

**Distribution of housing and employment by existing settlement**

**i) Weston super Mare**

**ii) Nailsea**

**iii) Clevedon**

**iv) Portishead**

**v) Service Villages including appropriateness of designations**

**vi) Infill Villages including appropriateness of designations**

1. The background to the settlement strategy is set out in the Council's topic paper on Settlement Function and Hierarchy and its Appendix (SD/07I and SD/07I(i)). The settlement hierarchy was first issued for consultation within the Core Strategy Issues and Options in October 2007, then Consultation Draft (March 2009) and specifically consulted upon in Key Changes (October 2010) where the new category of "Infill Village" was introduced. This acknowledged that a one-size-fits-all approach was not appropriate outside of Service Villages and that some communities had called for the opportunity to allow very limited infilling on appropriate sites. Parish/Town Council workshops were held to discuss the hierarchy with the local communities and adjustments made at the communities' behest based on the communities' perceived needs and appropriateness (e.g. Nailsea moved from Service Village to town; Kingston Seymour settlement boundary removed; Winford moved to Infill Village).
2. The spatial strategy reflects the priority given to the regeneration of Weston-super-Mare, which is where multiple deprivation in North Somerset is concentrated<sup>1</sup>. Development elsewhere is to be limited so as not to undermine this priority, or lead to dispersed and unsustainable patterns of development<sup>2</sup>. There will therefore inevitably be an element of redistribution, with needs being met in the most appropriate location, rather than necessarily where they arise. The Core Strategy seeks thriving communities in both urban and rural areas but this need not in all cases imply growth, particularly of market housing, which could simply exacerbate existing dormitory characteristics. It has been argued that the area policies do not achieve Visions 6 and 7 in terms of increasing access to facilities. However, the Core Strategy is a spatial plan and there are ways to improve accessibility that do not depend on land use policies, such as high-speed broadband.
3. The location of settlements within the rail corridor does not necessarily make them more sustainable locations for growth, because, for whatever reason,

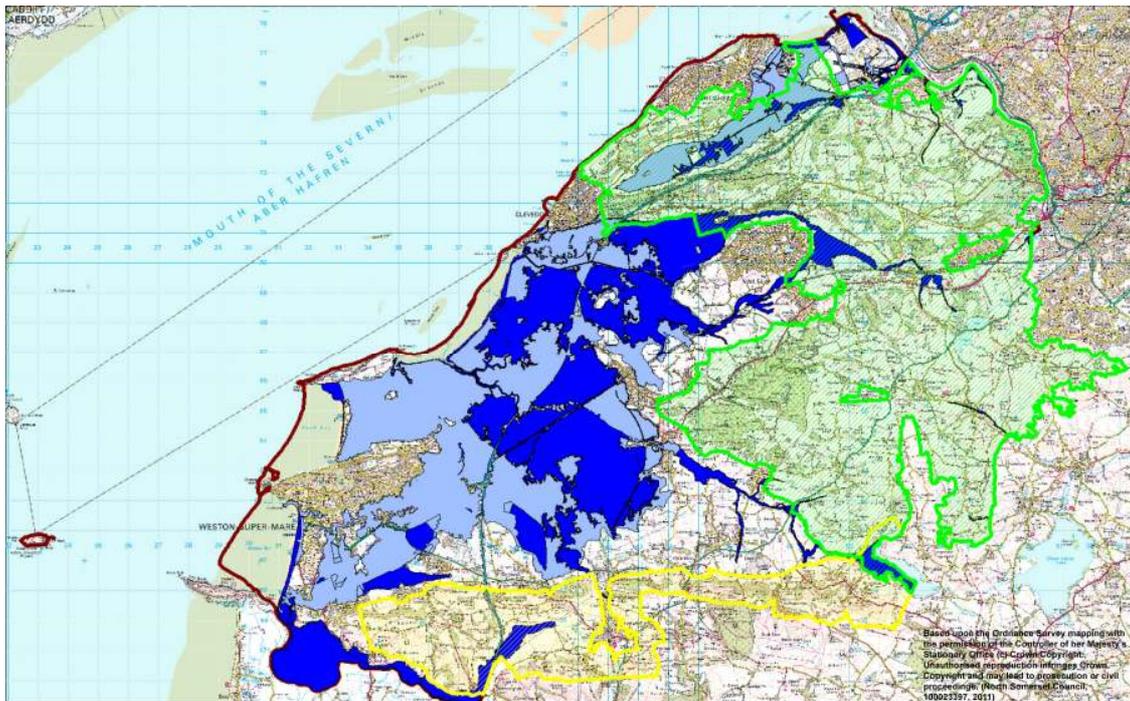
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<sup>1</sup> See Initial Note (ED/03), Fig. 1, page 45

<sup>2</sup> See Initial Note (ED/03), paras. 85 to 88

the opportunity to travel by train may not be taken up. Census data shows this to be the case<sup>3</sup>. No business case has been made for additional stations on the main line and it is doubtful that rail timetabling could accommodate them without investment in additional track and signalling.

