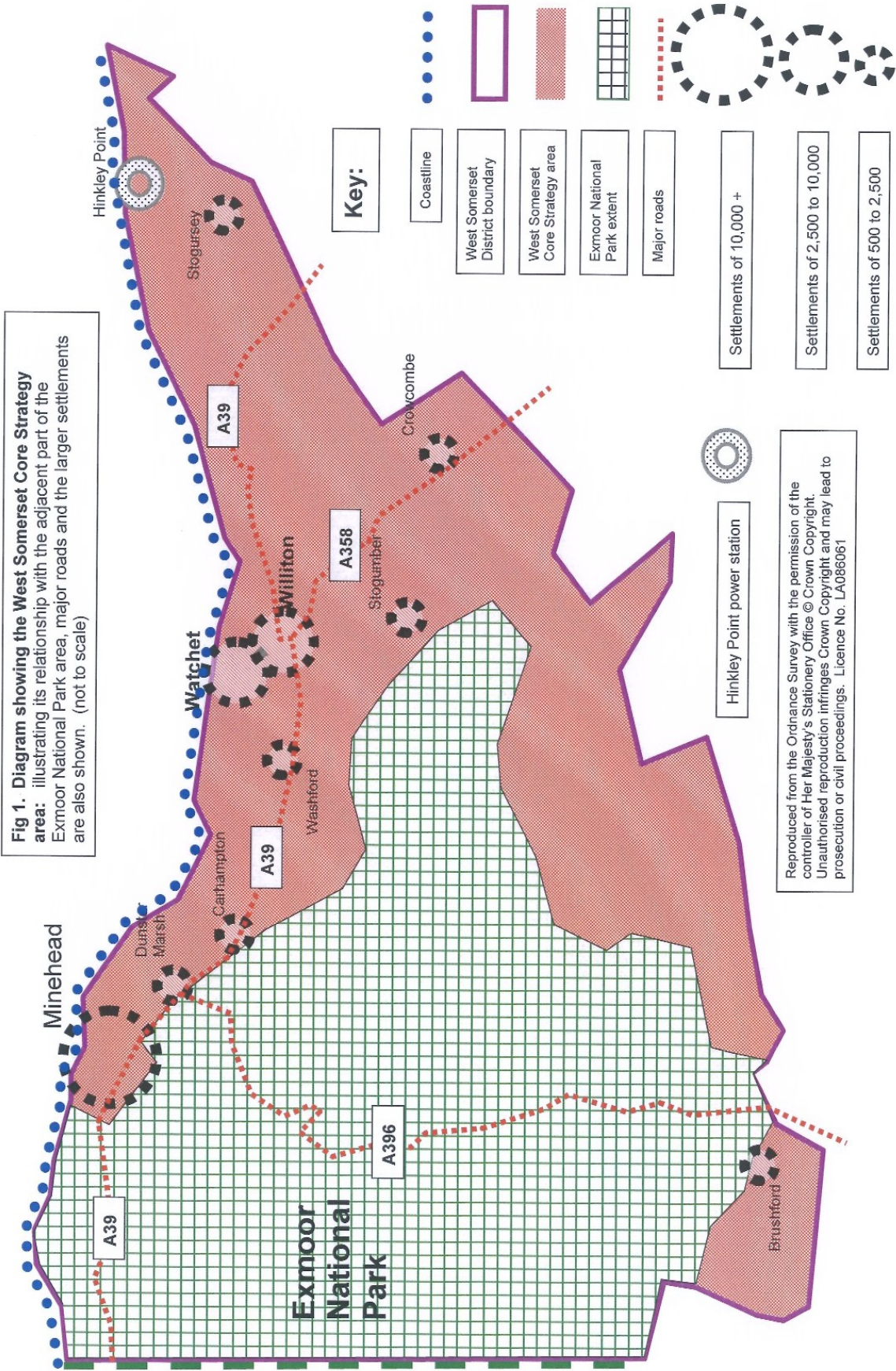
2.6 Landscape protection and biodiversity:

A substantial part of the Core Strategy area borders onto the Exmoor National Park, within which the landscape is subject to statutory protection. The part of the Quantock Hills within the Core Strategy area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is also protected. There are a number of significant areas protected as Natura 2000 sites under the 1992 European Community Habitats Directive for their ecological value as well as nationally designated sites of special scientific interest.

2.7 Hinkley Point nuclear power station:

Hinkley Point nuclear power station lies within the eastern edge of the District, where there are currently proposals for the development of two new nuclear reactors. This would constitute the largest investment in the District for many years, and would involve the influx of a substantial workforce over a period of several years.

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3.0 Key Issues and Critical Issues:

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The following key issues have emerged from the following sources:

- views expressed in the initial issues community engagement exercise carried out during July and August 2009 (Some 330 individuals and stakeholders were contacted, a summary table of the responses received is attached at Appendix 3);
- research carried out for the LDF evidence base and;
- relevant government guidance.

(the issues have been grouped by theme but are not ranked in any particular order).

3.1 Housing and community:

- **The provision of significantly more affordable housing** - West Somerset has one of the greatest disparities between average house price and average earnings in the Country. In 2007 average house prices were £239,935,¹ which was 10.6 times the average salary of £22,700.² . The currently demonstrated need for affordable housing is well in excess of the total number of additional new dwellings required by the Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026.
- **Providing appropriate facilities, including housing, for the District's ageing population** – West Somerset has one of the highest proportions of elderly people in its population in the south west. In particular, the lack of a range of employment opportunities leads to the outmigration of a relatively high proportion of the 19 to 45 age group (Recent Government data has identified that the average age of the population in 2008, in West Somerset, at 52 is the highest of any local authority in England and the projections for the future suggest that it could reach an average of 60 by 2031.³). Projections suggest that the disproportionate number of older people in the population is likely to become more marked, giving rise to a need to ensure that an appropriate range of facilities is provided.
- **Improved provision of sport and recreation facilities** – The closure of the swimming pool in Minehead has highlighted a perception that there are insufficient sport and recreation facilities within the District.
- **Fuel poverty** – The dispersed settlement pattern of West Somerset, and the relative remoteness of many houses denies mains gas as a space heating and cooking fuel choice for a substantial proportion of the District's population. The reliance on electricity which this gives rise to means that heating and cooking is more expensive for the part of the population without access to mains gas.
- **Providing an appropriate level of facilities for young people** – This issue will be partially addressed by the implementation of the Minehead Eye project due to open in 2010.

3.2 Settlement hierarchy and development distribution:

- **Identifying the appropriate hierarchy of settlements within West Somerset in terms of their functions** – In order to fulfill the strategy of the RSS it will be necessary to identify the appropriate policy category which different settlements fall into depending on their respective functions as service and employment centres.
- **The need to increase the self containment of West Somerset settlements** – West Somerset's poor level of access to and from the national highway network via three relatively narrow and winding 'A' roads, one of which is further constrained by several low bridges makes the level of self containment achieved in its communities of particular importance.
- **Appropriate locations for new development** – A critical task for the Core Strategy is to make the difficult decisions about the location of strategic development proposals to fulfill the RSS strategy within the area. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, currently in preparation, will help in the choice of the most appropriate site allocations to support the implementation of the preferred spatial strategy.

¹ Housing Vision; Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula; op. cit.

² Office for National Statistics; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2007; Office for National Statistics; 2007; (dataset)

³ Office for National Statistics; Ageing in the UK Table 11: Median Age of Population 1992 – 2031; ONS; 2009; (data-set)

3.3 Transport:

- **Increasing the proportion of non-private car travel within the District** – In order to improve health (through increased cycling and walking) and also to increase the viability of public transport within the District and to other places. This will be a real challenge in an area where because of the dispersed population and relative inaccessibility, private transport is an almost essential requirement for some communities.
- **Improving accessibility to and from West Somerset** – see the 'increasing self containment' points above.

3.4 Employment / Business / Tourism:

- **Promoting tourism and in particular more sustainable tourism** – Tourism is a vital part of the West Somerset economy, its encouragement will form an important part of the Core strategy's approach. As part of the Council's carbon footprint reduction strategy it is important to encourage tourism development where visitor use of the private car for transport can be minimised once they have arrived in the area.
- **Increasing the amount of, and broadening the variety of employment opportunities within the District, particularly the knowledge based, high income sector** – the limited choice (and predominantly low wages) of employment opportunities within the District is a major cause of the 19 to 45 year old age groups' tendency to leave the area to seek work elsewhere. The three largest employment sectors in West Somerset, agriculture, tourism and social care are generally low skilled and paid.
- **Continuing to encourage appropriate training and educational opportunities locally** – much has already been achieved with local training initiatives, however more action can be usefully taken in order to continue delivery in this essential area.
- **The importance of the agricultural industry to the area and its contribution to sustainable food production** – the agricultural sector is an essential part of the local economy, and has potential to help deliver more food for use in the West Somerset area.
- **The need to retain more young people within the community (19 to 45 age group particularly)** – see the item above concerning broadening the employment base.

3.5 Climate Change:

- **The management of flood risk** – Each of the three main settlements within the core strategy area have significant areas at high or medium risk of flooding either from rivers, in the case of Williton, or the sea as at Minehead, or in the case of Watchet, both. The consideration of options for strategic development allocations will necessitate work being carried out on a level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to address this issue.
- **The efficient use of water supplies** – in addressing climate change issues, it is important to ensure that water is used efficiently, therefore new development should take account of this issue insofar as is practical.
- **Encouraging the creation of a low / zero carbon economy** - the potential for equipping new development with combined heat and power units, and the encouragement of new enterprises based on renewable fuel sources for example should be encouraged. The Core Strategy is about planning future development in locations where people will have the opportunity to live, work and play in the same area.
- **Mitigating the effects of climate change** – Climate change will alter the way we design development due to the requirements placed upon it by changes such as: more severe storms, more drought, hotter summers and a greater risk of flooding. Many design approaches have already been developed in order to reduce the impact of these effects, their use should be encouraged.

3.6 Historic and Natural Heritage protection:

- **Protecting the landscape and built heritage of West Somerset** – West Somerset has a wide variety of important historic landscape features and historic buildings. Their protection whilst accommodating the planned growth will be of great importance.
- **Protection of the environment** – in particular the nationally and internationally designated areas on the Quantock Hills, and the foreshore in the eastern part of the District.

- **Protecting and strengthening biodiversity within the District** – by the increased linkage of existing areas and creation of new areas of high quality habitat to facilitate the free movement of species in response to climate change.

3.7 Other key issues:

- **Co-ordinating policy development with the Exmoor National Park Authority** – a significant number of the District's parishes, and several settlements lie partly within the National Park and partly outside it. A co-ordinated approach will be necessary in order to plan for the future of this National Park boundary area.
- **The impact of the Hinkley Point nuclear power station proposals** – it is anticipated that as part of the forthcoming National Policy Statement on nuclear power a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point will be required. EDF is developing such a proposal at present. Implementation of such a scheme will have a significant impact upon the District in terms of additional housing required to house those working on the project, and also the traffic to and from the site.

3.8 The Critical Issues

These are the challenges which really stand out, the successful management of which provides the key to addressing many of the other key issues and enabling positive place shaping to take place within the Core Strategy area. This is the purpose for preparing a Core Strategy. The Critical Issues are:

1. **The extreme degree of disparity between average house prices and average earnings, with consequent high level of unmet affordable housing need**
2. **The requirement to provide 2,500 dwellings during the period 2006 to 2026.**
3. **The demographic imbalance in the area, with its low proportion of 19 – 45 year olds, and high proportion of 50+ age group**
4. **The narrow base of the economy, and the predominance of low income jobs in agriculture, tourism and social care**
5. **The relatively poor level of accessibility between the West Somerset communities and the M5 corridor**
6. **The need to reduce the relatively high per capita level of CO₂ production within West Somerset**
7. **Management of flood risk in and around the main settlements**
8. **The importance of protecting the West Somerset landscape.**

These critical issues are also the driving force for the themes and objectives of the County and District Sustainable Community Strategies and the Council's Corporate Plan objectives set out in section 4.0 below.

