

Claverham Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2026

**A report to North Somerset Council on the
Claverham Neighbourhood Development Plan**

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Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by North Somerset Council in August 2017 to carry out the independent examination of the Claverham Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by written representations. I visited the neighbourhood plan area on 28 August 2017.
- 3 The Plan proposes a series of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the plan area. There is a very clear focus on safeguarding open spaces and key community facilities. It identifies a brownfield site for housing development.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. The community has been actively engaged in its preparation in a proportionate way.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report I have concluded that the Claverham Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum should be held within the neighbourhood plan area.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
3 October 2017

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Claverham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2026 (the Plan).
- 1.2 The Plan has been submitted to North Somerset Council (NSC) by Yatton Parish Council in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012 and which continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 This report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the Basic Conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.5 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then be used to determine planning applications within the plan area and will sit as part of the wider development plan.

2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by NSC, with the consent of the Parish Council, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both the NSC and the Parish Council. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. In previous roles, I have over 30 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level. I am a chartered town planner and have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service.

Examination Outcomes

- 2.4 In my role as the independent examiner of the Plan I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the Plan is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (b) that the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
 - (c) that the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

The Basic Conditions

- 2.5 As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and
 - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and
 - be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area; and
 - be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations.

I have examined the submitted Plan against each of these basic conditions, and my conclusions are set out in Sections 6 and 7 of this report. I have made specific comments on the fourth bullet point above in paragraphs 2.6 to 2.10 of this report.

- 2.6 In order to comply with the Basic Condition relating to European obligations NSC carried out a screening assessment. The conclusion of the draft screening report was that there were no significant environmental effects as a result of the production of the

Plan. This conclusion was drawn on the basis that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the Core Strategy and that no significant changes are proposed to that Plan in the neighbourhood plan.

- 2.7 The required consultation was carried out with the three prescribed bodies. Their responses are helpfully provided as part of the package of submitted documents.
- 2.8 NSC has also prepared a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening report on the Plan. It concluded that the Plan was not likely to have any significant effect on a European site. In particular the screening report assessed the particular impact of the Plan on the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC. Table 4 of the screening report assesses any likely significant effects of each policy in the Plan on this European site. This is best practice.
- 2.9 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various Regulations. None of the statutory consultees have raised any concerns with regard to either neighbourhood plan or to European obligations. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am entirely satisfied that the submitted Plan is compatible with this aspect of European obligations.
- 2.10 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. There has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. On this basis, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

Other examination matters

- 2.11 In examining the Plan I am also required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
 - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and
 - the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.
- 2.12 Having addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.11 of this report I am satisfied that all of the points have been met subject to the contents of this report.

3 Procedural Matters

3.1 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:

- the submitted Plan.
- the Basic Conditions Statement.
- the Consultation Statement.
- the NSC Screening report
- the package of submitted evidence
- the representations made to the Plan.
- the North Somerset Core Strategy January 2017
- the North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 Development Management Policies
- the emerging North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan Part 2 Site Allocations
- The North Somerset Replacement Local Plan 2007 (saved policies)
- the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).
- Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014 and subsequent updates).
- Relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the Plan area on 28 August 2017. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular. My site inspection is covered in more detail in paragraphs 5.9 to 5.16 of this report.

3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan, I was satisfied that the Plan could be examined without the need for a public hearing. I advised NSC of this decision early in the examination process.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 the Parish Council has prepared a Consultation Statement. The Statement reflects the Plan area and its policies. It also provides specific details on the consultation process that took place on the pre-submission version of the Plan from June to August 2016.
- 4.3 The Statement sets out details of the consultation events that were carried out in relation to the initial stages of the Plan. Details are provided about the engagement with the statutory bodies and the public consultation events in the village.

Consultation Processes

- 4.4 The consultation timetable in Section 2 of the Statement is particularly informative. It sets out a consultation route map of how the Plan has progressed. It highlights the following key events:
- The publication of an initial newsletter (February 2015)
 - The May Day presentation (May 2015)
 - The public meeting (July 2015)
 - Manned displays at the monthly village market (July/August/September 2015)
 - Engagement sessions with landowners and businesses (July/August 2015)
 - The public questionnaire (January 2016)
 - The public meeting (March 2016)
 - The preparation of articles and posters to encourage comments on the pre-submission draft Plan (June 2016)
- 4.5 The Appendix to the Statement is commendably thorough. It helpfully reproduces the various documents and consultation methods addressed in the Statement itself. This gives depth and context to the Statement.
- 4.6 The thoroughness of the consultation process has resulted in a Plan has attracted a limited number of representations at the submission phase (see 4.8 below). The Plan has received general support from the various statutory bodies.
- 4.7 From all the evidence provided to me as part of the examination, I conclude that the Plan has sought to develop an inclusive approach to seeking the opinions of all concerned throughout the process. NSC has carried out its own assessment of this matter and has concluded the consultation process has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

Representations Received

4.8 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by the District Council for a six-week period that ended on 4 August 2017. This exercise generated comments from the following persons and organisations:

- Ann Gawthorpe
- C Moore
- Cleeve Parish Council
- Coal Authority
- D Hayler
- Environment Agency
- Highways England
- Historic England
- N Cooper, Claverham Future
- National Grid
- Network Rail
- Portishead Town Council
- Gladman Developments Limited
- Persimmon Homes Severn Valley
- UTAS Claverham Limited
- Somerset County Council

4.9 I have taken account of all these representations as part of the examination of the Plan. Where it is appropriate and relevant to do so I refer specifically to the representation in this report.

