

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Sedgemoor Local Development Framework Newsletter. This edition provides an update on progress of the Core Strategy and outlines possible changes to the Spatial Strategy which have been suggested as a result of the Preferred Options Consultation.

Changes to the Spatial Strategy

The Spatial Strategy will establish the role and function of places and the main areas of change in Sedgemoor up to 2026. It will therefore be an essential part of the Core Strategy.

As indicated in the last newsletter, one of the main areas of concern to emerge from the Preferred Options Consultation was the proposed distribution of housing. This included concerns about the lack of development proposed in rural villages, low numbers of housing proposed for Burnham and Highbridge and the identification of Cheddar as the District's third urban area.

Addressing these concerns and reconsidering the Spatial Strategy has been the main focus for the LDF team over the past few weeks. As a result of this work, the Spatial Strategy has been revised to include the following key changes:

- An extra 400 houses at **Burnham and Highbridge**, bringing the total proposed for the towns to 1,700.
- **Cheddar** to be classified as a Key Rural Settlement rather than a Market Town.
- **Brent Knoll, East Huntspill, Lympsham and Mark** to be classified as Key Rural Settlements.
- **Wembdon and Berrow** are identified as KRS, but with reference to their relationship with the urban areas and their potential role in accommodating urban extensions.
- **Catcott, Chilton Polden, Combwich, Cossington, Edington, Middlezoy, Othery, Shiphams, Spaxton, Weare and West Huntspill** are classified as Smaller Sustainable Settlements. These will be the focus for limited growth in the countryside that meets identified local needs, on sites released only for that purpose.

These changes will slightly increase the overall housing numbers, and represent a balance of development throughout the District. An updated Spatial Diagram is presented on the following pages, setting out this information in a visual form.

HOT NEWS

CONSULTATION STATEMENT AVAILABLE.

An initial report on the Preferred Options Consultation is now available via the Core Strategy Preferred Options link on our website at www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/ldf. This gives an overview of the consultation and responses made. A detailed Schedule of Responses will be published with the final Core Strategy. All responses also remain available for viewing in full on the consultation portal via the same link on the above webpage.

SECOND ROUND OF NUCLEAR CONSULTATION PLANNED. EDF are planning to consult on their preferred proposals for Hinkley C and associated development in late spring/early summer. For more information visit their website at www.edfconsultation.info

NATIONAL GRID will be issuing additional information in response to community concerns raised during the first round of consultation about the proposed Hinkley to Seabank power lines. Check their website at www.nationalgrid.com/uk/Electricity/MajorProjects/HinkleyConnection

RENEWABLES AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STUDIES UNDERWAY. The council has commissioned two important technical studies that will feed into the final Core Strategy. See the back page for more information on these.

Comments on these changes?

We can consider comments on these changes to the Spatial Strategy if they are received by 7th May. Please write to or email the LDF team at the address on the back of this newsletter.

A Revised Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor

The diagram below shows the suggested revised Spatial Strategy following consultation.

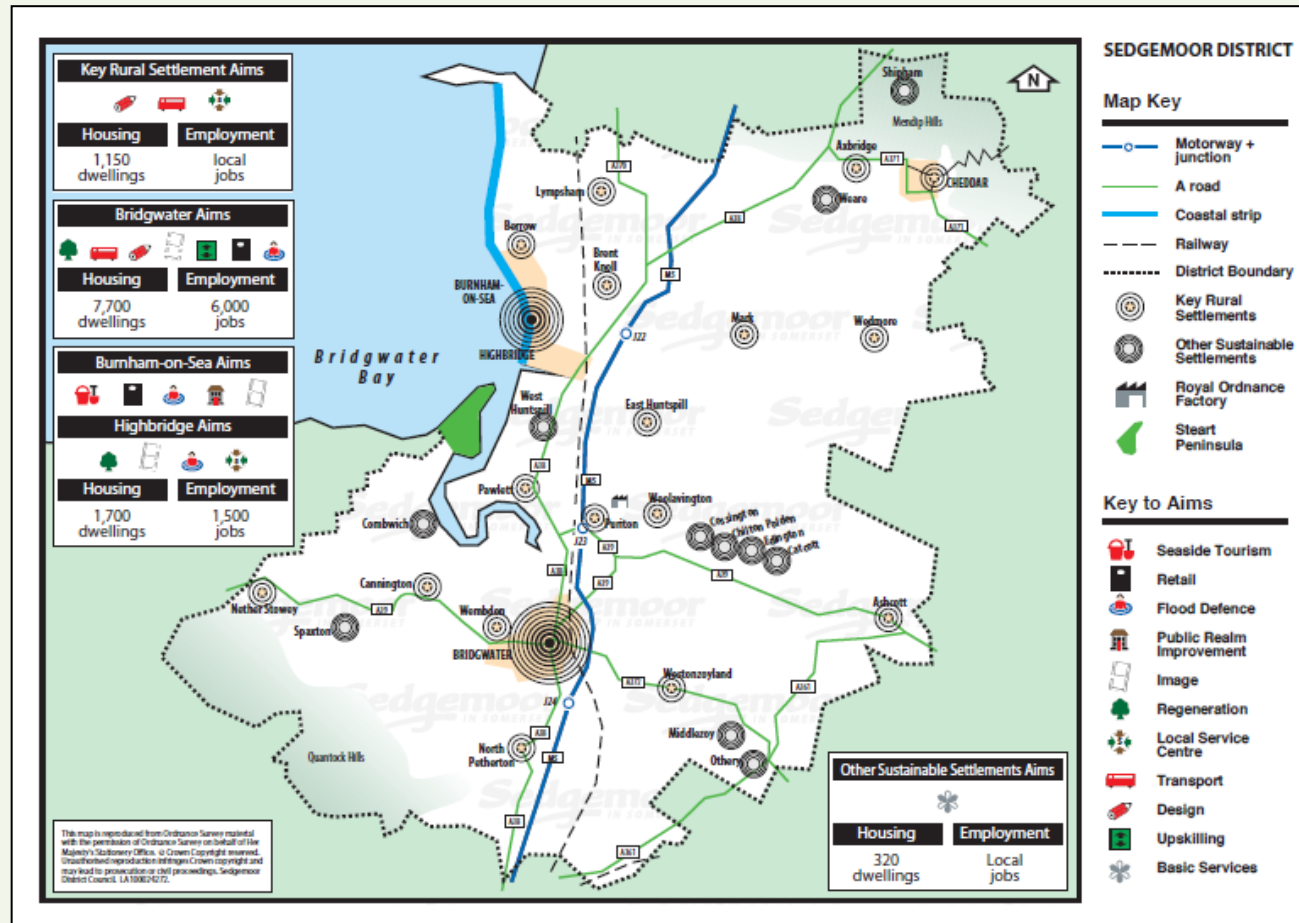
The main changes have been highlighted in the text.

