



East Coker Neighbourhood Plan

September 2018

2018-2028

What is neighbourhood planning?

‘Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead.’

Quoted From: Department for Communities and Local Government

Foreword

Welcome to the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan which the community has helped put together through a range of consultation exercises. The plan aims to give local people more say about the scale and nature of the development which takes place in their area.

The East Coker Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of the Parish of East Coker and is not just about housing, employment, community facilities, transport, and the heritage and natural environment, but also about maintaining and improving our quality of life. The Plan identifies projects and improvements that the community can take forward in the coming years with support from external funding where possible.

The Plan will run until 2028 so is for the long term, which is why planning for younger generations is important, as well as the lifetime needs of the community as a whole.

The Plan has been prepared by local people with some external support, following extensive community consultation and engagement over a period of years and is now put forward as the completed plan following further consultation with official bodies as well as the public and an independent examination.

Acknowledgements and thanks are due to East Coker Parish Council and Members of East Coker Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group past and present for delivering this Neighbourhood Plan:

September 2018


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Section 1

Background



*“Now the light falls
Across the open field, leaving the deep lane
Shuttered with branches, dark in the afternoon,
... TS Eliot, “East Coker”*

1 About The Neighbourhood Plan

1.1 A decision was made by the East Coker Parish Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for East Coker Parish in 2013 and it established a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which includes representatives of the Parish Council as well as others who have been willing to assist with the project and have some relevant expertise to offer. The Plan Area was formally designated by South Somerset District Council (SSDC) in September 2013.

1.2 The purpose of the Plan is to provide a framework:

- For the guidance and control of new development to support East Coker's continued prosperity and well-being
- To identify the features in the Parish within the natural and built environment that are of greatest value and that are worthy of protection for the long term
- To identify and help meet the needs of the local community in the coming years

1.3 The Plan covers a 10 year period, but may be subject to review in due course. It covers the whole of East Coker Parish and so includes the villages of East and North Coker, the south western edge of Yeovil, and part of Wraxhill Ward. It also encompasses the attractive countryside that surrounds the villages and adjacent hamlets, which is of landscape value and has some Grade 1, high quality agricultural land. A plan of the Parish and Neighbourhood Plan Area is set out below.

1.4 The Final Plan comprises these documents:

- The Plan Written Statement
- The Proposals Map
- Consultation Statement
- Basic Conditions Statement

1.5 In accordance with Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, this East Coker Neighbourhood Plan 2018 was submitted formally to South Somerset District Council, who published the Plan for a further 6 week consultation period with statutory agencies and the public, prior to arranging the examination of the plan by an independent planning inspector. This has now been completed. The Examiner made a number of modifications to the Plan, which have been incorporated in this final plan.

How the Plan is organised

1.6 The Plan has a number of sections which cover a range of subjects. It includes background information, together with policies and their

justification, as well as projects to benefit the community.

East Coker Summary

1.7 East Coker Parish lies approximately 3 miles to the South West of Yeovil with a population of just over 1,700. East Coker was the birthplace in 1627 of William Dampier (hydrographer, explorer, writer, and naturalist) - the first Englishman to set foot in Australia. He was a fundamental inspiration to Banks, Cook, and Darwin, and important to the development of Western science and English exploration.

The village of East Coker will forever be associated with the poet T.S Eliot and in addition to being the poet's final place of rest, he gave the name 'For East Coker' to the second of his Four Quartets, the sequence of poems that crowned his career.