5 The Plan Area and the Development Plan Context

The Plan Area

- 5.1 The Plan area covers the eastern part of the parish of Yatton. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 24 April 2015. The Parish Council and local residents have concluded that two separate neighbourhood plans should be produced for the parish (Claverham and Yatton). This decision reflects the two very different identities of the parish. These differences are also reflected in local planning policy – the Core Strategy identifies Yatton as a ‘service’ village and Claverham as an ‘infill’ village. The distinction between the two areas has been sensitively handled both in terms of defining the drawing of the common boundary and in ensuring (in this Plan) that the property owners in the east of Yatton have been kept informed about the production of the Plan.
- 5.2 The Plan area sits to the immediate east of Yatton. The wider parish sits to the north of the A370 in general, and Congresbury in particular. The A370 provides the Plan area with good and convenient access to Bristol, Bristol Airport, the M5 and to Weston-super-Mare. The Plan area is primarily rural and agricultural in character. Claverham Drove provides a very interesting insight into the land use and drainage characteristics of the bulk of the Plan area. The Bristol – Taunton/South West railway line runs through the central part of the Plan area in a south-west/north-east alignment.
- 5.3 The majority of built development in the Plan area is within the village of Claverham. It is largely a linear village based on the route of Claverham Road and Bishops Road. The properties along Claverham Road are largely linear development that over time has connected Claverham to Yatton. The traditional core of the village of Claverham is based around the junctions of Claverham Road with High Street and Chapel Lane. The former UTAS factory sits to the immediate east of the village off Bishops Road. It is largely separated from the village by its extensive boundary landscaping.

Development Plan Context

- 5.4 The North Somerset Core Strategy was adopted in April 2017. It sets out the basis for future development in the North Somerset area up to 2026. It adopts a hierarchical approach to secure the development of the minimum figure of the 20985 dwellings required. Weston-super-Mare is the focus for this new development. Thereafter other significant development is to be provided in Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead. The Core Strategy identifies that the levels of growth in the rural areas will be more restricted.
- 5.5 Claverham is identified as one of a series of ‘infill’ villages in Policy CS33 of the Core Strategy. In these locations development will be strictly controlled to protect the character of the rural area and to prevent unsustainable development. Within identified settlement boundaries of infill villages residential development of an appropriate scale will be supported subject to certain criteria.

- 5.6 Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy sets out the approach to the Bristol to Bath Green Belt. In effect, it maintains the boundaries as defined in the saved Local Plan 2007. The south and east of the Plan area is within the Green Belt. In particular it sits to the south of the properties on the southern side of Claverham Road and to the east of the former UTAS factory site.
- 5.7 The Sites and Policies Plan (Part 1 Development Management Policies) includes a wide range of other more detailed policies. The Basic Conditions Statement helpfully captures these against its various policies. In summary, the following policies have been particularly important in underpinning neighbourhood plan policies:
- DM8 Nature Conservation
 - DM28 Parking Standards
 - DM32 High Quality Design
 - DM38 Extensions to dwellings
 - DM54 Employment development on previously-developed land in the countryside
 - DM68 Protection of sporting, cultural and community facilities
- 5.8 It is clear that the submitted Plan has been prepared within what was the context of this strong and robust local planning policy. In doing so it has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned the emerging Local Plan. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.

Site Visit

- 5.9 I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the Plan area on 28 August 2017. I was fortunate to have chosen a warm and pleasant day to do so.
- 5.10 I drove into the Plan area from Yatton to the west. I was immediately able to see the linear development along Claverham Road and some of the traffic issues addressed in the Plan. I saw the different characteristics of the dwellings, including several fine Edwardian houses with stone and brick contrasting details.
- 5.11 I parked in High Street and looked initially at the village core around the junctions of Claverham Road with High Street and Chapel Lane. I saw the pizza shop and the hairdressers. I also saw the closed restaurant on the Claverham Road. I walked up High Street to Withymead. In doing so I saw a pleasant mix of traditional stone and pantiled roof houses and the more modern housing stock.
- 5.12 I then walked along Bishops Road to the Village Hall. I saw that it was beautifully designed and maintained. I also saw the adjacent May Day Field (LGS1). I saw the entrance to the former UTAS factory site and its relationship to the Village Hall. I saw that the site was shielded from the village and the wider countryside by its extensive landscaping belt. I then walked out of the village to the east so that I could understand the relationship between the wider countryside (here the Green Belt) and the built-up part of the village.

- 5.13 I walked back to the village centre and then into Steamcross so that I could see the proposed local green space in this part of the village (LGS2). I walked around the site and across it using the various footpaths. It was being enjoyed by several other local residents walking their dogs. In looking at this part of the village I was able to see the very imposing Claverham House to the west of Steamcross.
- 5.14 I retraced my steps so that I could look at the Broadcroft Play area (Policy CF2). I approached it along the pathway from Steamcross. This helped me to understand the relevant policy in the Plan. It is a well-stocked play area for young children. From the evidence of my visit it is both well-maintained and much appreciated by the younger generations of the village.
- 5.15 I took the opportunity to walk back along Claverham Road to Yatton so that I could see the various traffic and transportation issues addressed in the Plan. I saw that the village was well-served by the X2 bus service between Bristol and Weston. I also saw the relationship between Claverham and Yatton.
- 5.16 I finished my visit by driving to Lower Claverham and then onto Claverham Drove. At that point I saw the landscape change significantly in character and appearance. Thereafter I drove out of the Plan area along Bishops Road to the east.

6 The Neighbourhood Plan as a whole

- 6.1 This section of the report deals with the submitted neighbourhood plan as a whole and the extent to which it meets the basic conditions. The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has helped considerably in the preparation of this section of the report. It is a well-presented, informative and very professional document.
- 6.2 The Plan needs to meet all the basic conditions to proceed to referendum. This section provides an overview of the extent to which the Plan meets three of the four basic conditions. Paragraphs 2.6 to 2.10 of this report have already addressed the issue of conformity with European Union legislation.

