

Clarifying the Status of Local Planning Guidance

The Council is updating the status of local planning guidance such as Village Design Statements. A total of seventeen documents which were adopted as “supplementary planning guidance” under previous legislation are now proposed for adoption as “supplementary planning documents” under the terms of new planning laws.

The documents are:

- Sedgemoor Landscape Assessment and Countryside Design Summary
- Development and Design Guide for South Bridgwater
- Development Brief for South Bridgwater
- Planning Guidance Note on Outdoor Space for Sport and Children’s Play in New Housing Development
- Allerton Village Design Statement
- Catcott Village Design Statement
- Compton Bishop Village Design Statement
- Chilton Polden Village Design Statement
- Edington Village Design Statement
- Othery Village Design Statement
- Over Stowey Parish Design Statement
- Shapwick Village Design Statement
- Spaxton Village Design Statement
- Wedmore Village Design Statement
- Agricultural Building Design Guidelines for the Mendip Hills AONB
- Guidelines for Horse-related Development for the Mendip Hills AONB
- Cheddar Gorge Design Guide

Some of these documents date from as early as the mid 1990’s, but are still considered to be fit for purpose as design guidance. If the Council does not refresh the status of these documents they will not be a formally recognised component of the Local Development Framework and there is a risk that they will not be given due recognition in planning appeals. In some cases an advisory note with updated references will be inserted, but the documents are not being fundamentally altered.

NEWS

Travel Planning SPD adopted. This Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance on the expected content of Travel Plans to be submitted with applications for larger development. For more information see www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/travelplanning

East Brent. Following the close of public consultation, a report on the proposal to alter the status of East Brent in the Core Strategy will be going before the Council’s Executive on 27th February. More details at www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/eastbrent

5 Year Housing Land Supply 2013-18 Report now published, showing an excess of available land. See overleaf for more.

Annual Monitoring Report 2011-12 is to be published later this month, and will show positive growth across the District. See overleaf for key findings.

Community Infrastructure Levy. The Planning Minister Nick Boles announced last month that 15% of CIL will go to communities that host new development, and that this percentage will rise to 25% where the community has a Neighbourhood Plan in place. There will be a second round of consultation on the Sedgemoor CIL Charging Schedule this spring. See www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/cil

Before they can be adopted, all the documents must be open to a 4 week period of public consultation which starts on Thursday 7th February. The documents and associated Consultation Statements are available via a link at www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/ldf or at the Council offices. The deadline for comments is 5pm on Thursday 7th March.

Annual Monitoring Report shows positive growth

The AMR 2011/12 is due to be published by the end of February. This report measures performance across the District against planning policy targets set out in the Core Strategy. It is the key mechanism by which the Council can assess whether its planning policies are working.

The AMR shows that the distribution of new housing across the district is beginning to reflect the target profile set out in Policy S1: more building is being carried out in urban areas and in Key Rural Settlements, and less in the countryside. A total of 730 dwellings were completed last year, resulting in additional New Homes Bonus to the Council of over £900,000. Of these, 395 were 'affordable', i.e. for sale or rent below market value to those in need. These figures mean that Sedgemoor is on target to comfortably exceed strategic housing requirements over the plan period to 2027.

1,670 new jobs were created in the District in 2011/12, mostly at the new Morrison's distribution centre and at Harris Brothers on Bristol Road, while tourism related development was also strong, including tourist accommodation outside the urban areas. There was little overall change in retail which is positive news given the national picture: shop vacancy rates have dropped in Highbridge and St John's Street, Bridgwater and increased slightly in Burnham.

A significant area of growth across the District was in renewable energy installations, particularly solar, and Sedgemoor is now the leading renewable energy generating local authority in Somerset, with a total of 16.57MW of installed capacity.

The full report will be published at www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/amr

5 Year Housing Land Supply shows excess of available land

National planning policy requires Local Planning Authorities to identify and maintain a rolling five year supply of deliverable land for housing. The 5 Year Housing Land Supply report recently published demonstrates a supply of deliverable sites for the period 2013-18 in excess of the required five years with the actual supply standing at over 6 years.

The assessment draws on up-to-date deliverability information as well as the conclusions of the Planning Inspector overseeing the Cokerhurst Farm appeal where the methodology of the report and a sufficient five year supply was endorsed.

The land supply identified is likely to underestimate actual build rates given that allowance has not been made for 'windfall' sites. These small, unanticipated sites typically make a significant contribution in Sedgemoor.

The District has seen strong building rates in recent years, including 10 consecutive years of delivery in excess of strategic requirements and a record build rate of 730 dwellings last year. There is confidence that this will continue with the ongoing development of four key strategic sites (South Bridgwater, North East Bridgwater and the former factory sites of Gerber and Federal Mogul), plus the progress of additional sites identified in the Core Strategy.

The full report can be read at www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6375

Finding out more

Please use our website to keep in touch with what is happening.

www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/ldf

South West Planning Aid provides free, independent advice on planning matters to community groups and individuals who cannot afford professional fees. To find out more go to www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
Or to find out more about planning generally, go to www.planningportal.gov.uk

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