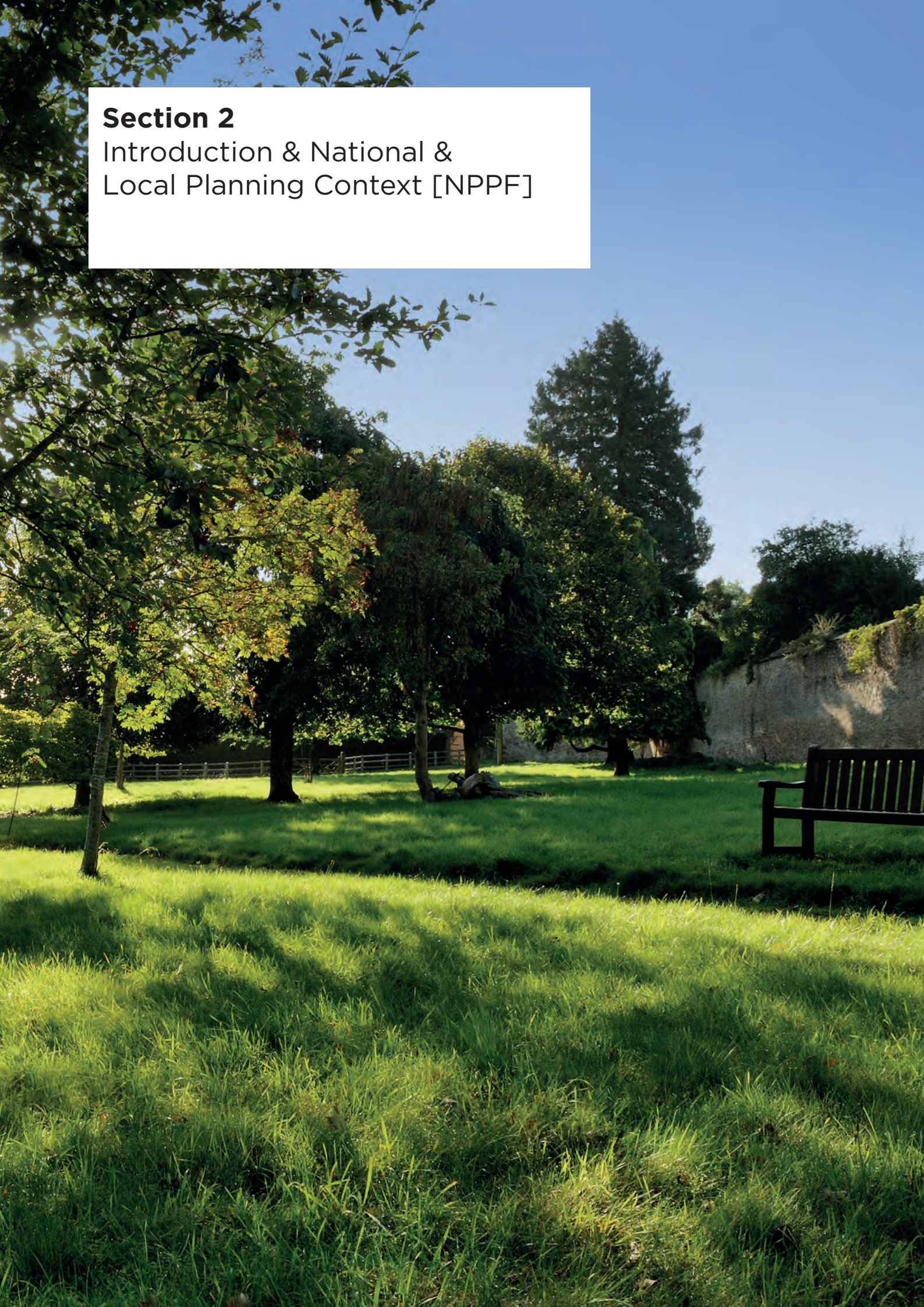
In the 18th Century East Coker was a major centre for the production of Flax due to the village being surrounded by Grade 1 Agricultural land. It became known for the production of rope and twine subsequently the Cokers were the major supplier of ropes to the British Navy and Nelson's Fleet.

The Plan shows the Parish boundary which is also the Neighbourhood Plan boundary.