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4.0 Different Strategy visions for the West Somerset District Core Strategy area:

The Core Strategy will set out the overall spatial vision for the area, but it must take account of (and help to implement) a number of other relevant strategies with their respective visions for the area. These are:

4.1 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (RSS)

There is a statutory requirement for the Core Strategy to implement the strategy for West Somerset set out in the Government's Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West. This document, which will form the strategic part of the statutory development plan for the area once it is finalised, is currently at an advanced stage of preparation. Its provisions for West Somerset are as follows:

- The RSS treats West Somerset as part of the Taunton Housing Market Area, being identified as part of the rural hinterland surrounding the main corridor of development activity along the M5 motorway and including Taunton and Bridgwater.
- The Core Strategy must provide for some 2,500 dwellings, 4 residential Gypsy pitches and 5 hectares of additional employment land during the period 2009 to 2026.
- Two directly relevant policies are included in the RSS: development at Market and Coastal towns (Development policy B) and development at "Small towns and villages" (Development Policy C). Their principal thrust is to maintain and enhance the existing service provision role of such settlements and at the same time to increase their level of self containment.

4.2 "*Somerset a Landscape for the Future*"⁴ - the Sustainable Community Strategy for Somerset 2008 – 2026.

This document is prepared by the Somerset Strategic Partnership, which includes the Somerset local authorities as well as police, fire service, health service, education, business and voluntary sector representatives. It sets out a vision for improving the quality of life for local people in Somerset and proposes a series of actions in response to six broad aims:

- Aim 1 - Making a positive contribution :
 - strengthen the leadership given by councils and partners through closer working together and engage local people and communities in decision making
 - Widening and strengthening the involvement of local people in their communities
- Aim 2 – Living sustainably :
 - Prepare for and respond to the impact on Somerset of climate change.
 - Increase peoples' quality of life through the use of Somerset's environment, nature and heritage.
 - Make Somerset a more affordable place for people to live
 - Encourage communities to be more self-sufficient and united
- Aim 3 – Ensuring economic wellbeing :
 - Broaden and strengthen the local economy
 - Plan for new sustainable communities to be built in Somerset
 - Invest in the Somerset workforce
- Aim 4 – Enjoying and achieving :
 - Raise achievement and fulfil aspirations
 - Tackle disengagement from learning
 - Promote lifelong learning and cultural opportunities
 - Promote independent living
- Aim 5 – Staying safe :
 - Community Safety
 - Mutual respect and understanding
 - Road safety
 - Domestic abuse

⁴ [*Somerset a Landscape for the Future*](#)

- Aim 6 – Being healthy :
 - Reduce health inequalities
 - Tackle high risk health issues

There is a West Somerset specific section to the document which states that:

- Two thirds of the area is covered by the Exmoor National Park with Dunkery Beacon, the highest point in Somerset, at its centre. The Quantocks AONB sits within the Eastern boundary of the district.
- There are many ancient and historic sites including Watchet, Kilve, Dunster Castle and the famous West Somerset Steam Railway running from Bishops Lydeard to Minehead. The district is famous for its connections with Samuel Taylor Coleridge who lived in Watchet and who is commemorated by the Coleridge Way.
- 30% of all employment in West Somerset is in tourism with Butlins in Minehead and many holiday caravan sites lining the Severn estuary coast to the north.
- Over 30% of the population is over 65 but life expectancy is high.

Key issues for West Somerset are identified as follows:

- Ensuring adequate affordable housing.
- Having regular and fast public transport to other major towns in the area for students, working people and major cultural events.
- Encouraging economic development that supports employment with decent pay and training.
- Reducing vandalism, bullying and other crime. Dealing with the fear of crime.
- Conserving the environment.

4.3 Somerset Local Area Agreement⁵ priorities:

The Local Area Agreement sets out the delivery strategy for “*Somerset – a landscape for the future*” it includes a detailed set of indicators baselines and targets which guide and monitor the implementation of the strategy over a series of three year periods. The current LAA runs from 2008 to 2011.

4.4 The West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 to 2010, prepared by the West Somerset Strategic Partnership, sets out the following vision for West Somerset:

Vision - Our vision for 2020 is that West Somerset is:

- Prosperous
- Welcoming
- Strong
- Balanced
- Self-sufficient

Our economic vision: a prosperous West Somerset

By 2020 there will be a thriving local economy in West Somerset. People will be able to work close to where they live. The economy will benefit from creative and knowledge-based industries, which don't rely on high levels of commuting. People will be suitably skilled to work in these industries and will have access to continuing training to update their skills. As a result they will be well paid.

Our social vision: a welcoming, strong and balanced community

⁵ [Somerset Local Area Agreement](#)

By 2020 West Somerset will provide enough opportunities for young people to stay in the district after their education. The population will primarily consist of older people, but everyone who lives in the district will feel safe and accepted as part of the local community.

Our environmental vision: an increasingly self-sufficient West Somerset

By 2020 West Somerset will be noted for its rapid progress in introducing a low-carbon economy minimising damaging emissions. The economy will be thriving because of the new business opportunities this will have created. Businesses and individuals will have learned how to minimise their impact on the environment. The district will produce more of its own food and generate its energy locally. There will be sufficient affordable housing available for people in West Somerset. People will live in energy efficient housing and have a much lower impact on the planet's resources (ecological footprints). They will appreciate the benefits of the local region and reduce travel to elsewhere. Towns will be safe and the environment will be well managed to minimise the use of resources and reduce the impacts of climate change.

4.5 The West Somerset Council Corporate Plan 2009 - 2012

This sets out the vision guiding the Council:

"To be a high performing Council that is working in partnership with both private and public sector organisations to establish a good quality of life for all residents in West Somerset."

External Corporate Priorities and Principal Objectives:

- **Economic development including tourism:**

"To promote and strengthen the local economy of West Somerset through imaginative use of available funding streams and opportunities for partnership working".

Specific objectives are to:

- Develop and implement a tourism strategy for West Somerset that maximises the economic benefits of tourism
- Develop strategies to maximise the impact and benefit to the community of external funding streams (SNF, LARC).
- Facilitate the regeneration of key areas and communities
- Encourage and facilitate business growth in West Somerset

- **Housing:**

"To provide better access and availability of housing that fits the diverse needs of local people."

Specific objectives are to:

- Make general housing service improvements
- Enable housing that better meets the needs of local people
- Improve the quality of private sector housing
- Improve access to housing for local people that meets diverse needs

- **Community:**

"To improve the health and well being of local people through promoting a healthier lifestyle and improving access and availability of leisure facilities for the community."

Specific objectives are to:

- Work with partners to develop a leisure strategy for West Somerset
- Increase community facilities for young people
- Support the provision of arts in West Somerset
- Carry out service reviews

- **The Environment:**

"To protect the natural environment of West Somerset and encourage local people to play their part in environmental sustainability and waste management and reducing Co₂ emissions."

Specific objectives are to:

- Protect the natural environment of West Somerset

- Facilitate the delivery of the Climate Change Strategy
 - Improve waste collection and disposal performance and arrangements
 - Promote more sustainable planning policies and building techniques.
- **Internal Corporate Priorities and Principal Objective:**
“A slimmer more focussed Council where councillors and officers work effectively together with partners for the benefit of West Somerset within the context of national and regional priorities; legislation; targets and inspection. To improve the quality of life for the community.”

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5.0 The Core Strategy's Spatial Vision for the District:

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5.1 As stated in section 4.0, the starting point for the Core Strategy's spatial vision is a series of 'givens' based on national / regional policies and taking account of the County and District sustainable community strategies. In particular it must address the critical issues identified at paragraph 4.8. Whatever else it includes, the Core Strategy must provide effective planning policies and proposals to achieve the following outcomes:

- To provide 2,500 homes to be completed between 2006 and 2026 to meet the housing needs of West Somerset District (outside the Exmoor National Park)
- Support for and improvement of the economic and community vitality of Minehead, Watchet and Williton, the District's three main settlements, and retention / improvement of facilities in its rural settlements
- The risk of flooding to new and existing development will be minimised
- A significant amount of additional affordable housing will be delivered
- An additional 5 hectares of employment land will be provided within the District
- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity within the Core Strategy area
- Development will be of an increasingly high quality
- The use of low carbon / zero carbon principles in development will be more common
- The level of self containment in the main settlements will be greater
- An appropriate pattern / distribution of development types in the various settlements will be identified dependent on their functions.
- Overall accessibility to and within West Somerset will be improved
- Substantial contributions will have been made towards meeting the aims and objectives of the County and West Somerset SCSs and the West Somerset Corporate Plan.

5.2 The essential Core Strategy elements (PPS12 para 4.1) are set out in paragraphs 5.2.1 to 5.2.4:

5.2.1 The Spatial Vision for the Core Strategy showing how the area and the places in it should develop:

- **ECONOMY** - By 2026 Minehead, Watchet, Williton, Brushford and Dulverton will be the centres of a thriving and increasingly varied local economy within West Somerset, which will enable more people to work close to their homes. People will have the skills to enable them to work and thrive in this more diverse economy. The tourism industry will also have diversified with a wider range of sustainable enterprises.
- **HOUSING** – By 2026 there will have been a significant increase in the amount of affordable housing provided in the area. More people will be able to afford housing which is appropriate to their circumstances. New housing development will be located in locations which will help to secure a reduction in transport demand and more self contained settlements. 2,500 additional houses will have been provided in accordance with the provisions of the South West RSS.
- **ENVIRONMENT** – By 2026 there will be a marked increase in the low carbon economy locally. Biodiversity will have been strengthened and flood risk will have been managed positively in accommodating new development. More of the District's food supply will be produced locally.

5.2.2 Strategic objectives for the area based on the key issues identified:

- Strengthen the role and function of the District's main settlements
- Implement types and quantities of development in locations appropriate to meet the RSS requirements
- Increase self containment within the District's main settlements
- successfully managing flood risk in implementing new development
- Make a step change in the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local needs
- Make a significant reduction in Co₂ emissions for the District
- Create an aspirational, enterprising and entrepreneurial culture within West Somerset
- develop the quality of the tourism offer within the District
- protect and enhance biodiversity in the District
- Conserve and enhance the character of historic settlements, buildings and landscapes
- Deliver high quality design in new development which will contribute to the area's heritage in a positive way

5.2.3 A delivery strategy for achieving these objectives demonstrating how much development is proposed, where, when and how it will be delivered:

This section will be developed as the options are refined and specific proposals emerge.

5.2.4 Clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy.

This section will be added as the strategy evolves and becomes more specific. The Local Area Agreement indicators will be an important part of the monitoring process.

5.3 Developing options for the overarching settlement and development strategy.

The process of developing the Core Strategy's policies and proposals must include the testing of a range of realistic overall strategy options against the Council's published Sustainability Objectives. Three such options have been identified, these are illustrated by diagrams which show the general disposition of development proposed. Two other potential options have been identified which, it is considered, would clearly fail to satisfy the relevant Sustainability Objectives. These are set out at Appendix 1 with reasons for their rejection.

5.4 Strategy Option 1 : Concentrate new development at three main settlements (see fig. 2)

The first option is to concentrate most new development at the main settlements of Minehead, Watchet and Williton, with the largest allocation(s) being at Minehead. This would be done in such a way as to strengthen their function as service and community centres, supporting their vitality and level of self containment.