National Planning Policies and Guidance

- 6.3 The key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in March 2012.
- 6.4 The NPPF sets out a range of core land-use planning principles to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following are of particular relevance to the Claverham Neighbourhood Plan:
- a plan led system– in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and the adopted Core Strategy and the Sites and Policies Plan part 1 Development Management Policies
 - Proactively driving and supporting sustainable economic development.
 - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving local communities.
 - Always seeking to secure high quality design and good standards of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings.
- 6.5 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is identified as a golden thread running through the planning system. Paragraph 16 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the development plan.
- 6.6 In addition to the NPPF I have also taken account of other elements of national planning policy including Planning Practice Guidance and the recent ministerial statements.
- 6.7 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance in general terms. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the plan area within the context of its character and location. At its heart are a suite of policies that aim to safeguard its character and appearance and to promote sensitive development appropriate to this character and the position of the village in the local

settlement hierarchy. It also promotes positive development on a significant brownfield site. Table 3 and Section 6 of the Basic Conditions Statement are particularly effective in terms of mapping the Plan policies with the appropriate paragraphs in the NPPF.

- 6.8 At a more practical level the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraphs 17 and 154). This was reinforced with the publication of Planning Practice Guidance in March 2014. Its paragraph 41 (41-041-20140306) indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.9 As submitted the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. The majority of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

Contributing to sustainable development

- 6.10 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social and environmental. It is clear that the submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the Plan area. In the economic dimension, the Plan includes policies for the development of new housing or employment development on the UTAS site (Policy D3) and for infill residential development (Policy D1). It also promotes local employment (Policy EMP1) and new local shops (Policy LS1). In the social role, it includes policies on community facilities (Policies CF1-3), to designate local green spaces (Policy ENV4) and to promote a youth facility (Policy Y1). In the environmental dimension, the Plan positively seeks to address nature conservation (Policy ENV1), the historic environment (Policy ENV2) and hedgerows and trees (Policy ENV3).

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

- 6.11 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in the wider NSC area in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.
- 6.12 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context and supplements the detail already included in the Core Strategy. Table 3 and Section 7 of the Basic Conditions Statement helpfully relate the Plan's policies to policies in the Core Strategy. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. In particular, it makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that the various policies have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 My recommendations focus on the policies themselves given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the Plan area. The wider community and the Parish Council have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in their Plan. The preparation of two separate neighbourhood plans in one parish properly and sensitively reflects its nature and the different characteristics of the two component parts. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance ((41-004-20170728) which indicates that neighbourhood plans must address the development and use of land. In certain areas where this objective has not been secured I recommend appropriate modifications.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted plan.
- 7.6 For clarity this section of the report comments on all policies whether or not I have recommended modifications in order to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

The initial sections of the Plan (Sections 1-6)

- 7.8 These introductory elements of the Plan set the scene for the policies. They are commendable to the extent that they are proportionate to the Plan area and the subsequent policies.
- 7.9 Section 1-4 provide very concise context to the neighbourhood planning process. They set out information on the Plan area, the need for a Plan and the relationship between the Plan area and the adjacent Yatton Plan area.
- 7.10 Section 5 sets out the planning policy context to the Plan area. Its makes appropriate reference to the Core Strategy and to the Sites and Allocations Plan part 1.
- 7.11 Section 6 sets out the consultation events that have been associated with the preparation of the Plan. It inevitably overlaps with the submitted Consultation Statement.

7.12 Section 7 sets out the Vision and Objectives of the Plan. They cascade into the various policies and are specifically referenced throughout the Plan. They are distinctive to the Plan area.

7.13 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of this report.

Policy SB1 – Settlement Boundary

7.14 This policy identifies a Claverham settlement boundary. It is consistent with that set out in local planning policy documents. It is clearly shown in Figure 5. It makes two associated comments. The first is that the boundary should remain, although without indicating any timescale. The second is that the boundary defines the boundary of acceptable infill development and therefore the start of the countryside.

7.15 The policy has attracted several representations which suggest that the policy is already addressed in strategic guidance and is therefore unnecessary. I have considered this matter carefully. I consider that the policy is appropriate. It provides a context to other Plan policies and its identification on the Policies Map will provide clarity both to the decision-maker and to developers.

7.16 However I recommend a series of modifications to the policy. The comment about the boundary ‘remaining’ is unnecessary. The Plan period sets out the operational period of the Plan. The commentary of the purpose of the settlement boundary is also unnecessary as it is addressed in local planning policies. On this basis, I recommend their deletion.

Replace ‘shall be...as’ with ‘is’ and delete ‘and defines.... countryside’

Policy D1 – New Development General

7.17 This policy provides a more detailed context to the previous policy. It sets out an approach to support new development within the settlement boundary and to introduce strict control outside the boundary. It does so in a significant level of detail in general, and in particular by reference to definitions of largescale and small scale major developments and minor developments.

7.18 I sought clarification from the Parish Council on this somewhat complicated approach. It comments that it was seeking to add clarity and assurance to Policy CS33 of the adopted North Somerset Core Strategy. Whilst this approach is understandable the Core Strategy and any ‘made’ neighbourhood plan will take on complementary roles within the development plan. In this respect, there is no need for the neighbourhood plan to repeat or reinforce the wider suite of strategic policies. On this basis, I recommend that the third and fourth components of the policy are deleted.

7.19 The first part of the policy sets out support for minor development (defined as 1-9 dwellings) within the settlement boundary. Given the nature of the village and the way

that the development boundary is drawn it is highly likely that the vast majority of all developments will be of this limited scale. Nevertheless, the Plan includes no evidence on this size restriction. The wider context is set by Policy CS33 of the Core Strategy. It comments that in Claverham and other infill villages new residential development should be of an appropriate scale which respects its scale and character. In order to ensure that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the development plan I recommend a modification to address this matter.