**Fig. A – planning constraints in North Somerset**



<b>Dark blue:</b>	Flood Zone 3b*	<b>Green:</b>	Green Belt
<b>Light blue:</b>	Flood Zone 3a*	<b>Yellow:</b>	Mendip Hills AONB

\* Recent updates at Bleadon/Loxton and Congresbury/Yatton not yet reflected in available GIS data

### **Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead (Policy CS31)**

4. Development opportunities at the smaller towns are limited. The principal constraints are shown in Fig. A above. (This supersedes Fig. 2 on page 46 of the Initial Note (ED/03)<sup>4</sup>.) Portishead is constrained by Green Belt, Clevedon by Green Belt and functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b). While brownfield sites will continue to arise, large-scale opportunities such as the East Portishead development area, which has significantly raised the completion rate in recent years, are unlikely to recur. Nailsea may have some scope for

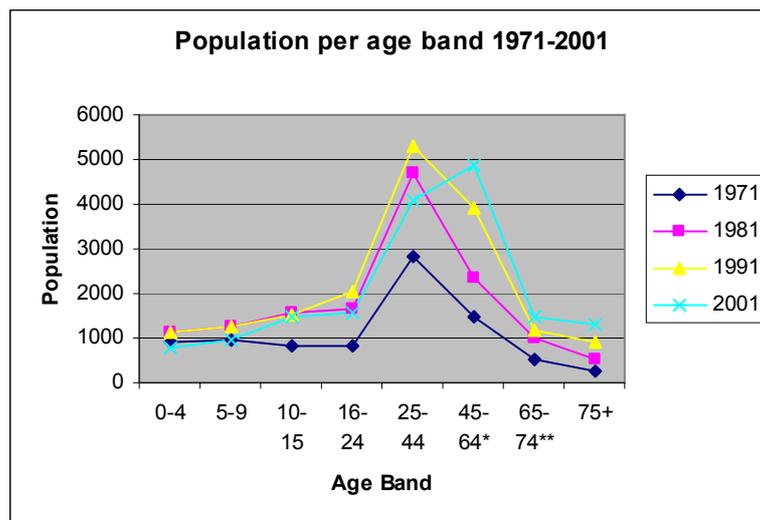
<sup>3</sup> See para. 3.1 and Table 2 in Topic Paper: Transport and Communications (SD/07p)

<sup>4</sup> Fig. 2 in fact illustrated the division between fluvial (or fluvial/tidal) and tidal-only flood risk but should have illustrated the division between Flood Zone 3a and Flood Zone 3b, as stated in the key.

expansion, particularly to the west. Where constraints prevent outward expansion, the aims of Policy CS31 are to be met through more intensive use of land within town settlement boundaries. The policy allows for the expansion of Nailsea but not on Green Belt land, which is considered to fulfill a strategic function that should not be eroded. This point is developed in the position statement on Issue 3b: Green Belt (HD/11).

- Nailsea has some of the characteristics of a New Town, having expanded to its present scale largely during the 1960s and 1970s, and its demographic has now begun to age (see Fig. B below). Under-16s and the 45-64 age group are over-represented in Nailsea compared to Clevedon, Portishead and North Somerset as a whole. A settlement that has experienced rapid growth can be expected to have a young age profile to start with but to then evolve towards the norm. In this case, the only way in which Nailsea can retain a young age profile indefinitely is to be forever expanding and this is not possible within environmental constraints.

**Fig. B – Nailsea’s population by age band 1971-2001**



\* 1981: 45-pensionable age  
 \*\* 1981: pensionable age-74

- Nailsea Town Council has aspirations for a Neighbourhood Plan for the town. Land to the east and north-east is in the parish of Wraxall and Failand. Land to the south-east is in the parish of Backwell. The Green Belt at Nailsea is largely located in these parishes, not in Nailsea itself. This administrative geography therefore has implications for the options the Town Council is able to promote through a Neighbourhood Plan without joint, co-operative working with adjoining parishes.