Section 2

Introduction & National & Local Planning Context [NPPF]



2 Introduction & National and Local Planning Context for England and South Somerset

2.1 Neighbourhood Plans have to respect and reflect National and District Local Planning Policy. However it is also considered important that, when local people examine the Neighbourhood Plan, they are provided with an understanding of the national and Local Planning Policy context. This is so that they do not continually have to refer to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and/or the Local Plan, simply to gain an understanding of which policies apply in their Parish from a range of different documents.

2.2 The main National Planning Acts in force at present include: The Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compensation Act 2004; The Planning Act 2008 and the Localism Act of 2011. The right for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans was established by the Localism Act in 2011, and the Housing & Planning Act 2012 which was accompanied by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. Therefore, Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet a number of basic conditions that are addressed in a detailed Statement later in the plan process. This will need to show that the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Has had regard to National Policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
- Is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area - in this case the South Somerset Local Plan
- Be compatible with the European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations or UK superseding legislation.

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

2.3 In addition to the planning acts referred to above, the main policy guidance provided by Government is within the NPPF of 2012 and the Planning Practice Guidance. These set out guidance to local planning authorities, planning applicants and local communities on how the Government expects the planning system to be delivered in support of sustainable development, both economic regeneration and environmental protection.

NPPF retains the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', as defined by five principles:

1. living within the planet's environmental limits
2. ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
3. achieving a sustainable economy
4. promoting good governance
5. using sound science responsibly

(A revised NPPF was published in July 2018, but this plan has been examined based on the transitional arrangements as set out in paragraph 214 of the 2018 NPPF.)

The East Coker Neighbourhood Plan is designed to embrace these principles and roles of sustainable development.

2.4 Following scrutiny of the Plan by an independent examiner, and the incorporation of any modifications, the Plan is subject to a local referendum. Provided that more than 50% of those who vote support the Plan, South Somerset District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, will formally bring the Plan into force and it will be 'made'. At this point, the Plan and its policies will, together with the South Somerset Local Plan, form part of the local statutory 'Development Plan' for the area and planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless other material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The policies in the plan will also be used and given weight by independent planning inspectors when planning appeals are held in the area, following refusal of planning permission by the District Council and when East Coker Neighbourhood Plan policies are referred to in the reasons for refusal of planning permission.

2.5 The preparation of the Plan therefore means that the local community has a greater voice in determining the location, nature and quality of new development and in assessing its impact on the character of the villages and surrounding rural landscape within the Parish. However, it must be emphasised that Neighbourhood Plans are not and are not intended to be simply a mechanism for opposing the principle of new development.

South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028

2.6 The South Somerset Local Plan for the whole District has been prepared by the South Somerset District Council and sets out policies and proposals for the future development of the District until 2028. This Local Plan was formally adopted by the District Council in March 2015, following an extensive Examination by a Planning Inspector, in which East Coker Parish Council and other organisations and individuals fully participated.

2.7 The Local Plan policies and proposals have been used to help guide the preparation of the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan and where appropriate in the final plan a cross reference will be made next to Neighbourhood Plan policies to those that are relevant to the subject matter in the Local Plan, as well as the appropriate sections in National Planning Policy Framework. The Neighbourhood Plan includes and adds more local detail and policies than would be appropriate for inclusion in the District wide Local Plan, providing the necessary 'Local Distinctiveness' for East Coker Parish.

2.8 SSDC Policy SS1 of the Local Plan includes reference to Rural Settlements such as East Coker and states as follows:

"Rural Settlements will be considered as part of the countryside to which national countryside protection policies apply (subject to the exceptions identified in Policy SS2)."

These form part of a hierarchy which includes Strategic Towns, Market Towns and Rural Centres.

Yeovil as being a: "Strategically Significant Town and the prime focus for development in South Somerset."

Clearly the Yeovil Southern Urban Extension which is described further in 2.14 is seen as being part of Yeovil's growth, although it lies within East Coker Parish.