In the first part of the policy replace ‘New minor...9 dwellings’ with ‘Proposals for new residential development of an appropriate scale which reflects the size and character of Claverham’

Delete the third and fourth part of the policies

Delete Section 7.3 (Definitions)

*Insert the following additional supporting text as a new paragraph in section 9.1:
Policy D1 sets out a neighbourhood plan level approach to new residential development in the Plan area. It consolidates the approach already set out in the Core Strategy. Within the settlement boundary it is anticipated that the majority of developments will be small in scale (nine or less dwellings). Within the context of the policy any larger developments would be assessed in terms of their relationship to the size and character of the village.*

Policy D2 - Design: Design of New Developments, Conversions and Extensions

- 7.20 This policy sets out the Plan’s approach to design matters. The Parish Council has helpfully clarified that its intention is that the policy should apply to all developments. Within this context there is a specific section on house extensions and alterations. The policy makes appropriate reference to the Claverham Character Statement 2002.
- 7.21 The submitted policy reflects the importance of design matters in both national and local planning policies. One of the 12 core planning principles in the NPPF (paragraph 17) is ‘(always seek) to secure high-quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings’. The approach adopted in the policy has regard to the more detailed design elements of the NPPF. In particular, it sets out a positive requirement for high quality and inclusive design (paragraph 57), it develops a robust and comprehensive policy (paragraph 58), it proposes outlines of design principles (paragraph 59) and does so in a locally distinctive yet non-prescriptive way (paragraph 60).
- 7.22 Within this context I recommend a series of modifications to the policy. In the main the modifications reposition narrative from within the policy into the supporting text. In other places, the modifications introduce language which will provide the type of clarity in the policy required by the NPPF.

In the first part of the policy:

Delete the first sentence.

**In the second sentence replace ‘are to’ with ‘should’
Delete the final sentence.**

In the third part of the policy:

Replace ‘must include..... latest version’ with ‘should provide car parking in accordance with North Somerset Council Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document’

In the fourth part of the policy:

In the first and second sentences replace ‘must’ with ‘should’

Replace ‘demonstrate..... latest version’ with ‘should comply with North Somerset Council’s Residential Design Guide section 1’

In the fifth part of the policy:

Insert ‘into new developments’ between ‘incorporated’ and ‘wherever’.

Reverse the respective positions of the second and the fifth parts of the policy.

At the end of the supporting text insert the following:

Policy D2 sets out the Plan’s approach to design. It has been designed to give a neighbourhood plan scale approach to that adopted in the NPPF. The policy is designed to set out key principles on the one hand and to encourage modern developments and design initiative on the other hand. For example, the first part of the policy does not mean that new building should copy or apply features of earlier buildings. However, it does apply to important details such as the choice of materials and the size of development.

Policy D3 - Redevelopment of Site PS1

- 7.23 This policy sits at the heart of the Plan. It has the ability to represent the most significant change in the neighbourhood area. The policy relates to the former UTAS employment site to the immediate east of the village. It secures vehicular access off Bishops Road and is visually contained within its extensive landscape boundary. The site ceased its employment use earlier this year as the company rationalised its operations in the UK. The implementation of the policy has a significant ability to contribute towards the achievement of the economic dimension of sustainable development in the Plan area.
- 7.24 The policy proposes the allocation of the site for residential or mixed residential/employment uses. It does so subject to a series of criteria that address its landscaped boundaries, the access arrangements both to the site and to the adjacent Village Hall, the retention of heritage assets and lighting matters.
- 7.25 The policy has attracted a range of representations from NSC, the landowners and the development industry. I also sought clarification from the Parish Council on the design, the construction and the content of the policy. In summary, the policy raises the following three key issues – its relationship to national policies, its relationship to local policies and the details of the various criteria.

- 7.26 On the first issue the proposed identification of the site for housing or mixed housing and employment uses has significant regard to national planning policy. One of the 12 core planning principles in paragraph 17 of the NPPF is to 'encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed provided that it is not of a high environmental value'. Within this overarching context paragraphs 22 and 51 provide specific support and encouragement for such proposals. Paragraph 22 in particular comments that 'applications for alternative uses of land and buildings (...in employment use) should be treated on their own merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.' Plainly the eventual development of houses on this site (either alone or with other development) would boost significantly the supply of housing in the Plan area.
- 7.27 On the second issue the local planning policy context addresses this matter in considerable detail. Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy identifies the need for at least 10,100 new employment opportunities in the period up to 2026. The proposed distribution of new jobs and associated employment land follows the same hierarchical approach as set out in paragraph 5.4 to 5.6 of this report. The matter is taken further in the emerging Sites and Policies Part 2 Site Allocations Plan. This document has now reached its Main Modifications stage.
- 7.28 Emerging Policy SA4 (which combines policies SA4-SA6 as originally submitted) provides for a degree of flexibility in terms of the use of employment buildings and land where the wider objectives of local planning policy are not compromised. Its supporting text at 4.32 to 4.34 identifies that there may be a range of circumstances where existing employment floorspace may no longer be viable or represent a suitable option for the site's future. It also highlights that the planning system has a positive role to play in facilitating the appropriate change. On this basis, the emerging Policy SA4 sets out support for the use of employment land and buildings for other uses where a series of circumstances arise. These include evidence that the site is no longer capable of offering business accommodation and that the overall ambitions of the local planning strategy are not harmed. NSC and many of the organisations making representations on this matter do not consider that the longer-term retention of the site in employment use is fundamental to local planning policies. By definition the Plan area is remote from Weston and the other major settlements in the North Somerset area. Given the advanced nature of this Plan it is appropriate to give it significant weight.
- 7.29 Plainly the circumstances on this site have generated the policy approach in the Plan itself. The Parish Council has addressed the site as an opportunity that has arisen rather than within a wider context of a site selection and evaluation process. Such a process would not have been expected within the context of the Plan area's position in the settlement hierarchy in general, and the contents of Core Strategy policy CS33 in particular. On this basis, it would be appropriate for the Plan to allocate the site for residential or for residential/employment uses. Given the evidence from various bodies and the current marketing of the site I am satisfied that there is no need for the neighbourhood plan policy directly to address the viability issue in its own right. The matter is already addressed in the emerging Part 2 Site Allocations Plan.

