

CPRE North Somerset District Group
Response to North Somerset Council
Statements and position papers for the hearings of
the inquiry into Core Strategy remitted policy CS31
14/3/14

Summary

- 1) In “The Housing Requirement for the North Somerset Core Strategy 2011” (RED-14) it is asserted that changes in the economy in recent years justify returning from the homes to jobs ratio to the use of more “conventional” methods of projection. CPRE believes that housing numbers based on the use of “conventional” methods of projection are the main cause of unsustainability in North Somerset because they have caused the increasing imbalance between new homes and new jobs in the district that has led to the need for the Council's employment-led Core Strategy. The NPPF stresses the priority to be attached to sustainable development and, in its description of what it means to be sustainable, allows for local issues to be fully considered. The method used to derive the housing provision in the adopted Core Strategy not only used an integrated trend approach based on the wider West of England housing market and economy but, by the use of the homes to jobs ratio, it also provided a means, which can now be seen to be consistent with the NPPF's description of sustainability, of breaking away from previous unsustainable levels of housing in the district. By contrast the Edge Analytics study for the Council and the studies submitted by the other respondents to the consultation, use “conventional” methods that largely focus on North Somerset and fail to adequately account for the wider West of England housing market and economy. Consequently those methods fail to match the sustainability requirements of the NPPF. Therefore no change in the wording of CS13 in the adopted Core Strategy can be justified on the basis of those studies and we withdraw the wording proposed for CS13 in CPRE's response to the consultation.

- 2) The Council is incorrect to assert in its “NSC Position Statement The effect the duty to co-operate has had on housing numbers” (RED12) that latent demand in North Somerset is not influenced by the wider West of England housing market and is consequently not a suitable topic for cooperation. CPRE considers that issues of latent demand in the District are strongly influenced by the wider housing market and that the question for the Council and its Core Strategy is how much of the latent demand in the wider area is it appropriate for North Somerset to accept.