Implications for Minehead -

Minehead is the main service centre for West Somerset and neighbouring parts of North Devon. It offers a good range of retail, employment, education, health, recreation and tourism facilities for a settlement of its size. The proximity of larger centres in the M5 corridor, such as Taunton and Bridgwater serves to threaten the good degree of self containment which Minehead has at present. It is therefore important to strengthen the Minehead economy, so that the level of service provision is sufficiently attractive to local inhabitants to deter longer distance commuting, shopping and entertainment trips in particular.

Minehead is also the main employment centre in the District, with the greatest potential for use of modes of transport other than the private car. This strategy option would help to maximise the likelihood of investment in public transport which can strengthen this characteristic, and also the incidence of walking and cycling journeys. There would be a consequent reduction in the need for additional car parking spaces in the town compared with more dispersed strategy options.

Initial indications from the SHLAA call for sites indicate that potential exists in and adjacent to Minehead to accommodate at least half of the remaining c.2000 dwellings for which the Core Strategy needs to provide sites (this is subject to more detailed assessment of the sites).

Implications for Watchet and Williton:

The functions of Watchet and Williton as important local service centres under would be strengthened by the allocation of some strategic mixed development sites at a scale involving a combined total of upwards of 1000 dwellings for the two settlements. The impact upon self containment would be less than for Minehead but would still be of benefit, particularly in the encouragement of walking, cycling and public transport.

Implications for other settlements within the Core Strategy area:

Development within the smaller settlements in the Core Strategy area would be limited to affordable housing development on rural exceptions sites – ie: on sites where development would not normally be permitted, subject to the demonstration of a local housing need, where rented accommodation the involvement of a Registered Social Landlord and also the support of the local parish council.

This approach would require policies which would:

- Allocate strategic development sites at Minehead, Watchet and Williton, and identify the necessary infrastructure for its delivery including responsibility and an indication of cost.
- Enhance provisions for walking, cycling and public transport serving the new development proposed
- Include effective Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) for managing surface water run-off and green infrastructure provision.
- Make provision to strengthen the local economy in these settlements.

5.5 Strategy Option 2 : Concentrate new development at four main settlements – including the upgrading of Stogursey to a ‘Policy C’ (or Local Service Centre) settlement (see fig. 3)

A variation of option 1 which, in addition, enhances Stogursey’s function to that of an RSS policy C settlement (like Watchet and Williton) to serve the part of the District to the east of the Quantocks – this option would respond to the likely strategic impact of the proposed Hinkley Point power station development on surrounding communities.

Implications for Minehead -

As for Strategy Option 1.

Implications for Watchet, Williton and Stogursey:

Similar to Strategy Option 1, however the c1000 dwellings would be distributed between three settlements rather than two. Provision for Stogursey, which would be the smallest of the three, might be in the 200 to 300 dwelling range. Stogursey lies close to the Hinkley Point nuclear power station, for which a scheme involving the construction of two new nuclear reactors is proposed. This will involve a workforce of all types (permanent operational staff and temporary construction workforce) peaking at c.6000 during construction which will take place over about eight years. Whether or not the settlement seeks change or not, there will be significant impacts from traffic (despite park and ride proposals as part of a green travel plan for the project) and there will also be commercial opportunities. The community could seek to manage this situation to its minimum disadvantage and maximum advantage by embracing the sensitive expansion of the village and its existing facilities.

Implications for other settlements within the Core Strategy area:

As for Strategy Option 1.

This approach would require policies which would:

- Allocate strategic development sites at Minehead, Watchet, Williton and Stogursey and identify the necessary infrastructure for its delivery including responsibility and an indication of cost.
- Enhance provisions for walking, cycling and public transport serving the new development proposed
- Include effective SUDS and green infrastructure provision.
- Make provision to strengthen the local economy in these settlements, and in the case of Stogursey, to mitigate the impact of the Hinkley Point power station project.

5.6 Strategy Option 3: - Dispersal of development including allocations at the larger villages (see fig. 4)

A more dispersed pattern of development, which would still provide for the majority of population growth at the larger settlements (but at a somewhat lower level than for Strategy Options 1 and 2). This option would also allocate housing sites at the larger villages of at least 500 population, which have a basic level of community facilities e.g. primary school, convenience store, village hall and public house.

Implications for Minehead -

This Strategy Option would not maximise the economic and social benefit which development as proposed in the first two options would bring to Minehead. However, some benefit would still accrue. One disadvantage would be that the more dispersed pattern of development would increase the average unit cost of servicing the additional dwellings provided with infrastructure etc.

The incidence of walking and cycling journeys would not be encouraged to such a great degree as for the first two options, private car journeys however would increase.

Implications for Watchet and Williton:

The functions of Watchet and Williton as important local service centres would still be strengthened by the allocation of some strategic mixed development sites, but to a lesser degree than in the first two options.

Implications for other settlements within the Core Strategy area:

A modest level of development allocated within the larger villages of at least 500 population (subject to detailed assessment for their suitability) would give rise to an increase in their population which might help to secure existing services and facilities within them. Historically, increased village development has sometimes failed to secure the continued existence of community services and facilities, leaving a larger population having to travel – usually by private car – to access alternative provision in other settlements.

Within the smaller villages in the Core Strategy area, development would be limited to affordable housing development on rural exceptions sites – ie: on sites where development would not normally be permitted, subject to the demonstration of a local housing need, where rented accommodation the involvement of a Registered Social Landlord and also the support of the local parish council.

This approach would be more challenging in terms of encouraging the use of modes of transport other than the private car, it would also give rise to a greater level of transport demand than that for options 1 and 2.

This approach would require policies which would:

- Allocate smaller (than for options 1 and 2) strategic development sites at Minehead, Watchet and Williton, and identify the necessary infrastructure for its delivery including responsibility and an indication of cost.
- Allocate development sites within a range of larger villages with good levels of local service provision and having populations of at least 500.
- Enhance provisions for walking, cycling and public transport serving the new development proposed
- Include effective SUDS and green infrastructure provision.
- Make provision to strengthen the local economy in these settlements.

5.7 How sustainable are these approaches?

Option 1 – maximises the potential for self containment of the largest three settlements within the District, and minimises additional transport demand by locating most of the new development close to the location of the existing facilities within the area which residents will need to visit frequently. Making the largest allocation at Minehead, the largest settlement with the widest range of facilities maximises these effects. Against this, trips to facilities which do not exist within the District tend to be longer for residents in Minehead than they are for residents closer to Taunton or Bridgwater. Of the options identified this is probably the most sustainable.

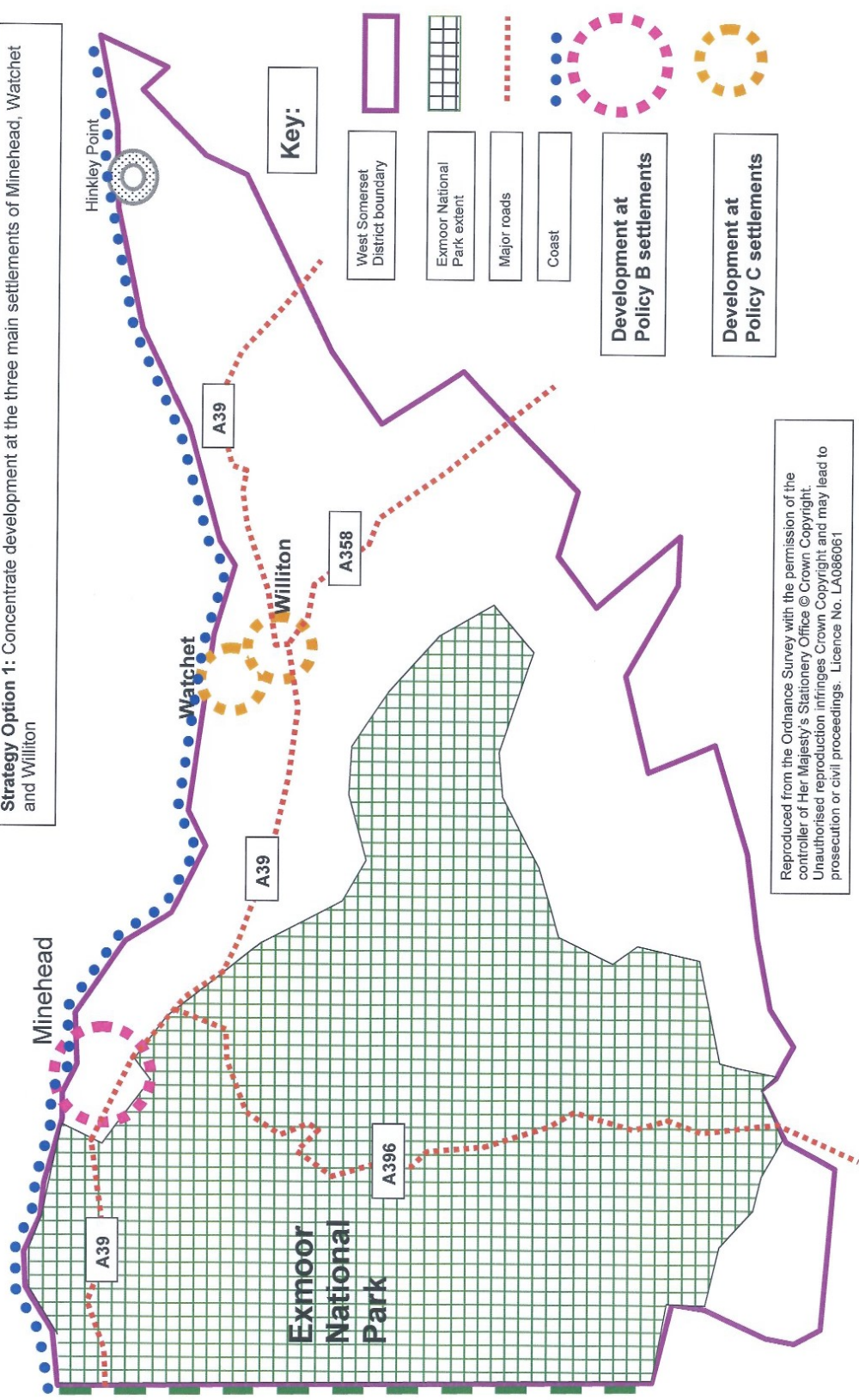
Option 2 – is similar to option 1, but with Stogursey included as an additional local service centre. Whilst this option has a similar degree of sustainability to the first option, it is balanced differently. The sustainability benefits of focussing new development in the main settlements is somewhat diluted, however, the potential to

mitigate some of the transport impact of the Hinkley Point nuclear power station proposals and to potentially provide an improved level of local services for the communities east of the Quantocks is achieved.