- 7.30 Within the framework set by both adopted and emerging policies I am satisfied that the policy is in general conformity with the policies in the development plan. The site owners suggest that the site should be located within the settlement boundary. In the event that the site is redeveloped this may well be the case in the future. However, at this stage, and given the current use of the land, I am satisfied that the settlement boundary is correctly and appropriately defined.
- 7.31 On the third issue several detailed representations have been made on the contents of the policy itself. I address these in paragraphs 7.32 to 7.35 of this report. However, in the first instances I recommend that the policy is restructured so that it explicitly identifies the site and its proposed uses. As submitted this statement comes at the end of the policy (item 5). This approach makes the policy difficult to understand and does not provide a structured context for the detailed criteria. I also recommend the deletion of elements of text from the grey policy/text box that are irrelevant to the policy and its formulation.
- 7.32 The first part of the policy sets out to preserve all the natural vegetation that surrounds the site. It also requires the creation of a 'Protected Site Boundary Zone' during construction works. The site owners and potential developers argue that this criterion is overly-restrictive. I have particular concerns about the retention of all trees. This may have unintended consequences and could prevent the natural management and enhancement of this landscaping as part of any new development. I recommend accordingly. I also recommend modifications to the site protection measures. At this stage, they are very prescriptive and are likely to be overtaken by events and more detailed work. Figure 7 shows the physical extent of the 'Protected Site Boundary Zone'. Whilst I have recommended modifications to the policy I am satisfied that this buffer serves a clear and appropriate purpose. In particular it provides for a proportionate degree of separation between the potential development site and residential properties to the west, the Village Hall to the south, and open countryside to the east.
- 7.33 The second criterion refers to the safeguarding of the access to the adjacent village hall. The site owners consider that this matter is unnecessary as it is separately controlled through commercial arrangements. I have considered this matter carefully and looked at the arrangements when I visited the Plan area. I am satisfied that the criterion serves a planning purpose. However, I recommend modifications to its wording.
- 7.34 The third criterion refers to the safeguarding of the listed heritage assets on the site. The site owners consider that this matter is unnecessary as it is separately controlled through separate legislation. I am satisfied that the criterion serves a planning purpose. However, I recommend modifications to its wording.
- 7.35 The fourth criterion addresses lighting matters on the site. The site owners express concern that it does so by reference to non-statutory documents. I am satisfied that the criterion serves a planning purpose. However, I recommend modifications to its wording so that it adopts a more general approach to this important matter.

Replace the policy with the following:

The site of the former UTAS complex off Bishops Road as shown hatched in red on Figure 7 is allocated for either residential or mixed residential and employment development subject to the following criteria:

- The existing trees, hedges and walls in the buffer zone shown on figure 7 should be retained where that approach is consistent with maintaining the existing screening of the site within the wider environment and the sensitive management of the various natural features;
- The installation of appropriate measures to protect local wildlife and the landscaping to be retained on the site during the construction period;
- The existing vehicular and footpath access to the adjacent village hall are safeguarded as part of the development of the site;
- The listed buildings on the site are sensitively incorporated into the comprehensive redevelopment of the site; and
- Any external lighting proposals should respect the location of the site on the edge of the village and adjacent to the countryside and the Green Belt.

In Figure 7 replace 'Protected Site Boundary Zone' with 'Buffer Zone'

In Figure 7 replace the reference in the key 'Local Green Space 1 (May Day Field) Policy ENV/4' with 'May Day Field open space'

In Figure 7 insert note to read: The proposed development site referred to in Policy D3 relates only to the red shaded area. The buffer zone, the village hall and the May Day Field open space surrounding the site are excluded from the proposed development area.

Delete the text in brackets in the grey box after the policy

Insert the following additional supporting text at the end of the text on page 24:

Policy D3 allocates the site for housing or mixed housing/employment use. Its development would be controlled by the five criteria set out in the policy. They reflect the sensitive location of the site on the eastern edge of the village and adjacent to open countryside (in this location the Green Belt). The matter of the retention of the existing landscape and wildlife habitat buffer is particularly important. It will assist in maintaining a habitats corridor around the site. The first criterion of the policy allows for a limited degree of site management both in its own right and to reflect emerging proposals for new development.

Policy DR1 – Foul and Surface Water Drainage

7.36 This policy addresses foul and surface water drainage. It reflects the sensitivity of the Plan area to flooding. It also draws on detailed work being undertaken by the Somerset Levels and Moors Internal Drainage Board area.

7.37 NSC has made very helpful suggestions for the reconfiguration of this policy and its supporting text. As submitted it generates a degree of overlap between planning policy (which is appropriate for inclusion in a neighbourhood plan) and the operation of the

development management system (which is for NSC to determine). I recommend accordingly.

Replace the policy with:

New developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems with long term storage potential to ensure that there is no increase in surface water run-off from the site concerned.

Pumped schemes for surface water drainage will not be supported unless back up power supplies and associated arrangements are put in place in the event of power supply failures.