Bridgwater

- Main focus for housing growth providing 7,700 new homes on Brownfield land and at an urban extension in North East Bridgwater and other well related Greenfield locations.
- Main focus for employment growth providing 6,000 new jobs.
- Transformational town wide regeneration strategy.
- Town centre will be the focus for new retail growth, other complimentary shopping functions, leisure uses and office development.

Key Rural Settlements (KRS)

- Focus for limited housing growth through infill, redevelopment and **exceptional small sites allocations**. Should collectively provide about **1150** new homes.
- Appropriate small-scale employment growth that will create or retain local jobs to reduce the need to travel, diversify the rural economy and promote sustainable communities.
- These places will be the focus for the provision of key local services and facilities, recognising the role of these settlements serving the wider areas.



Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge

- Focus for locally significant housing and employment growth that contributes to regeneration objectives and should provide about **1,700** new homes and at least **1,500** new jobs.
- Growth will be located **mainly** within existing urban area, maximising Brownfield opportunities, **and also includes a well related mixed use urban extension, to be identified following adoption of the Core Strategy.**
- Potential extension and enhancement of existing employment areas.
- Burnham town centre will be focus for locally significant retail and tourism growth.
- Highbridge town centre will focus on the needs of its local community.

Smaller Sustainable Settlements

- **Appropriate infill opportunities within existing settlement boundaries.**
- **Sites exceptionally released to meet identified local needs for rural housing.**
- **Retention and expansion of existing employment sites and premises to provide local employment opportunities.**
- **Consolidate and enhance the existing services, facilities and infrastructure and facilitate the provision of new where appropriate.**
- **Should provide collectively about 320 new homes between 2006 and 2026.**

The Countryside

- Conversion and re-use of appropriate existing rural buildings for small-scale employment space.
- Supporting development that meets the needs of the agricultural industry and other sectors that require a countryside location.
- Encourage and support environmental enhancement and protection of existing assets.

Core Strategy Timetable

We are still on target for publication of a Draft Core Strategy in July this year.

Key dates for progressing the Strategy are:

15th April LDF Working Group to consider policies for:

- Market Towns
- Key Rural Settlements
- Smaller Settlements
- Countryside
- Flood Risk

29th April LDF Working Group to consider remaining Development Management policies.

6th (or 12th) May LDF Working Group to consider:

- Bridgwater
- Hinkley issues /topic paper

10th June LDF Working Group to consider

- Remaining evidence
- Appropriate Assessment
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Full Draft Core Strategy

30th June Executive Council meeting*

7th July Full Council Meeting*

**Public meetings*

Renewable Energy Study

To ensure that Sedgemoor's LDF complies with national climate change policy the Council have combined forces with Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane to commission a study on the potential for renewable energy in the districts.

There are two main aspects to this: a) what level of renewable energy is it reasonable to ask developers to provide for on new developments? b) what is the potential for large stand alone projects to provide electricity for new and existing development?

A final version is expected at the end of April, when we will be able to say with more certainty what the implications are for the Core Strategy.

Green Infrastructure Strategy

The Council has also commissioned a Green Infrastructure Strategy based on an analysis of the multiple functions that green space provides. Green space is important for health and exercise, walking and cycling routes, leisure, water management, wildlife and biodiversity. It is vital that the LDF addresses these issues to ensure sustainable communities for the future.

The strategy is due for completion in May and will contain policy recommendations to inform the Core Strategy.

Sustainability Appraisal

Work on Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy is ongoing. A revised Scoping Report is now available on the LDF website.

Finding out more

Please use our new 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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Contact us

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