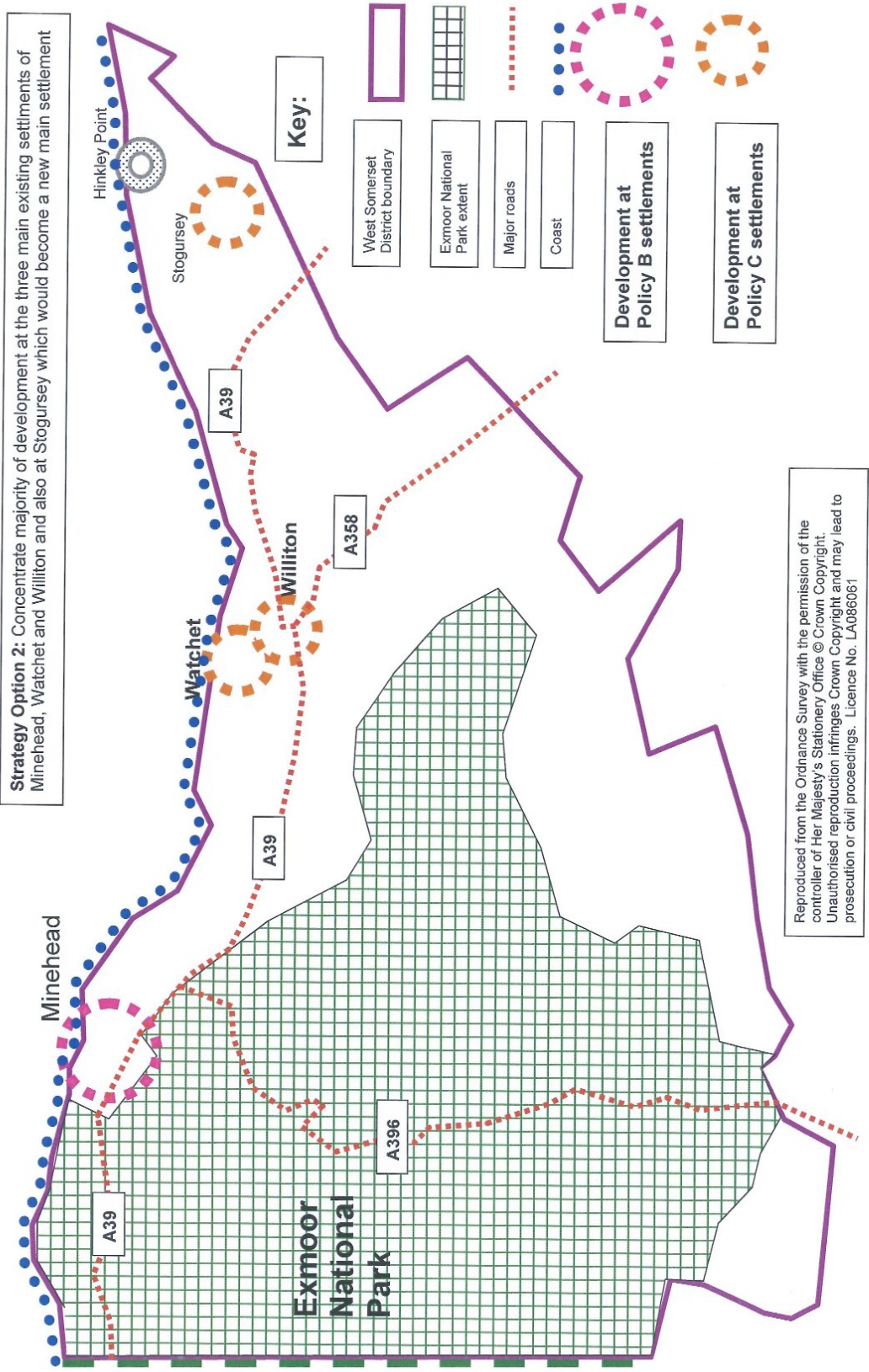
Option 3 – is less sustainable than either of the first two options because the potential reduction in transport demand is diminished, and the people dispersed to the larger villages will have to travel further, most probably by private car, to access frequently used services. Against this, there would be an increase in population at a limited range of larger villages, some of which lack the most basic level of convenience store. Of the seven larger villages within the Core Strategy area Carhampton, Crowcombe, Stogumber, Brushford and Stogursey currently have a local shop.

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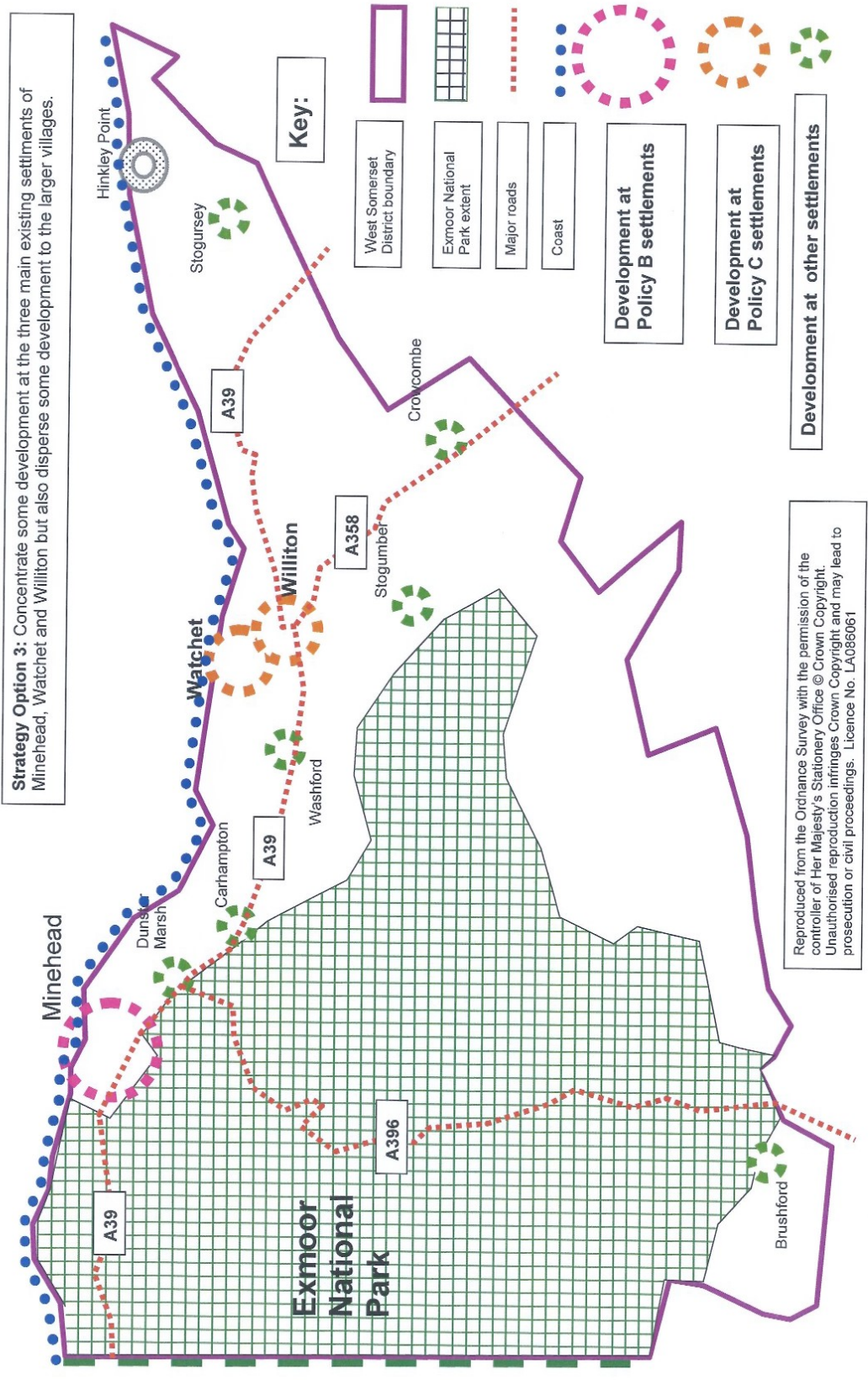
Strategy Option 1: Concentrate development at the three main settlements of Minehead, Watchet and Williton



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6.0 Key Themes including objectives and potential policy options.

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The three Strategic development options set out in section 5.0 above explore choices about the overall strategy which could be used to meet the needs of the community over the period to 2026. This section sets out the other matters for which the Core Strategy will need to provide policy guidance in order to deliver the Spatial Vision for the area and the Strategic Objectives.

6.1 Settlement policy:

Settlement role and function hierarchy

Key Issues:

- RSS development policies B and C
- Strategic housing allocations
- Infrastructure delivery plan
- Developer contributions

Objectives:

To address these issues, we think the Core Strategy should:

- Identify the role and function of the District's main settlements
- Set out the development locations, types and quantities appropriate to meet the RSS requirements
- Set out the infrastructure required to support this development

Options:

To achieve these objectives, the Core Strategy could have the following types of policy:

- a) An overarching development strategy as set out in section 5.0 above.
- b) Policies to indicate the appropriate mix of development in order to maximise self containment of settlements
- c) There should be an Infrastructure Delivery Plan setting out the necessary infrastructure to inform developer contributions

6.2 Transport:

Making West Somerset's communities more self contained

Key issues:

- The need to enhance access to local facilities by a choice of modes of transport
- Improving access to rural communities by public transport
- The need to increase the proportion of walking journeys
- The need to increase the proportion of Cycling journeys
- Reducing transport demand / the overall cost of transport
- Access to the national road network and sub-regional centres to the west
- The provision of a distribution and mix of land uses which minimises transport demand

Objectives:

To address these issues, we think the Core Strategy should:

- Create communities where walking and cycling is made safe and attractive
- Create a network of cycling and walking routes serving the main settlements in the District
- Create a more responsive network of public transport services within the District
- Secure necessary local highway improvements to enable strategic development to take place
- Improve access between West Somerset and the national transport network
- Reduce transport demand by increasing self containment within the District's main settlements

Options:

To achieve these objectives, the Core Strategy could have the following types of policy:

- a) Reduce the threshold for travel plans to require them for medium sized as well as large development
- b) Require contributions from new development to improve cycling and walking infrastructure
- c) Locate new developments likely to give rise to significant numbers of trips in locations which are served by a range of modes of transport.
- d) Explore the opportunity offered by the West Somerset Railway to connect sites within the District to the national rail network for freight traffic.
- e) Examine the potential for a commuter train service to be offered using the West Somerset Railway.
- f) Any new major development to be of an appropriate mix of uses and facilities to offer the opportunity to reduce transport demand.

- g) Proposals to deliver a relief road between the junction of Long Street and Fore Street in Williton, with the A39 to the west of the village as part of a traffic management and development package for the village centre.

6.3 Housing:

Meeting the communities' needs for housing by providing better access and availability of housing that fits the diverse needs of local people.

Key Issues:

- o RSS housing requirement of 2,500 dwellings
- o The need to improve the balance of the housing market
- o Increased affordable housing delivery is urgently needed
- o The unmet need for affordable housing exceptions sites in villages
- o Lifetime homes / increased independent living opportunities / personalisation
- o Nursing, independent living / warden supervised and residential accommodation
- o The need for more lower priced open market housing with 2 or 3 bedrooms
- o Gypsy and Traveller accommodation
- o Protection of a high quality environment

Objectives:

To address these issues, we think the Core Strategy should aim to:

- o Deliver sites to meet the RSS housing requirement by 2026
- o Improve the balance of the housing stock within the Core Strategy area
- o Housing should be provided in sustainable locations
- o Flood risk should be managed effectively in delivering new housing sites
- o Provide 35% of housing as affordable housing to meet identified local needs overall
- o Ensuring that new development is of high quality design

Options:

To achieve these objectives, the Core Strategy could have the following types of policy:

- a) Allocations for housing should be compliant with the RSS strategy
- b) Policies for housing should target the strengthening of existing service centres and potentially the creation of one or more new service centres
- c) Policies to encourage the provision of a wider range of housing opportunities for the elderly emphasising the potential for independent living, but with residential or nursing care also provided for.
- d) Policies to provide for an appropriate mix of land uses and house types and sizes.
- e) Policies to deliver an overall 35% of housing as affordable housing to meet identified local needs
- f) Rural settlements (other than identified service centres) should not have development boundaries
- g) Policies to ensure that high quality design is a guiding principle of development proposals

6.4 Climate Change:

Mitigating the effects of Climate change –

West Somerset's per capita Co₂ emission level (11.4 tonnes per person) is significantly higher than the regional and national average levels (8.9 and 9.3 tonnes per person respectively). This situation must be seen in the context of a dispersed population and limited alternative transport options.