Add the following text to the end of the third paragraph of text on page 28:

Policy DR1 addresses these important matters with a view to ensuring that new development does not add to the flood risk in the Plan area. The key component is the use of sustainable drainage systems. The second part of the policy identifies the Plan's approach to other systems where sustainable drainage schemes may not be either technically possible or appropriate to the site concerned. If a site is in multiple ownership long term maintenance arrangement will be expected to be put in place. [insert here NSC additional text – its page 8]

Policy EMP1 – Local Employment

- 7.38 This policy supports new small-scale employment development through either the re-use of former employment sites or through the conversion of other buildings.
- 7.39 The policy has regard to the positive approach that the NPPF takes on this matter. The policy also builds in appropriate environmental safeguards. It meets the basic conditions.

Policy R1 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

- 7.40 This policy offers support for local community-based renewable and low carbon energy generation projects. It identifies a series of supplementary planning documents with which it requires proposals to comply. It also sets out a comprehensive schedule of criteria against which proposals will be assessed.
- 7.41 I recommend two modifications to the policy. The first stems from the clarification provided by the Parish Council on the relationship of projects to the local community. The second includes a further supplementary planning document in the schedule in the policy as advised by NSC.

In the first part of the policy delete ‘offer....and’ and add ‘Biodiversity and Trees SPD’ to the schedule of SPDs.

Policy T1 – Highways

- 7.42 This policy (and Policies T2/T3) address a series of highway-related matters in the Plan area. This policy sets out support for measures to reduce traffic speed throughout Bishops Road. I saw some of the implications of this matter when I visited the Plan area.
- 7.43 Policy T1 is not in itself a land use policy. Rather it is a proposal from the Parish Council to NSC to reduce traffic speeds. Plainly that will be a separate matter for NSC and in its capacity as the highways authority. National policy anticipates that proposals of this nature may arise as part of the preparation of a neighbourhood plan. However, it comments that such policies should be located in a discreet part of the Plan and which would not form part of the development plan. Plainly these circumstances apply here and I recommend accordingly.

Delete policy

Reposition the policy into a separate non-land use part of the Plan

Policy T2 – Highways Safety

- 7.44 This policy provides a more detailed schedule of traffic measures than the approach taken in Policy T1. In this case the second to sixth parts of the policy are non-land use in character. I recommend modifications for the same reasons as those set out for Policy T1.
- 7.45 The first part of the policy relates traffic movements arising from new developments to the character of the road network in the Plan area. This is land use in its nature. I recommend modifications to its structure and to bring the type of clarity that would be required to enable NSC to make decisions on planning applications in a consistent fashion. In particular the submitted policy fails to explain the implication of ‘minimising traffic movements’ and ‘not compromising the use of roads.’

Replace the first part of the policy with the following:

Development proposals should be designed so that they are capable of being incorporated into the capacity of the local highways network in a satisfactory fashion. Developments should respect the use of the network for leisure and recreation purposes and should not unacceptably affect their rural character and alignment, including the relationship of carriageways with adjacent walls and hedges.

Delete the second to sixth parts of the policy

Reposition them into a separate non-land use part of the Plan

Policy T3 – Vehicle Parking

- 7.46 This policy addresses the specific issue of vehicle parking. The first part comments that on-street car parking should remain unrestricted. As with Policy T1 it is a proposal from the Parish Council to NSC on this matter. Plainly that will be a separate matter

for NSC and in its capacity as the highways authority. It is a non-land issue and I recommend accordingly as I have done with Policy 1 and parts of Policy T2.

- 7.47 The second part of the policy is more detailed. It sets out to ensure that potential on street car parking is not included within the requirements for car parking in NSC's application of its car parking standards as part of the operation of the development management system. NSC comments that its supplementary planning document adopts a case-by-case approach to this matter. The proposed blanket ban in the submitted policy would conflict with this approach. As such it would confuse the application of this matter in the Plan area. On this basis, I recommend that it is deleted.

Delete the first part of the policy

Reposition it into a separate non-land use part of the Plan

Delete the second part of the policy

Policy PT1 – Public Transport (Buses and School Buses)

- 7.48 This policy provides an appropriate degree of support for measures that would improve the frequency and ease of use of buses. It also supports the provision of bicycle stands in and around bus stops.
- 7.49 As with elements of Policies T1-3 these matters are not land use in nature. I recommend accordingly.

Delete policy

Reposition the policy into a separate non-land use part of the Plan

Policy LS1 – Local Shops

- 7.50 The policy offers support for the establishment of new shops either within the settlement boundary or as part of a farm complex. The policy reflects the community's concern that the Plan area does not have a general retail shop and that trips are necessary to Yatton for day-to-day services.
- 7.51 I sought clarification from the Parish Council on the types of shop that would be supported by the policy in general and the significance of its reference to 'small-scale farm diversification selling homer-produced goods'. It clarified that within the settlement boundary general shop uses would be supported. The more specialised retail uses are intended for the farm diversification projects. I recommend modifications to the policy to take account of this helpful clarity. I also recommend modifications to take account of the flexibility that now exists in the General Permitted Development Order. In certain circumstances retail units could be established in the Plan area without the need for planning permission.

Replace the policy with the following:

Insofar as planning permission is required proposals for the use of existing buildings within the settlement boundary for retail use will be supported.

Proposals for the use of existing buildings on farms for retail use will be supported where they are part of a farm diversification project and sell produce prepared or grown on the farm concerned.

In all cases the proposals should comply with Policy CS21 of the North Somerset Core Strategy and policy DM65 of the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 Development Management Policies.