East Coker is defined by the SSDC as a Rural Settlement and the Local Plan states as follows:

"Rural Settlements are considered as locations where there will be a presumption against development unless key sustainability criteria can be met. This is explained in Policy SS2. These settlements will no longer have identified development areas and will be considered to be within the open countryside for planning purposes."

"This approach does not preclude development; indeed the NPPF promotes sustainable development in rural areas, with housing and employment to be located where it enhances or maintains the vitality of rural communities." And that "Policy SS2 seeks to ensure the development needs of Rural Settlements can be met, whilst restricting the scale of such growth to be consistent with the spatial strategy of focusing development at Yeovil, the Market Towns, and the Rural Centres."

POLICY SS2: DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL SETTLEMENTS

Development in Rural Settlements (not Market Towns or Rural Centres) will be strictly controlled and limited to that which:

- Provides employment opportunities appropriate to the scale of the settlement; and/or
- Creates or enhances community facilities and services to serve the settlement; and/or
- Meets identified housing need, particularly for affordable housing.

Development will be permitted where it is commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, provides for one or more of the types of development above, and increases the sustainability of a settlement in general.

Proposals should be consistent with relevant community led plans, and should generally have the support of the local community following robust engagement and consultation.

Proposals for housing development should only be permitted in Rural Settlements that have access to two or more key services listed at Paragraph 5.41.

Importantly the Plan emphasises the role of local communities stating as follows:

“Given that Policy SS2 is starting from the premise of no development unless certain conditions are met, the evidence for development being of a strong sustainable nature is particularly important to provide. Furthermore the local community is best placed to determine local need and what will make their settlement more sustainable and there will be an expectation that development proposals have either come from the local community, or been tested and checked through local consultation and engagement.” The Neighbourhood Plan therefore reinforces this important role within the overall planning system.

The Local Plan also confirms that a total of 2,242 dwellings are to be developed in all South Somerset Rural Settlements; 14% of the District's total with a balance, taking account of dwellings already been built and with permission, of 911 as at 2012.

2.9 There is however a significant amount of strategic housing development taking place or planned within the Parish: already allocated in the South Somerset Local Plan, and/or sites that already have planning permission, or are currently under consideration. Further detail on the Local Plan's housing policies and a schedule of these sites is included within Section 6 - Housing.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy Context

2.10 The East Coker Neighbourhood Plan includes development control/management policies that aim to help ensure that the Vision and Objectives of the Plan are met and add value to the policies in the Local Plan. They are also drawn from views expressed in the public consultation and engagement exercises that were undertaken. The policies have to meet planning requirements, be land-use related and be concise and clear. They cover a range of subject areas: housing, employment; community facilities etc. and are set out in detail in the following sections of the Plan. As will be seen, these policies aim to guide and enhance the quality of future development within East Coker Parish and to help meet local needs, especially for affordable housing. The Plan may be subject to a review every five years or so; this may involve a full review or may involve single topics, as considered necessary at the time.

Overview of Consultation

2.11 The East Coker Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by local people within the Plan Steering Group together with some external support and is

the result of extensive consultation over the past 3-4 years, with the broadest possible range of local people and organisations.

2.12 The East Coker Neighbourhood Plan reached the Regulation 15 stages after a series of consultation exercises and local questionnaire surveys sent to every household in the Parish. One of the largest consultation events was held in October 2015, when the results of local surveys were reported and the vision, objectives and other aspects of the plan were promoted and views sought, through various techniques. Further consultation exercises were undertaken in March 2016 and March 2017 to provide an update on the Plan and the development of the detailed policies; the latter as part of the formal Regulation 14 consultation exercise. A full Consultation Statement has been prepared as part of the Plan process and is available on the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan website.

2.13 This Regulation 15 version of the Plan involve formal consultation by South Somerset District Council with other statutory consultees but anyone could also comment further on the Plan. Following this exercise the Plan was subject to 'Examination' by an Independent Planning Inspector who assessed whether it meets all the necessary requirements and regulations. The aim has been to produce a plan that has secured as broad a consensus as realistically possible.