Key Issues:

- o Flood risk management (including coastal management) – the three main settlements within the Core Strategy area all have significant areas at high and medium risk of flooding
- o The high per capita Co₂ emission level within the District
- o The need for low / zero carbon development / economic development (eg: government target of all new housing development to be zero carbon / code level 6 from 2016)
- o More renewable energy generation is needed
- o Affordable energy

Objectives:

To address these issues, we think the Core Strategy should aim to:

- o Help to achieve a 20% reduction in Co₂ emissions for the District
- o Promote the generation of renewable energy
- o Increase tree cover within the District by 10%
- o Reduce the risk of flooding through new development
- o Move rapidly towards minimal carbon housing development by 2016

- Future proof to help improve local self sufficiency in water, energy and food supply.

Options:

To achieve these objectives, the Core Strategy could have the following types of policy:

- Require that at least 20% of energy used at all new developments should come from local renewable resources
- Encourage the provision of combined heat and power systems in new development
- The encouragement of the development of wood fuel production and consumption using modern efficient heating systems
- Require new development to incorporate measures to mitigate against flood risk and manage surface water runoff through appropriate use of SUDS (sustainable drainage systems)
- A policy to encourage rapid move towards zero carbon development by 2016
- Encouragement for rainwater harvesting
- Making provision for new allotments to facilitate the growing of food close to the point of consumption
- Locate new employment provision close to housing to maximise opportunities for walking and cycling
- Require a tree planting contribution from new development as a carbon off-setting measure
- Engage in positive management of the coastal zone in relation to the emerging Shoreline Management Plan's proposals

6.5 Economy:

Strengthening and broadening the local economy –

(WSSCS - by 2020 a thriving local economy, people working closer to where they live, more creative and knowledge based businesses, suitable skills and training provided, higher wages, more opportunities for young people to stay and work in West Somerset.)

Key issues:

- The need for a new economic equilibrium based on increasing quality and sustainability
- Allocating additional employment land for appropriate types of premises
- Encouragement of low carbon economy
- Retail provision – Minehead, Watchet, Williton – also in a small number of villages
- Tourism development
- Continuing support for training
- More local food production / consumption
- Better balance needed in the type of land and accommodation available for businesses

Objectives:

To address these issues, we think the Core Strategy should aim to:

- stimulate an aspirational, enterprising and entrepreneurial culture within West Somerset
- create a network of sustainable rural enterprise hubs to foster business growth across the District
- find imaginative and sustainable transport solutions, particularly in relation to Taunton and Bridgwater
- ensure that the built environment of the District's principal settlements is of a quality that will attract private sector investment
- develop the quality of the tourism offer within the District
- encourage the growth of small high value economic sectors
- encourage business start-up and growth through the provision of appropriate workspaces
- strengthen the local production and consumption of food

Options:

To achieve these objectives, the Core Strategy could have the following types of policy:

- A policy to support the provision of enterprise development in the rural parts of the District, where they are within or adjacent to settlements and preferably make use of vacant or underused buildings
- A policy supporting the creation of a rural enterprise network
- A policy supporting the development of the local wood fuel supply chain including installation and servicing of wood fuel heating systems
- Policy support for the provision of low priced starter accommodation for businesses which have outgrown their homeworking stage
- Encouragement for sustainable tourism development
- Support for additional hotel accommodation within the District
- An enabling policy for a new jetty at Minehead
- A policy requiring the production of a regeneration based masterplan for Minehead
- Policies supporting the regeneration and economic development of Watchet and Williton
- A policy supporting the health of retail provision in the major centres

- k) A policy encouraging the development of the local food supply chain
- l) Encouragement for the provision of improved infrastructure including broadband services.

6.6 Biodiversity:

Protecting and enhancing biodiversity –

Key issues:

- o Protecting the nationally and internationally designated nature conservation sites within the District
- o Protecting biodiversity against any adverse impact of development
- o Enhancing biodiversity
- o Improving peoples' quality of life
- o The impact of climate change

Objectives:

To address these issues, we think the Core Strategy should aim to:

- o protect and enhance biodiversity
- o identify areas or sites for the restoration or creation of new priority habitats
- o mitigate the impact of climate change on the natural environment
- o Locate new development in such a way as to minimise impact upon nationally and internationally designated sites

Options:

To achieve these objectives, the Core Strategy could have the following types of policy:

- a) A policy to protect and enhance natural networks through developer contributions and the Nature Map
- b) Policies to encourage multifunctional Green Infrastructure and the creation of / improvement of access to the countryside.
- c) A policy to facilitate the implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plan objectives as part of landscaping schemes and habitat improvement schemes

6.7 Heritage:

Safeguarding and enhancing local distinctiveness

Key issues:

- o Protecting the built heritage
- o High quality design of development
- o Protecting historic landscapes
- o Protecting the coastal landscape

Objectives:

To address these issues, we think the Core Strategy should aim to:

- o Conserve and enhance the character of historic settlements and buildings
- o achieve high quality design in new development which will contribute to the area's heritage in a positive way
- o protect the coastline and other valued landscapes from the impacts of damaging development and land management

Options:

To achieve these objectives, the Core Strategy could have the following types of policy:

- a) policies which recognise the historic character of settlements where development will be focussed, and which will ensure that new development contributes positively to that character
- b) policies to manage the coastal zone in conjunction with the emerging Shoreline Management Plan

6.8 Other important issues:

Emerging Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Station Proposal.

This major development proposal, currently at pre-application stage, does not form part of the Regional Spatial Strategy's proposals. It is however anticipated that a proposal for a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point will be submitted to the Infrastructure Planning Commission in the context of a National Policy Statement on Nuclear Power yet to be published. If these proposals proceed to implementation, the construction phase of the project will have a significant impact upon the Core Strategy area. This would have to be managed in conjunction with the implementation of the Core Strategy's proposals.

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7.0 What Happens Next?

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- The policy options identified during this part of the Core Strategy process will be tested against the Sustainability Objectives set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Framework of May 2009 as amended following statutory consultation.
- This will compare the various options against each other in terms of the likely contribution towards the principles of sustainable development underpinning the spatial planning system.
- Further community and stakeholder involvement will be carried out as the outcomes of this testing process are produced, in particular, the identification of development sites for allocation will be progressed following publication of the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment anticipated early in 2010.
- Choices will then need to be made about the content of the Preferred Strategy to consult on during the Spring of 2010 in the light of the Sustainability Appraisal results.
- After this consultation, further engagement and consultation will take place to finalise the content of the Core Strategy in the light of the full Sustainability Appraisal report which will also be published, Habitat Regulations Assessment and, if necessary Appropriate Assessment, after which it will be formally published, and then be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for Examination by a Planning Inspector. The Inspector will assess the Core Strategy against the published tests of soundness following which an Inspector's report will be published containing the decision over whether the Core Strategy is sound or not, and including any necessary amendments to the document.

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Other potential options which have been considered, but which, it is considered, would clearly fail to satisfy the relevant Sustainability Objectives and so have not been put forward for more detailed testing.

Excluded option 1:

A strategy involving less development at the larger settlements, and a much wider degree of dispersal of development including the smaller settlements including those with few, or no facilities.

Reasons:

- This would result in a much greater degree of private car use than for strategy options with significantly more emphasis on development at the larger settlements.
- It would also reduce the potential for supporting a range of alternative modes of transport for journeys made by inhabitants.
- Servicing and infrastructure costs for such a dispersed pattern of development would also be substantially more expensive than that needed to serve a more concentrated pattern of development.

Excluded option 2:

A strategy involving no significant development at Minehead, with substantial development being focussed elsewhere in the District closer to the M5 corridor.

Reasons:

- Minehead is the main service centre for the District. If it is to continue to serve as a vital and viable economic and social centre it must have the opportunity for some growth to maintain and strengthen this function.
- The Regional Spatial Strategy policy for market and coastal towns – Development Policy B – requires development at such locations which will help to secure their function as service centres and enhance their degree of self containment. Failure to allocate development at Minehead would render the Core Strategy in conflict with the emerging RSS.
- Alternative provision closer to the M5 would effectively involve the development of a new settlement in a remote rural location which would also be contrary to the strategy of the emerging RSS.

Excluded option 3:

A strategy involving the concentration of the bulk of the RSS requirement of 2,500 dwellings in a single eco village / new settlement.

Reasons:

- Such a strategy would be in direct conflict with the RSS strategy for the District. The emerging RSS does not contain any policy basis to support the provision of new settlements or eco villages anywhere within the South West Region.
- Notwithstanding this context, in terms of West Somerset's settlement pattern, transport network and landscape there is no location which would allow such a settlement to function with a sufficient degree of self containment to render it effective in reducing Co₂ emissions, or for its own service facilities to develop and thrive.
- Similarly, a free-standing new settlement of 2,500 dwellings would be of insufficient size to support a level of new service provision to give it a good level of self containment. Such a development would most probably function as a dormitory settlement serving to increase transport demand compared with a similar amount of development taking place in or adjacent to an existing service centre.

How The Core Strategy will address the County and District Sustainable Community Strategies and the West Somerset Corporate Priorities.

1. the Somerset County Sustainable Community Strategy:

The Core Strategy will respond to the Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy's aims as follows:

- Aim 1 – “Making a positive contribution” : The process of preparing the Core Strategy involves closer working together, engaging local people and communities in decision making, widening and strengthening their involvement.
- Aim 2 – “Living sustainably” : The Core Strategy will help to respond positively to the impact on Somerset of climate change. It will increase peoples' quality of life through the use of Somerset's environment, nature and heritage. It will also help to make Somerset a more affordable place for people to live.
- Aim 3 – “Ensuring economic wellbeing” : The Core Strategy will seek to broaden and strengthen the local economy. It will also encourage investment in the Somerset workforce via appropriate training etc.
- Aim 4 – “Enjoying and achieving” : The Core Strategy will seek to facilitate a greater degree of independent living.
- Aim 5 – “Staying safe” : The Core Strategy aims to encourage good design for new development which takes account of designing out crime principles.
- Aim 6 – “Being healthy” : The Core Strategy will encourage walking and cycling particularly for shorter journeys, which will help to improve the health of the population. It will also seek to improve provision of play, sport and recreation facilities within the District.

Somerset SCS Key issues for West Somerset:

- **Ensuring adequate affordable housing** – one of the Council's main corporate priorities which will be a key objective of the Core Strategy
- **Having regular and fast public transport to other major towns in the area for students, working people and major cultural events.** – whilst encouraging modal shift to non-car modes of transport, care must be taken not to damage the Core Strategy's role in encouraging more self containment within the District.
- **Encouraging economic development that supports employment with decent pay and training.** - one of the Council's main corporate priorities which will be a key objective of the Core Strategy
- **Reducing vandalism, bullying and other crime. Dealing with the fear of crime.** – the Core Strategy will contribute towards this key issue through the encouragement of designing out crime principles in new development.
- **Conserving the environment.** - one of the Council's main corporate priorities which will be a key objective of the Core Strategy

2. The West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy:

The Core Strategy will respond to the West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy's vision that by 2020 West Somerset will be: **Prosperous, Welcoming, Strong, Balanced and Self-sufficient** as follows:

The economic vision: a prosperous West Somerset - The Core Strategy will help to fulfill the economic vision through policies to broaden the economy, increase self containment of settlements and continue to support training initiatives.

The social vision: a welcoming, strong and balanced community - The Core Strategy will seek to bring about a situation in which a higher proportion of young adults will be able to, and will want to, live and work within West Somerset instead of moving to work elsewhere. It will also aim to secure the provision of appropriate services and facilities needed for West Somerset's substantial elderly population.

The environmental vision: an increasingly self-sufficient West Somerset - The Core Strategy will actively encourage the development of a low-carbon economy. It will also recognise the importance of local food production and energy efficient design of development. Increased self-containment will also be an important aim of the document.