Policy CF1 – Community Facilities – Village Hall and Car Park

- 7.52 This policy sets out to safeguard the use and availability of the Village Hall and its car park. The policy reflects that the village has little infrastructure. It also recognises that the Village Hall is a key focal point for community activity and interaction.
- 7.53 The policy is entirely appropriate. It has the ability to make a major contribution to the achievement of the social dimension of sustainable development in the Plan area. However as drafted it offers no advice on how the Village Hall is to be retained. The Parish Council has helpfully advised that its intention is that the policy should prevent the use of the Village Hall for alternative/non-community purposes. I reflect this within the context of a recommended modification to the policy. It would have the effect of relating the ambition in the Plan to the development management process. It would also provide NSC with the mechanism to secure the community's intention in drafting the policy. I also recommend that the Village Hall is specifically shown on a separate map identifying this and the other two key community facilities (Policy CF2/3).

Replace the policy with the following:

The Village Hall, its car park, access road and footpath access as shown on Map [insert number] are identified as a key community facility. Proposals that would result in either the loss of, or significant harm to this community facility, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that its operation is no longer economically viable or that there is an alternative, accessible facility within or adjoining the settlement boundary as identified in Policy SB1.

Show the Village Hall on a separate map identifying this and the other two key community facilities (Policy CF2/3).

Policy CF2 – Community Facilities – Broadcroft Play Area

- 7.54 This policy is largely identical to Policy CF1. In this case it refers to the Broadcroft Play Area. I saw this play area on my visit to the Plan area and its value was immediately obvious.

- 7.55 For the same reasons as set out in relation to Policy CF1 I recommend modifications to the policy.

Replace the policy with the following:

The Broadcroft Play Area as shown on Map [insert number] is identified as a key community facility. Proposals that would result in either the loss of, or significant harm to this community facility will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there is an alternative accessible children’s play area within or adjoining the settlement boundary as identified in Policy SB1.

Show the play area on a separate map identifying this and the other two key community facilities (Policy CF1/3).

Policy CF3 – Community Facilities – Claverham Meeting House

- 7.56 This policy is largely identical to Policy CF1. In this case it refers to the Claverham Meeting House.
- 7.57 For the same reasons as set out in relation to Policy CF1/2 I recommend modifications to the policy.

The Claverham Meeting House, Barn and cottage as shown on Map [insert number] is identified as a key community facility. Proposals that would result in either the loss of, or significant harm to this community facility will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that its operation is no longer economically viable or that there is an alternative accessible location within or adjoining the settlement boundary as identified in Policy SB1.

Show the Meeting House on a separate map identifying this and the other two key community facilities (Policy CF1/2).

Policy Y1 – Youth Facility

- 7.58 The policy recognises that the Plan area has no specific youth facilities. It seeks to support the work of a local group that is seeking to create a youth hub. This is entirely the type of approach that is appropriate for a land-use based neighbourhood plan. Plainly it has the ability to make a major contribution to the achievement of the social dimension of sustainable development in the Plan area.
- 7.59 I sought clarification from the Parish Council on the structure and the content of the policy. Given its origins it is not perhaps surprising that its focus is on its inclusivity, safety and appropriate standards of adult supervision. Nevertheless, these are operational matters rather than land use issues and I recommend accordingly. As other elements of the policy acknowledge the key land use issues involved in this policy are its accessibility within the village and safeguarding the amenities of properties within the immediate locality of the chosen site.

Replace the policy to read:

Proposals for the establishment of a youth facility within the settlement boundary will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- **The site or building concerned would be accessible by foot, cycle and car; and**
- **The proposal would comply with Policy DM69 of the North Somerset Council Sites and Policies Plan part 1 Development Management Policies in general, and the need to safeguard the amenities of properties in the immediate locality of the chosen site in particular.**

Policy ENV1 – Nature Conservation

- 7.60 The policy sets out the Plan’s approach to nature conservation. It reflects the rich wildlife within the Plan area. This is comprehensively set out in the supporting text in Section 12.1.
- 7.61 NSC support the policy in general terms. However, it comments that in some areas the policy is not as robust as the equivalent policy in the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 (DM8). Plainly this is an important matter in its own right and given the significance of the wider issue in national policy. I recommend modifications accordingly.

In parts 1-3 of the policy replace ‘normally be permitted’ with ‘not be supported’

In part 4 of the policy delete ‘(see also ENV3)’

At the end of this part of the policy add the following:

[Extended policy provided by NSC at the top of its page 11 including ‘creating’ after ‘enhancing’]

At the end of the supporting text on page 40 include the proposed NSC footnote on its page 11

Policy ENV2 – Historic Environment

- 7.62 This policy refers to this historic environment. In particular it addresses listed buildings, locally important buildings and a wish to preserve open fields between Claverham and Cleeve as Green Belt.
- 7.63 Taking the latter point first I can understand the significance of the Green belt issue. However, the Green Belt is already defined and is safeguarded by robust national policies. As such I recommend the deletion of this part of the policy. The related supporting text on this point in paragraph 12.2 comments on the importance of the separation between the two settlements. As it makes no policy comments I am satisfied that it should remain in the Plan. However, I recommend a modification so that its existing Green Belt status is highlighted.
- 7.64 The second part of the policy follows on from detailed research and evidence. I can see that it is supported by Heritage England. However, it does not have regard to Claverham Neighbourhood Plan – Examiner’s Report

national policy which indicates that the responsibility for preparing local lists (in this case described as Locally Important Buildings) rests with the local planning authority (here NSC). The Parish Council have helpfully responded to my clarification note on this matter. It would be content for these buildings to be incorporated into a local list for the wider NSC area at some future point.

- 7.65 On this basis I recommend modifications to the format of the structure of the policy. In the first instance, the modification would apply separate policy considerations to listed buildings and to other identified buildings. In the second instance, I recommend that the local buildings be identified as ‘important character buildings’.

In the first part of the policy delete ‘and Locally Important’

Replace the second part of the policy with:

The following buildings are identified as important character buildings.