2.14 The examination was completed in July 2018 and the main findings of the Examiner were as follows:

“From my examination of the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to policy modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – the East Coker Parish Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Parish Council area as shown on the map on page 6;
- The Plan specified the period to which it is to take affect – 2018-2028; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

The South Somerset Local Plan The Southern Yeovil Urban Extension [Keyford Site] & Relationship with East Coker Parish

2.15 East Coker Parish Council; East Coker Preservation Trust; other organisations and individuals participated in the South Somerset Local Plan process throughout its production and attended the examinations, providing detailed planning evidence to assist the Inspector. Initially the Local Plan proposed some 2500 dwellings in one location in East Coker, based around the Keyford site, but this was rejected by the Inspector and the Local Plan as now proposed was supported by the Inspector, still with approximately 800 dwellings at Keyford. As well as mixed development, this includes employment, community and open space. (as a 'Strategic Direction for Growth' and 'Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension'.)

2.16 A planning application for the Keyford site was submitted in February 2015 but as of July 2018, planning consent has still not been granted. Furthermore SSDC has estimated that the build out period for the Keyford site will extend until at least 2029, which is beyond the end of the both the current Local Plan and the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan period.

2.17 In recognition that the site is now a commitment in the Local Plan and is included in this Neighbourhood Plan, when the Keyford site is developed, it needs to be implemented in a way that ensures it is of the highest quality and that mixed tenure housing and the essential community facilities are provided in a timely and phased manner, so that new residents have the facilities they need to help create a 'new community', but as part of the Parish of East Coker.

2.18 Any further development that is proposed within the rest of the Parish is expected to be of a modest scale only, with planning applications being considered in the context of criteria-based policies being used rather than land allocations. However the Planning Authority has supported a planning application for a further 90 dwellings at Holywell, on the outskirts of Yeovil but just within the parish of East Coker .

The South Somerset Local Plan Review

2.19 The Local Plan Review has started and SSDC are at the evidence gathering stage, with an initial Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment [HELAA] published by the District Council in 2017. It is too early to assess if/how the outcomes of the Local Plan Review might impact on the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