3. The West Somerset Council Corporate Plan 2009 - 2012 : External Corporate Priorities:

Economic development including tourism:

"To promote and strengthen the local economy of West Somerset through imaginative use of available funding streams and opportunities for partnership working". - one of the Council's main corporate priorities, achieve a strengthening and broadening of the economy will be a key objective of the Core Strategy.

Housing:

"To provide better access and availability of housing that fits the diverse needs of local people." – one of the Council's main corporate priorities which will be a key objective of the Core Strategy.

Community:

"To improve the health and well being of local people through promoting a healthier lifestyle and improving access and availability of leisure facilities for the community." – It is an aim of the Core Strategy to improve access to recreational facilities and also walking and cycling facilities, all of which should improve the overall health of the population.

The Environment:

"To protect the natural environment of West Somerset and encourage local people to play their part in environmental sustainability and waste management and reducing Co₂ emissions." – Protection of the environment and enhancing biodiversity are a key objective of the Core Strategy.

Internal Corporate Priorities and Principal Objective:

"A slimmer more focussed Council where councillors and officers work effectively together with partners for the benefit of West Somerset within the context of national and regional priorities; legislation; targets and inspection. To improve the quality of life for the community." – The preparation of the Core Strategy involves engaging in a considerable amount of partnership, stakeholder and community involvement, in order to contribute positively to the shaping and future development of the District's settlements and landscape.

Summary table of West Somerset Core Strategy Reg 25 issues consultation responses - October 2009

It should be noted that the responses to this consultation exercise included much that went beyond the identification of issues, such material, suggesting potential options will be re-visited as part of the ongoing options development exercise.

Key issues have been extracted from the submissions made. In identifying these Key Issues, reference has also been made to the relevant themes and objectives from the County and District Sustainable Community Strategies and the Local Area Agreement.

The nature of the entries in the schedule varies with the nature of the material in the responses. The brevity or otherwise of a summary in no way reflects the importance attached to the issue identified.

No.	RESPONDENT	Issue ref.	Summaries of issues identified
1	Ministry of Defence – Defence Estates, Safeguarding	1/1	<u>Aerial safeguarding areas</u> Development which would affect the statutory safeguarding height zones for the Meteorological Office at Cobbacombe Cross should be constrained.
	Ministry of Defence – Defence Estates, Safeguarding	1/2	<u>Aerial safeguarding areas</u> The potential for windfarm development to interfere with MOD radar installations must be prevented. (MOD DE Safeguarding can advise on potential windfarm installations).
2	National Housing and Planning Advice Unit.	2/1	No specific input to make at this stage
3	Watchet Town Council		Submitted a copy of the Watchet 2025 strategy document as the Watchet Town Council response. It contains a wide range of issues identified by the group as affecting Watchet and a range of proposed actions in response to them. The content of the main report is more relevant as input to the option development stage of the Core Strategy. A series of issues identified in the SWOT analyses appended to the main report are set out below.
		3/1	<u>Development of key sites relating to the Watchet Marina Development</u> Including the East Wharf and Mineral Yard on the West Pier.
			Economic issues:
		3/2	Sparse population – lack of ‘critical mass’

		3/3	Remoteness – poor transport links and poor roads
		3/4	Underperforming economy
		3/5	Lack of diversity and higher income opportunities in the local employment market
		3/6	Over-reliance on the declining sectors of agriculture and tourism
		3/7	Provision for tourists is of patchy quality
		3/8	Unattractiveness to business investors
		3/9	High housing cost to average earnings ratio
		3/10	Lack of affordable premises for business / starter units
		3/11	Skill levels / skill shortages
		3/12	Lack of vocational training opportunities
		3/13	Low wage economy
			Cultural community issues:
		3/14	Green tourism facilities need developing
		3/15	Two towns in Watchet – the old town and the new town
		3/16	Poor housing
		3/17	Fuel poverty
		3/18	Weak skills base
		3/19	unemployment
		3/20	Lack of cultural venues
		3/21	An unwillingness to embrace tourism as a revenue generator
4	The Exmoor Society	4/1	Sensitivity of development adjacent to Exmoor National Park The Spatial Vision should include reference to the importance of West Somerset's landscapes including the setting of Exmoor National Park. ENP is of national importance and much of West Somerset outside the Park contributes to its setting. Developments close to the Park need to respect this. (Has West Somerset an up to date landscape character assessment)
		4/2	Remainder of West Somerset as service provider for ENP communities Exmoor looks to the part of West Somerset outside the Park for many of its socio-economic functions and services (particularly Minehead)
		4/3	Need for close co-operation between West Somerset and Exmoor National Park as neighbouring planning authorities in preparing Core Strategies West Somerset Council operates within the Exmoor National Park boundary as housing authority etc. There should therefore be close links between the two LDF plans. The ENP Authority has a narrower purpose in preparing its LDF concerned with conservation and enjoyment of Exmoor's special qualities.
5	Brompton Regis Parish Council	5/1	No specific comment.
6	Williton Parish Council		Submitted a copy of the Williton Parish Plan March 2006 and a series of specified matters also for consideration. The issues have been extracted from their context in the full document:

			Specific issues identified in e-mail
		6/1	Provision of a balanced housing stock
		6/2	The need for improved infrastructure for Williton including Williton Inner Relief Road
		6/3	Provision of additional employment land
		6/4	Provision of varied employment opportunities
		6/5	Addressing of flooding issues
		6/6	Clarification of the position regarding Hinkley C Nuclear Power Station
			Summary of other issues identified in the Parish Plan for Williton
		6/7	The level and quality of public transport provision (pp11/12)
		6/8	Traffic speed and volume on A39 and A358 (pp13/14)
		6/9	Road safety / pedestrian and cycleway network quality (pp15/16)
		6/10	Parking management in Williton (pp 17/18)
		6/11	Improve Williton's retail vitality (pp 19/20)
		6/12	Improve visitor facilities (pp 19/20)
		6/13	Capitalise on the through flow of tourist traffic (p22)
		6/14	Open space provision / protection / enhancement (pp23/24) (see also the Memorial Ground issue pp 31/32)
		6/15	Consider the designation of more conservation areas (pp25/26)
		6/16	Protect wildlife and trees (pp25/26)
		6/17	Provision of appropriate level of community building (ie a hall) (p29)
		6/18	Improve sport and recreation facilities (pp 33-36)
		6/19	More facilities needed for young people
7	Bourne Leisure Ltd. (owner of Butlins and Doniford Holiday Park)	7/1	Importance of tourism investment – expansion of sites Regular investment is needed in response to market conditions and attracting customers. This investment sometimes necessitates the expansion of existing sites (whilst taking account of environmental constraints). The Core Strategy should provide the context to allow masterplans to be agreed for the company's landholdings. Clear benefits arise from being able to agree a park's short, medium and long term future.
		7/2	Balance of tourism development with environmental issues Emerging planning policies should recognise the economic benefits of allowing appropriate development in sensitive areas, of which Bourne Leisure has significant experience. Economic benefits should be appropriately balanced with environmental issues.
		7/3	Specific support for expanding the tourism market within the District The importance of dealing positively with tourism promotion as an economic issue for the area was stressed. The Vision and Core Strategy Objectives should specifically support the growth of tourism within the district, and encourage the development of West Somerset as an important all year round tourist destination.
		7/4	Expansion of existing holiday parks Explicit policy support should be given in the Core Strategy to the upgrading and expansion of existing tourism accommodation including holiday parks. This would increase its attractiveness, extend the season, attract higher spending visitors and improve the environmental impact of

			sites.
		7/5	Tourism development can be appropriate adjacent to protected sites The Core Strategy should recognise that there is scope for tourism development adjacent to protected sites subject to appropriate mitigation measures. Locally and nationally important sites should be distinguished between.
		7/6	Flood risk and coastal protection and tourism development In relation to flood risk and coastal protection, the Core Strategy should recognise the need for certain tourism uses to be located, or remain, near to water. Account should be taken of whether the residual risks of flooding to people and property are acceptable and can be satisfactorily managed, and whether the proposed development makes a positive contribution to reducing or managing flood risk. The Core Strategy should allow for landowners / operators to implement / fund appropriate coastal defence works to protect and continue to operate their businesses, even where not identified as a priority in a shoreline management plan. Priority should be given to protecting existing properties.
		7/7	Transport and accessibility The Core Strategy should recognise, in any strategic objectives and policies for tourism related travel, that there may be no feasible alternative means of access to remotely located tourism facilities than the private car. Any future development should allow for the encouragement of cycle and pedestrian travel once visitors have arrived in the area.
8	Avon and Somerset Constabulary	8	Letter of acknowledgement
9	South West Water	9	No comments to make at this stage, but asked to be consulted on any proposals affecting Brushford.
10	Mrs Janet Manley	10/1	Improved public transport including better co-ordination of services. More frequent bus services are needed to link Stogursey with facilities in larger settlements such as Bridgwater. Better co-ordination is also needed for connecting services with the national coach network.
		10/2	Better management of car parking in Stogursey is needed, better public transport would encourage more people to do without a car.
		10/3	More facilities are needed for young peoples' activities.
		10/4	More incentives are needed to encourage the provision of more shops within the village.
11	The Coal Authority	11	Has no specific comments at this stage.
12	South West Councils	12/1	Emphasised the very significant weight carried by the RSS Proposed Changes version as the context for preparing the Core Strategy.
		12/2	The need to provide especially economic development at small towns and villages under policy C was emphasised.
		12/3	A clear understanding of the role and function of settlements and their hierarchical relationship to each other is needed as part of the evidence base. Joint working with Taunton Deane and Sedgemoor Councils will be

			needed for this purpose.
		12/4	Spatial options for growth should be tested as part of the Sustainability Appraisal.
		12/5	Local housing needs assessments should be used to approximately distribute housing growth. Economic assessments should provide information for aligning jobs and housing.
		12/6	The local business community should be able to help identify settlements with sustainable economic growth potential which could increase levels of self containment. (see para 3.5.3 in the draft revised RSS).
		12/7	The importance of properly understanding the role and function of settlements in terms of their service provision level and accessibility by a range of modes of transport was emphasised.
		12/8	The issue of potentially securing contributions from developers to support public transport which would help to sustain the operation of a network of smaller settlements functioning as a service centre.
		12/9	Increasing population, particularly in the relatively elderly section of the community
		12/10	The needs of young people, maintaining service provision for young people as their numbers decline
		12/11	Joint working should take place with Taunton Deane Borough Council in order to explore improvements in the transport links to the M5
		12/12	The potential impacts of the EDF proposals for Hinkley Point as set out in the application for a Development Consent Order will need to be considered as part of the Core Strategy process.
		12/13	Mitigating the effects of climate change – an evidence based understanding of local feasibility of incorporating decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy in new development is required.
		12/14	Economic development should be focused on the most sustainable and accessible locations, eg the market towns. The potential for home working and rural economic diversification were also highlighted.
		12/15	More activities for tourist visitors should be provided in locations where people do not have to use the private car, so that overall mileage per visitor is reduced.
		12/16	Attention was drawn to the Infrastructure Advice Note available on the old SWRA website.
13	The Highways Agency	13/1	The Agency's main concern is the continued function and capacity of the Strategic Road Network, particularly the M5 which runs close to the administrative boundary.
		13/2	The development proposals for Hinkley Point nuclear power station are of particular interest to the Agency. They would like to be involved in discussions with WSC SCC and SDC over this matter.
		13/4	New residential development should be located in sustainable locations which are highly accessible by public transport. The Agency believes that this should be informed by a strategic transport study.
		13/5	Densities of housing development should be based on the accessibility to local services and public transport of their location. Higher densities being appropriate at well serviced locations.
		13/6	Mixed use development should be preferred, this would tend to encourage self-containment.
		13/7	There should be a strong balance between the location of jobs and housing within the District in order to minimise the need to travel. This will alleviate pressure on the strategic road network during peak hours. – a crucial factor in delivering sustainable communities during the plan period.
		13/8	The use of water and rail based transport should be considered in the location of new employment development. In appropriate scales of development Transport Assessments and Green Travel Plans should be required.