7. There is a clear falling-off in scale between the three smaller towns and the larger villages<sup>5</sup>. The smallest town, Nailsea, has more than twice the population of the largest village, Yatton. Therefore, the classification into towns and villages is appropriate, based on character, size and facilities.

### **Service Villages (CS32)**

8. The Core Strategy explains at para 4.86 the basis on which the Service Villages were designated. Development at the Service Villages is not necessary to meet a strategic need, but will be permitted where it supports their role as service centres. Individual sites of up to 10 dwellings within the villages represents a scale of development considered appropriate, although clearly a number of such sites may come forward in any particular village. Sites could come forward either by allocation through the Sites and Policies DPD or as windfalls through a planning application.
9. Acknowledging that local communities may have needs which cannot be met within the settlement boundary there is flexibility for this development to be pursued through the Sites and Policies DPD via an allocation or amendment to the settlement boundary. This would avoid speculative planning applications and allow an assessment of how the proposal addresses the local community's needs. This will not apply in the Green Belt, where the presumption against inappropriate development applies instead and exceptional circumstances would be needed to justify a change of status.
10. The Core Strategy approach to the level of development in service villages is considered to be correct given the level of services and facilities available and the need to avoid unsustainable development in rural areas. Proposed Change PC44 intends to address the need for community facilities where it cannot be met within settlement boundaries, to reflect the current North Somerset Replacement Local Plan approach. Whilst the settlement classification has been based on existing levels of facilities, these may fluctuate in part due to economic conditions and economic restructuring is outside the scope of the Core Strategy. Although there may be some fluctuations over time in the facilities and services located in the Service Villages, the policy approach will remain relevant given the size and character of these settlements.
11. Cleeve lacks the employment opportunities and services necessary to make it a sustainable location for additional housing, or to be classified as a Service Village. It is also washed over by Green Belt. It is therefore considered to be correctly identified as an Infill Village where small-scale infill development only may be appropriate. It would be contrary to national Green Belt policy to allocate land for housing at Cleeve. Core Strategy Policy CS17 allows for affordable housing schemes outside of settlement boundaries in Service and

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<sup>5</sup> See population figures in Topic Paper: Settlement Function and Hierarchy (SD/071)

Infill Villages which lie outside of the Green Belt, e.g. Yatton, Claverham, Congresbury and Wrington. These villages are in reasonably close proximity to Cleve and therefore are well-situated to meeting its housing needs.

### **Smaller settlements and countryside (Policy CS33)**

12. Infill villages, given their small size and level of facilities, are not considered generally appropriate for growth. Additional housing would exacerbate trips for commuting and for services. The policy accepts however that there may be community-led opportunities which could be pursued through the Sites and Policies DPD either as a specific allocation, even for a small number of dwellings, or by a change to the settlement boundary. Neighbourhood Plans or Community Right to Build Orders may also in the future be a means of achieving this where development is locally supported. This is considered to be a reasonable approach which balances sustainability objectives with localism. The classification of smaller villages either as Infill Villages or as settlements in the countryside reflects the views of the respective parish councils.
13. Proposed Change PC46 allows the possibility of community facilities where they cannot be accommodated within settlement boundaries, to reflect the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan approach. Proposed Change PC45 is consequential to PC25 which allows for rural exception schemes in villages without settlement boundaries provided they are adjacent to the main body of the settlement.
14. Infill Villages close to Weston-super-Mare are not considered suitable for additional allocations outside settlement boundaries. Such allocations would detract from the priority of creating the new Weston Villages and ensuring that they are provided with the critical mass to underpin supporting facilities needed to establish sustainable communities.
15. Tickenham is washed over by the Green Belt. It has developed in a linear form for almost 2km along the heavily trafficked B3130 which is the main road between Clevedon and Nailsea. Although previously having a settlement boundary (in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan) and therefore suitable for infilling, this boundary is now proposed to be removed. Infill development would perpetuate development of an unsustainable nature.
16. Development in the countryside – land outside settlement boundaries – is strictly controlled in accordance with national planning policy. The draft NPPF (ND/07) (para. 113) continues to advise against isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances. The tests for establishing the case for a dwelling for an “essential rural worker” are well-established and currently set out in PPS7, Annex A (NP/07).