[List here the buildings in the second part of the submitted policy]

Proposals for the demolition, redevelopment or substantial alterations to important character buildings should demonstrate the consideration that has been given to retaining:

- **The important character building itself;**
- **Its most distinctive and important features;**
- **The positive elements of its setting and its relationship to its immediate surroundings; and**
- **The contribution that the building and its setting makes to the character of the local area.**

Delete the third part of the policy

At the end of the second paragraph of text in 12.2 add:

‘The separation of the two settlements is safeguarded by the Bristol to Bath Green Belt’.

In the first paragraph of 12.2 replace ‘Locally.... Walls’ with ‘important character buildings. This matter is addressed in the second part of the policy’.

Policy ENV3 – Hedgerows and Trees

- 7.66 This policy addresses the retention of hedgerows and trees. It reflects the rural setting and context to the Plan area.
- 7.67 I recommend a series of modifications to bring the clarity to the policy required by the NPPF. In particular I recommend that the third and fourth components of the policy are deleted. The third component is a site maintenance issue rather than a policy matter. The fourth point, although well-intentioned, is well beyond the planning process and offers no guidance or clarity to a developer. I also recommend the deletion of the fifth part of the policy. This is a consequential matter to a recommended modification to Policy ENV4 (LGS1).

**In the second part of the policy delete the text in brackets.
Delete the third, fourth and fifth components of the policy**

Delete the final sentence of the first paragraph of 12.3

Policy ENV4 – Local Green Spaces

- 7.68 This policy proposes two parcels of land as local green space. LGS1 is the May Day Field adjacent to the Village Hall. LGS2 is land north of Chestnut Drive. The latter site has recently been designated as a Village Green under separate legislation. I looked at both sites on my recent visit to the Plan area. Proposed local green spaces are addressed in paragraphs 76 to 78 of the NPPF. The context is that such designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open spaces. On this basis, the designation should only be used where three circumstances apply as described in paragraph 77 of the NPPF.
- 7.69 The two sites have been properly addressed in the evidence bundle. In the case of LGS2 this overlaps with the information submitted as part of the Village Green application. In both cases I am satisfied that they are in close proximity to the community that they serve and that they are local in character and not extensive tracts of land.
- 7.70 I am satisfied that LGS2 is demonstrably special to the local community. This was separately addressed as part of the village green application. In addition, I saw significant use of the site by dog walkers and other members of the public when I visited the Plan area. I am satisfied that it would be appropriate for the site to be both local green space and a village green given that they are affected by separate legislation.
- 7.71 In relation to LGS1 I have looked at the evidence and information very carefully. I can see in the evidence bundle that the site has been used for a range of leisure and cultural functions. At the same time, I can see that the site is only available to the community with the consent of the site owners. This is acknowledged in the evidence bundle submitted with the Plan. In addition, the information on the community use of the land concerned refers to relatively recent history (2013-2016).
- 7.72 I can see that the community events held on this parcel of land are precisely the type of land uses that are envisaged by the NPPF and will have been very helpful to community cohesion in the Plan area. However, on balance I am not satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the site is demonstrably special to the local community in terms of access rights and the longevity of the community events that have taken place recently. I recommend that LGS 1 is deleted from the schedule. This conclusion reflects the high tests set out for such designation in the NPPF.
- 7.73 I also recommend a modification to the structure of the policy itself. Whilst it designates land as LGS it does not identify the policy implications of doing so in accordance with paragraphs 76 and 78 of the NPPF. I also recommend the deletion of unnecessary detail in the description of LGS2.

Delete LGS1 from the policy and the Policy Map

Replace the policy with the following:

‘Land north of Chestnut Drive adjacent to Steamcross and as shown on the Policy Map is designated as a Local Green Space.

New development will not be supported on this Local Green Space except in very special circumstances.’

Other Matters

- 7.74 This report has recommended a series of modifications both to the policies and to the supporting text in the submitted Plan. Where consequential changes to the text are required directly as a result of my recommended modification to the policy concerned I have highlighted them in this report. However other changes to the general text may be required elsewhere in the Plan as a result of the recommended modifications to the policies. It will be appropriate for NSC and the Parish Council to have the flexibility to make any necessary consequential changes to the general text. I recommend accordingly.

Modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies

- 7.75 The Plan addresses the various local planning documents in differing ways in various parts of the submitted Plan. To ensure consistency and to bring the clarity required by the NPPF throughout the Plan period I recommend that any references to the following documents should adopt the following titles:

North Somerset Council Core Strategy January 2017

North Somerset Council Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies July 2016

North Somerset Council Sites and Policies Plan Part 2: Site Allocations Plan 2006-2026

- 7.76 I have made certain recommendations which require additional information to be shown either on the policies map or in separate plans. There are conflicting issues on this matter. On the one hand, the Plan needs to have the clarity so that it can be applied consistently and with certainty by the decision-maker. On the other hand, the policies map (Figure 4) is already heavy with detail and is at a scale that makes it difficult to display specific sites. I recommend that consideration is given to amending the scale of figure 4 or including within it some form of reference to the position of more detailed maps within the Plan.

Rationalise the approach to the level of detail on the various maps both in their own right and to respond to recommended modifications that touch on this matter in particular.

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2026. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community.
- 8.2 Following my independent examination of the Plan I have concluded that the Claverham Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.
- 8.3 This report has recommended some technical modifications to the policies in the Plan. Nevertheless, it remains fundamentally unchanged in its role and purpose.

Conclusion

- 8.4 On the basis of the findings in this report I recommend to North Somerset Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report that the Claverham Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

Referendum Area

- 8.5 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Plan area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as approved by the District Council on 24 April 2015.
- 8.6 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth and efficient manner.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
3 October 2017