		13/9	Tourism development should preferably be within existing settlements, well served by public transport and within walking / cycling distance of local services.
		13/10	Physical infrastructure works to the Strategic Road Network will only be considered once every measure to reduce trip generation has been pursued. The transport evidence base should be capable of supporting an appropriate infrastructure delivery plan.
		13/11	The Core Strategy should make clear that the Agency does not have the funding to contribute towards the provision of necessary infrastructure to facilitate the RSS development strategy for the area. The Agency will seek contributions from developers to mitigate the potential impact of development on the strategic road network.
		13/12	Provision of new community facilities and services is supported in sustainable locations. Facilities which attract a large number of visitors should be supported by a robust Transport Assessment.
		13/13	Improved sustainable transport patterns should be encouraged by the Core Strategy. This should be supported by an appropriate evidence base and a robust Transport Assessment in accordance with the GTA and Circular 02/2007.
		13/14	Any development which have the potential to impact upon the M5 will require significant mitigation measures. The Core Strategy should set out how such impact will be managed.
14	Mr Jim Butterworth	14/1	Excluding Exmoor National Park and the Quantocks AONB there is little left of West Somerset District which is capable of sustainable development. Most of it is very rural.
		14/2	The existing policies for the coastal strip are supported, retaining the attractiveness of the undeveloped landscape for its enjoyment value.
		14/3	Some of the allocated housing sites in the West Somerset District Local Plan have not yet been developed, (Townsend Farm, Carhampton, Dunster Marsh etc.). This is beyond the Council's control.
		14/4	Any housing development should be in the main towns, with some limited development in the larger villages where it will be sustainable and support local services.
		14/5	New development in smaller settlements is undesirable due to energy use
		14/6	The poor highway network in the District, one small accident on the A39 can effectively cut the District in two.
		14/7	The lack of sporting facilities, in particular a swimming pool
		14/8	The availability of school spaces should be used to inform the allocation of housing sites.
		14/9	The new houses should be for local people as a matter of priority.
		14/10	The key improvement needed is for the 1930s highway improvement scheme to be implemented. This is key to the improvement of the local economy.
15	Harmers (planning consultants)	15/1	There is a need to develop employment opportunities to strengthen the economy and improve local prosperity
		15/2	To increase the amount and range of housing available to local people including affordable housing
		15/3	Climate change mitigation through the use of solar water heating, heat pumps, small scale wind power, encouraging use of public transport walking and cycling
		15/4	Promote increased appropriate tourism opportunities to strengthen local economy

		15/5	Protection and conservation of the beauty and amenity of the countryside
		15/6	Improved leisure facilities are needed for local and tourist amenity
		15/7	Local agriculture should be supported by providing opportunity for additional income for farmers, eg from tourism.
16	Environment Agency	16/1	Hinkley Point - The Core Strategy should consider the likely impact of the Hinkley Point nuclear power station development in respect of increased infrastructure pressure.
		16/2	Flood risk management - The North Devon and Somerset Shoreline Management Plan, the erosion risk maps and West Somerset Catchment Flood Management Plan and SFRA levels 1 and 2 will provide the basis for strategic policies on these issues. Flood risk will be a key issue for the area, given that most of the economic development and regeneration are focused around Minehead and Williton mainly in or near to areas of high flood risk.
		16/3	Biodiversity – Maximum use should be made of the West Somerset Railway for freight traffic. When road improvements are planned particular attention must be paid to the high quality of watercourses within the area. A green space strategy could be developed to identify key corridors including watercourses and highlight areas where improvements will be sought.
		16/4	Where opportunity arises through redevelopment it would be beneficial to see new development set well back from the watercourses (especially in Minehead and Williton) restoring waterside habitat, reducing flood risk and perhaps offering the potential for recreational walking, cycling and educational opportunities.
		16/5	Water resources – consideration should be given to using existing water supplies more efficiently rather than assuming increasing water consumption with the implementation of new development. This has a benefit in terms of climate change reduction as the treatment of water uses significant amounts of energy. The West Somerset Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy is being assessed. It appears that Horner Water and Washford may have resource issues at times of low flow which could have implications for new abstraction licences. Consultation with the local water company is essential at an early stage in order to ensure that new demand can be met in particular locations.
		16/6	All new residential development must meet Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
		16/7	A water cycle study should be carried out for areas to be subject of moderate and high levels of growth.
		16/8	Water quality is also an issue which the Core Strategy should seek to address positively.
		16/9	Environmental management – septic tanks and soakaway systems can cause diffuse pollution problems as they age. The Core Strategy should seek to help improve this situation.
		16/10	Fisheries – future planning proposals should ensure that fish stocks are enhanced.
		16/11	Groundwater – development should be satisfied that the provisions protecting groundwater have been properly applied in considering development proposals.
		16/12	Waste – new homes will produce waste. Recycling should be maximised. WSDC should be promoting the use of Site Waste Management Plans to further this aim.
17	Somerset Wildlife Trust		Key Issues for the Core Strategy:
		17/1	Climate change – steps must be taken to enable wildlife to adapt gradually to climate change.

		17/2	Population growth and land use pressure - increasing population within the District will mean a good evidence base is needed in order to support sustainable growth within environmental limits.
		17/3	Biodiversity – natural habitats have declined and fragmented over the past decades. The Core Strategy should be used to enhance and restore the area’s biodiversity.
		17/4	Major infrastructure projects – referring to Hinkley Point and the Severn Tidal Power project. The cumulative impacts of these will have a significant effect on the environment of West Somerset. Exact implications are unclear as yet, WSC should take a landscape-scale approach should be taken to addressing such impacts.
			What should the Core Strategy contain?:
		17/5	The core strategy’s vision should be aspirational seeking to maximise the potential of the District.
		17/6	Biodiversity: policies should seek to enhance this, implementing the local Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitat action plans for the area. Development should be required to provide for a net gain in biodiversity. Local (County) Wildlife Sites should be protected, Linear Features should be protected, habitat creation should be secured to maximise connection of areas on the South West Nature Map and Priority BAP habitat maps.
		17/7	Water – policies should seek to manage water efficiently and effectively. The use of SUDS should be actively promoted.
		17/8	Quality of life – This area is attractive, people will want to come here, or stay here to live. Access to nature through development should be secured via provision of green infrastructure and the Local (County) Wildlife Site Network.
18	Tetlow King Planning on behalf of South West RSL Planning Consortium	18/1	Increasing the supply of affordable housing within the District: the Northern Peninsula Strategic Housing Market Assessment (NPHMA) indicates that to meet anticipated affordable housing need over the next ten years affordable housing would have to be provided at a level of 217% of the projected supply of new housing in the District for the period. The supply of affordable housing must be increased without inhibiting the delivery of market housing.
		18/2	Providing sufficient housing for an increasingly elderly population: The NPHMA states that by 2026 over 19,000 people aged 60+ will inhabit the District. This includes an increase of 2,300 people of retirement age. The Core Strategy should therefore include policies to encourage a range of housing and care options for the elderly. Some of these will not count towards the District housing allocation being of C2 use class. Insisting that all new dwellings meet the lifetime homes standard will not be sufficient to address this problem.
		18/3	West Somerset Council must ensure that they work closely with Exmoor National Park Authority in order to ensure that planning policies do not deter development on sites which are close to, or straddle, the border
19	Natural England		From an environmental and socio-environmental point of view, the most important issues facing West Somerset are:
		19/1	The potential alone and in-combination effects of developments (housing and other), within the District, on Nationally and Internationally protected sites (landscape and ecological) – i.e. AONBs, NPs, SACs, SPAs, NNRs, SSSIs;
		19/2	The potential effect of increased population, within the district as well as in combination with that of

			surrounding districts, on Nationally and Internationally protected sites – i.e. pressure from increased recreation, potential air quality issues related to increased traffic etc;
		19/3	The potential alone and in-combination impact of proposed development on biodiversity;
		19/4	The alone and in-combination impact of large infrastructure projects, e.g. Hinkley Point New Nuclear power station (Hinkley C) and the 'Severn tidal energy proposals' on Internationally and Nationally designated sites and biodiversity;
		19/5	The potential impact of sea level rise, flood defence strategies and coastal squeeze on sensitive sites along the coast.
			The Core Strategy should contain:
		19/6	A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Strategy, which should be undertaken by a person (ecologist) with appropriate expertise and experience;
		19/7	Policies that refer to and demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements of PPS9 and the LBAP, in relation to biodiversity protection and enhancement and the responsibility of West Somerset District Council in this regard;
		19/8	Policies relating to sea defences and developments/proposals along the coast which are clearly linked to/reflect the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)
		19/9	Policies relating to multifunctional Green Infrastructure (GI) provision and the creation/improvement of access to the countryside. These policies should ideally be based on/reflect Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) - which provide benchmarks for the provision of places where people can experience and enjoy nature.
20	Jane Taunton	20/1	Health : Improved sports facilities are needed, in particular swimming pools.
		20/2	Housing developments: should be in proportion with the village they are attached to, The countryside should be protected from encroachment of housing which will eventually lead to suburbanisation.
		20/3	Workforce skill levels need to be enhanced, including more vocational training and at a local level.
21	Cllr. Sue Goss, Stogursey Parish Council	21/1	The most important issue is the proposed Hinkley Point nuclear power development. It will provide opportunities and challenges especially to its near neighbours. Socio-economic benefits arising from any S106 agreement should be targetted at Stogursey and the surrounding area.
		21/2	A lack of employment opportunities needs to be remedied, particularly for young people who leave to find work elsewhere. Also support needed for expanding home working workforce better internet connections and shared office / workshop facilities are needed.
		21/3	There needs to be a greater provision of low cost as opposed to "affordable" housing. Much affordable housing is beyond the reach of the most needy and much remains unsold.
22	Artlife	22/1	Social - Maintain and improve the equitable spread across the district to arts and creative industry opportunities.
		22/2	Economic – business advice for West Somerset artists, and a public art policy and delivery mechanism are needed.

