

**NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL SITES AND POLICIES PLAN: PART 1:  
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES  
MAIN MODIFICATIONS: SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL  
REGULATION 9(1) DETERMINATION / STATEMENT OF REASONS**

The requirements of European law on strategic environmental assessment (SEA) are transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Reg. 5(2) requires SEA for development plans, subject to Reg. 5(6), which exempts minor modifications<sup>1</sup>, unless it has been determined by the responsible authority that the modification is likely to have significant environmental effects.

Such a determination, under Reg. 9(1), must take into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 of the Regulations and follow consultation with the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The duration of consultation is not prescribed.

Under Schedule 1 it is necessary to consider the characteristics of the plan and the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected. The Plan is subservient to the Core Strategy, which sets the strategic context for North Somerset. The specific focus of Schedule 1 is on environmental designations and environmental quality standards or limit values. The Plan has had regard to these throughout its preparation and the Main Modifications are therefore unlikely to have an adverse effect on them.

The Sustainability Appraisal has not been updated to reflect the Main Modifications. This is because the majority of the modifications are insufficient to change the content or overall aim of the policy. However, there are a few policies where more major changes have been proposed. These are as follows:

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Effect of Modification</b>	<b>Significance</b>
SP1	Deleted. No SA impact as covered in NPPF.	No significant environmental effect
DM2	Exclusion of Wind Turbines from the policy. The Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) entitled Local Planning (18 June 2015) sets out considerations to be applied to wind turbines and any future allocations will be considered against the	No significant environmental effect.

<sup>1</sup> The Regulations, like the Directive on which they are based, refer to 'minor' modifications but this term is to be understood in the context of SEA rather than planning legislation.

	criteria set out in the WMS.	
DM27	Increase threshold (from 10 to 50 dwellings) in developments required to be accessible to a bus service. Negative impact as more houses built in poorly connected areas but precise scale and location cannot be determined.	No significant environmental effect
DM42	Adds a paragraph about Housing Standards. Unlikely to be any negative impact as policy still meets SA Objectives 1, 2 and 5.	No significant environmental effect
DM45	Removal of requirement to attempt to secure an economic use for rural buildings. Negative impact as weakens restriction on residential development in unsustainable locations but precise scale and location cannot be determined.	No significant environmental effect
DM55	Removal of sentence which states: "Where it is considered likely that further expansion or intensification is likely in the future, the business will be encouraged to work with the council to identify suitable sites for relocation in the Towns or Service Villages where practicable." Removal of this sentence could result in continued encroachment into the countryside by expanding rural businesses. However, the policy states that proposals should not be harmful to the character and	No significant environmental effect.

	appearance of the countryside and other policies in the plan provide protection to the countryside and precise scale and location cannot be determined.	
DM57	Removal of requirement to demonstrate a business case/evidence of demand in that locality. Increases the possibility of residential development in unsustainable locations but precise scale and location cannot be determined.	No significant environmental effect
DM59	Deletes first paragraph relating to amount of non-garden goods that can be sold at garden centres. Sustainability issues with impact on town centres, increased car use etc. but precise scale and location cannot be determined.	No significant environmental effect
DM65 and DM66	Removal of locally set threshold for impact assessment. Rely on NPPF threshold which is much higher. Negative impact as could result in more larger scale out of town retailing so increased car use, impact on town centres etc. but precise scale and location cannot be determined.	No significant environmental effect

Where the responsible authority determines that the modification is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, a statement of reasons is required (Regs. 9(3) and 11(1)). This statement has been subject to consultation with the three environmental consultation bodies, all of whom have responded and are in agreement with the conclusion North Somerset Council have reached.