		22/3	Environmental – great potential to use the arts creatively to help people respond to environmental issues and changes. (Watchet Community Cultural Strategy refers).
23	British Wind Energy Association	23/1	Climate change is the most important issue facing West Somerset.
		23/2	An overarching climate change policy should be included in the Core Strategy. More specific delivery policies should be included in a Development Control Policies DPD. These should be robust and criteria based with direct reference to PPS22. The policy should be positive and pro-active rather than restrictive. Landscape and conservation policies should not be generally used to prevent renewable energy development. Policies should be developed in accordance with the guidance in PPS22.
		23/3	The need to encourage low and zero carbon developments is also a pressing issue. The Core Strategy should include policies to encourage such development, and also small scale renewable energy schemes. DCLG model policies requiring all residential development of 10 or more dwellings to provide at least 10% of their energy requirements from onsite renewable energy generation should be included.
		23/4	A policy on sustainable design and construction methods should be included.
		23/5	The council should have an evidence based understanding of the local feasibility and potential for renewable and low carbon technologies to supply new development within its area. This should be used to inform policies including target percentages of energy to be used in new development coming from decentralised low carbon and renewable energy sources where it is viable. Any targets should have a clear rationale and be properly tested.
		23/6	The Core Strategy should include a brief outline of the different renewable energy generation technologies and equally encourage all forms of renewable energy.
24	Paul Norton	24/1	The use of mobile home parks as a solution to the issues of a high proportion of over 50s in the population and the difficulty in people affording to buy housing on the open market is suggested. This would be through a combination of older people downsizing their accommodation and using part of the equity released to help their children or grandchildren purchase housing in the area which they otherwise would be unable to afford.
25	Minehead Conservation Society	25/1	The West Somerset economy is largely based on tourism, protection of the special character of the area and its settlements is therefore an issue of paramount importance.
		25/2	Protection of the built heritage in a detailed and integrated way is essential.
		25/3	Protection of Minehead's setting as well as important trees and green spaces.
		25/4	Protection of the coastline from inappropriate development
		25/5	Renewable energy development should be thoughtfully designed. North Hill should be protected from wind turbines.
		25/6	Appropriate provision should be made for senior citizens' recreation in view of the high proportion of them in the population.
		25/7	Tree and orchard planting and the sustainable management of greenspaces and gardens should be encouraged.
		25/8	Encourage more energy efficient buses, and walking / cycling.
		25/9	The emphasis for accommodating new development must shift from Minehead/Watchet/Willton to take in a

			more dispersed pattern of development.
		25/10	Minehead has a tourism based economy and is an outstanding heritage settlement, it should not be subjected to unwarranted industrial development which would have adverse environmental (and therefore economic) impact. The town has very limited potential for growth of any kind, the only brownfield site which could be easily used for housing with little adverse impact is that in Seaward Road where Morrisons supermarket is proposed.
		25/11	Williton should have additional development, access is better than Minehead, it is not a prime tourist destination being away from the coast. Additional population could enable the provision of eg: a community hall which the village currently lacks. New supermarket provision could help to make the settlement more self contained and reduce pressure on the roads to other towns. Homes built in Williton would be more likely to be bought as permanent homes rather than holiday homes. The land along the road to the railway station would be an appropriate place for development.
		25/12	Watchet should be given the same degree of care in respect of additional growth as Minehead. Some increased housing may facilitate the provision of a butcher and bakery for instance.
		25/13	Other development alternatives: Stogursey is close to a major development and has better access than other West Somerset settlements. The new power station proposal should improve access to this area. It would spread development more evenly across the Core Strategy area, improve service provision locally and perhaps encourage light industrial development in the locality. Power station workers could also be accommodated.
		25/14	Battleton and Brushford could also take some development helping to support Dulverton's trade whilst protecting its special character.
26	Pauline Brain	26/1	Road connections are very poor, public transport particularly to Taunton needs to be improved. 2 commuter trains should be run daily with direct communication to the main line station at Taunton.
		26/2	Development on North Hill at Minehead should be limited to a small number of specified small sites.
		26/3	There is a lack of good class entertainment facilities locally in Minehead which should be remedied.
		26/4	The problem of dog fouling on footpaths needs to be solved.
27	Transition Minehead and Alcombe	27/1	Peak Oil and the need to plan for it constitute the key issue to be addressed by the Core Strategy. Peak Oil will occur within the lifetime of all homes being constructed now so they need the highest levels of insulation.
		27/2	More support for the insulation of existing homes is urgently needed (eg: 60% of West Somerset homes do not have cavity walls). Fuel poverty will be worsened as Peak Oil is passed.
		27/3	Planning barriers to renewable energy generation should be removed, it should be actively encouraged.
		27/4	New homes must be provided with adequate food growing land, and spare land be made available for allotments or community orchards.
		27/5	Opportunities for public transport cycling and walking should be maximised (including sea and rail transport).
28	Old Cleeve Parish Council	28/1	The provision of piped gas should be made more widespread within the District.

		28/2	The railway should be extended to Taunton and be used to take some of the traffic off the local roads.
		28/3	Woodchip as a fuel source
		28/4	The Bristol Channel is an asset which could be made more use of.
		28/5	Access to tradespeople for the older part of the population should be improved.
		28/6	The level of litter in the area should be reduced, to improve the appearance and general attractiveness of the area and to deter rats.
		28/7	More affordable housing is needed
		28/8	Somerset County Council should take better care of the roads and lanes within the area.
		28/9	Get the "so many dead on this road" signs removed, they are very distracting, make visitors think West Somerset is more dangerous than it is. All this must be bad for the tourist industry whilst doing nothing for road safety.
		28/10	Find more money to solve the dog mess problem – more dog bins and action to prosecute offending dog owners. A full time dog warden may be needed.
29	Sandy Hull	29/1	Greater provision should be made for facilities for the 4 to 18 age group, especially in parts of the District outside Minehead where provision is concentrated at present.
		29/2	Access to adult education across the District should be improved.
		29/3	The A39 within the District must be improved, preferably to dual carriageway standard
		29/4	More small, non-polluting, high income, businesses are needed
		29/5	More food and energy needs to be provided locally
		29/6	Wet weather entertainment is needed in Minehead for those who do not want to visit Butlins
		29/7	Proper maintenance of countryside buildings and community facilities to encourage residents to enjoy their local area.
		29/8	Noise and air pollution reduction, from HGV traffic in particular.
30	Mono Consultants Ltd on behalf of the Mobile Operators Association	30/1	No specific key issues are identified for the Core Strategy.
		30/2	A telecommunications policy should however be included within the Local Development Framework as they play a vital role in the economic and social fabric of communities. PPG8 gives guidance that statutory local planning documents (i.e. DPDs) should set out criteria based policies to guide telecommunications development in such a way that siting and design considerations do not inhibit operational efficiency. A specific PPG8 compliant policy wording is suggested by MOA, which, it acknowledges, would be most appropriately included in a Development Management Policies DPD.
31	Wessex Water	31/1	Water efficiency measures are an important issue.
		31/2	Flood risk Surface Water Management Plans and Sustainable Drainage Systems are also important issues.
		31/3	The need to recognise the impact of new development upon existing utility infrastructure

		31/4	Arrangements to work with utility service providers to identify, plan and implement capacity improvements to infrastructure where necessary.
32	Somerset County Council	32/1	Promoting the self containment of settlements.
		32/2	Targeting development and growth at settlements falling into RSS categories of policy B and C settlements.
		32/3	Addressing the cause and effect of climate change
		32/4	Improving energy efficiency and exploring new renewable energy technologies
		32/5	Improving the quality of life for residents
		32/6	Addressing the needs of british minority ethnic groups such as gypsies and travellers.
		32/7	Coastal erosion and flooding
		32/8	Ecology and biodiversity
		32/9	Environmental protection
		32/10	The need to diversify the economy
		32/11	Improving the well being of children
		32/12	The ageing population
		32/13	Retaining young people within the area
		32/14	Transport – tackling climate change
		32/15	Transport – promoting equality of opportunity (accessibility / social inclusion)
		32/16	Transport – supporting economic growth
33	Forum 21	33/1	The core strategy should promote the use of sustainable construction methods and local materials
		33/2	Low carbon / zero carbon development should also be promoted
		33/3	The use and generation of renewable energy should be encouraged wind energy and severn tidal power are supported
		33/4	Biomass industries should be encouraged and developed
		33/5	The implementation of the biodiversity action plan should be made a key strategic objective of the core strategy
		33/6	Low impact development should be encouraged including the use of exceptions sites for low impact self build development.
		33/7	Agricultural land should be made available near settlements for home owners living in those settlements to grow food.
		33/8	The development of planning policies to provide for genuinely sustainable development of a low impact nature
		33/9	The need for more sustainable transport infrastructure and provision
		33/10	Each settlement should have a natural childrens' play area set aside.
34	The Theatres Trust	34/1	Highlighted the importance of protecting and maintaining the provision and use of theatre premises within the Core Strategy area. The value to the social and economic life of the community was emphasised.
35	Peel Energy	35/1	Supports West Somerset Council's vision that by 2020 it will be noted for its rapid progress in introducing a

			low-carbon economy minimising damaging emissions.
		35/2	Support is also given for West Somerset Council's vision that the economy will be thriving because of the new business opportunities which this will have created.
36	Mr P.A. Gannon		Social issues
		36/1	The majority of the population are relatively elderly (over 55) and reliant on fixed pension income, housing costs are high
		36/2	The area is attractive and desirable
		36/3	Personal transport is essential with ever increasing costs. Reasonable public transport exists on the A39 and A358
		36/4	Younger people with skills have to leave the area to find suitable work, leaving those without skills to the local economy in services, care, tourism and declining agriculture. Unaffordable business premises do not help
			Economic issues
		36/5	Low manufacturing based businesses
		36/6	Declining agricultural based business, diversification impacts
		36/7	High transportation costs for goods and services
		36/8	Small specialised businesses with low numbers of employees
		36/9	Loss of employment opportunities within villages (closure of pubs / schools / post offices / shops / garages / repair shops / workshops) Burden of legislation with high basic costs.
		36/10	Tourism area – largest employer: Butlins – many non local workers, low paid. High landscape value to be balanced against over exploitation.
		36/11	High fuel costs and poor infrastructure, lack of mains gas (apart from Watchet / Williton and Minehead mainly).
			Environmental issues
		36/12	The scale of dwelling increase proposed will have a negative impact upon the landscape (lack of brownfield opportunities).
		36/13	Increased burden on the A39 / A358, already sub standard roads.
		36/14	Reduction in tourism income likely due to adverse impact upon landscape
		36/15	Hinkley Point C will have a major impact. New staff will need housing – where?
		36/16	Increasing demands on infrastructure: fuel, electricity, gas, oil, bio fuels, water, sewerage, transportation of foodstuffs and goods
		36/17	Lack of suitable development land to be balanced with impact / quality / demand. Minehead is the main town but space is restricted due to coast, marshland and Exmoor National Park proximity.
		36/18	Flood plains, coastal and river.
37	Mr P.J. Carter	37/1	Minehead should be protected from further development because of its setting and context. The majority of new housing development should be in the north east of the District at Watchet, Williton and east of the Quantocks. Close to employment centres of Bridgwater and Hinkley.
38	Mrs Rosina Pyatt	38/1	Housing development at Williton, if it is necessary, would be best located on the fields to the west of the

			village on the north side of the A39 where there is little impact upon amenity or landscape. Development should not take place on the eastern side of Williton due to its high amenity value, difficulty of access and relatively high landscape quality.
39	Entec on behalf of The Crown Estate	39/1	The lack of decent well paid jobs
		39/2	The need to develop a more robust economic base
		39/3	The lack of affordable housing to meet the needs of the people of the area
		39/4	The attractiveness of the high quality landscape in and around the area
		39/5	The poor level of transport infrastructure. Restricting access from the M5 and discouraging investment. A lack of high value development will prevent opportunities to improve the infrastructure.
40	Exmoor National Park Authority	40/1	The need for an appropriate process of joint working between the Exmoor National Park Authority and West Somerset District Council was identified as a key issue, particularly in relation to the split parishes / settlements on the National Park boundary.
		40/2	The role of settlements outside the National Park boundaries in meeting the needs of residents of the National Park in respect of: employment, retail, education, leisure/recreation (e.g. a swimming pool and play facilities) and community / social requirements. This is due to the very rural nature of the National Park and the statutory National Park purposes defined in the Environment Act 1995.
		40/3	The need to retain employment sites both within and outside the National Park, and to co-locate employment and community facilities including affordable housing in existing settlements.
		40/4	The urgent need for more affordable housing for local communities both within the National Park and in the remaining parts of West Somerset District.
		40/5	The potential of development outside the National Park to impact adversely upon the statutory purposes of National Park designation – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and; ▪ the promotion of the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities by the public. Joint working on this issue is particularly relevant in respect of Minehead.
		40/6	The poor level of accessibility of the area, particularly by a range of modes of transport.
		40/7	The desirability of developing an integrated green infrastructure network across the National Park boundary.
		40/8	The need for renewable energy and zero or low carbon development which does not compromise the National Park's objectives (see 40/5 above)
		40/9	Flood risk minimisation.

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