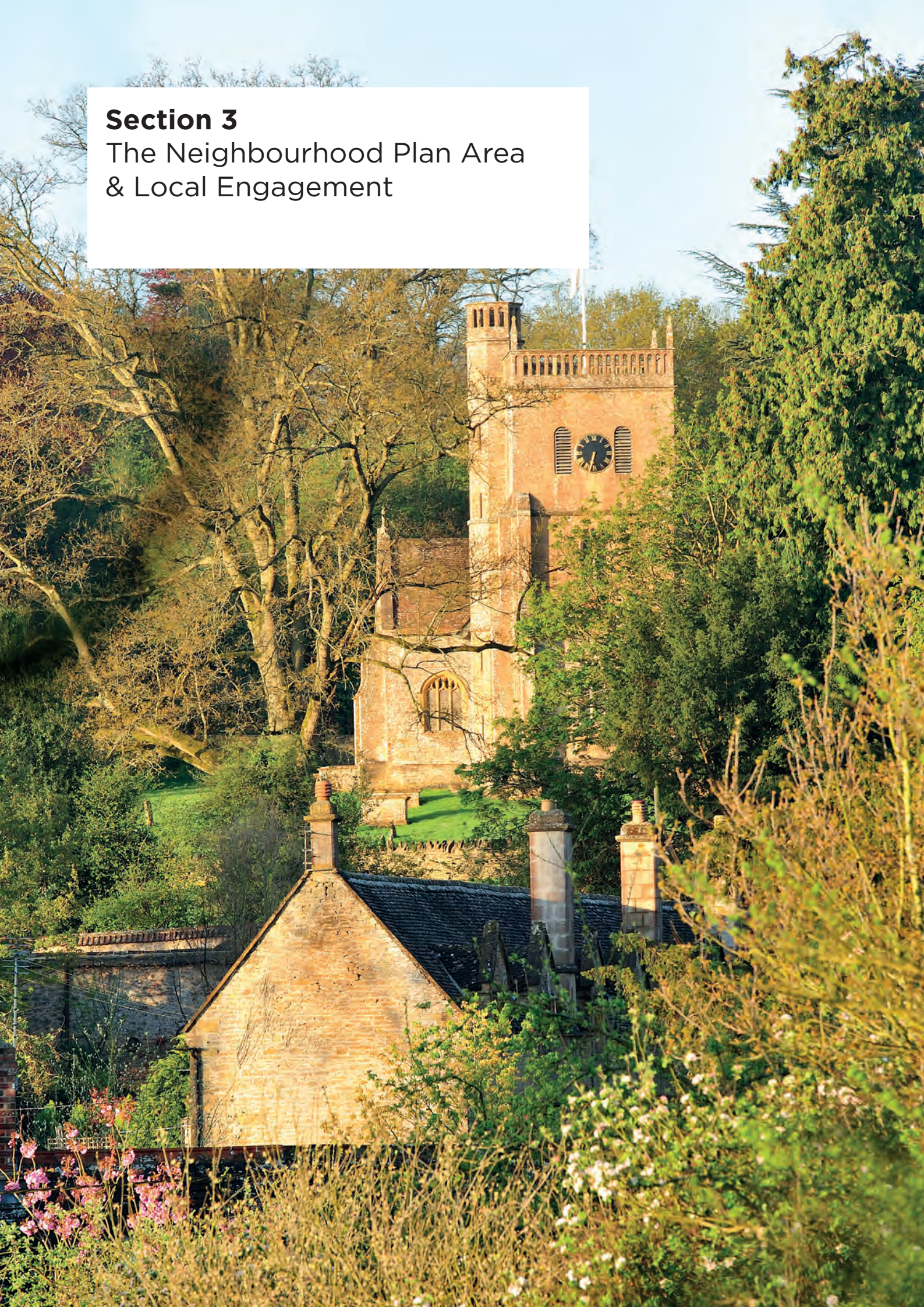
It would also be inappropriate and premature for the Neighbourhood Plan to potentially pre-determine the outcome of the Local Plan Review. This is because, the Review will need to be subject to all the statutory procedures and will not be adopted until at least 2020/21. House building in Yeovil is proceeding at a slower rate than the current local plan envisaged and as at June 2017, there was provision of land with planning permission allocated for housing in Yeovil, for 3000 dwellings. It is however important that the Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed if

(a) there are significant changes in the rate of District Housing growth (b) following the adoption of the reviewed Local Plan and (c) if there are changes to other higher level planning guidance / legislation that affect Neighbourhood Plans. This is an approach recommended by "Locality" the official Government appointed advisors on Neighbourhood Planning.

2.20 The Examiner considered the issue of the timing of the Plan review and expressed the view that there was "considerable potential for the suggested adoption date to slip back".

Section 3

The Neighbourhood Plan Area & Local Engagement



3 The Neighbourhood Plan Area

Historic Development

3.1 The village has been known as 'Cochra', 'Cocre' and 'Cocker'. In the language of the Early Britons 'Cochra' may have meant red arable land. Roman influence is strong with the remains of two nationally designated Roman Villa monuments; and a Roman track ran over Back Lane to Coker Wood. In early Roman times, two villas were established at East and West Coker, directly on the route between the Roman Road from Dorchester and the military camp at Ham Hill, one of the first Roman invasion routes and defensive lines. Directly between the villas on a permanent spring of water is Naish Priory, and the area of this ancient Roman route may well yield further archaeological evidence. A Manor of Cochra is evidenced in the Exeter Domesday Book. St Michael and All Angels Church dates from about 1276; it is located on previous Saxon foundations and possibly an earlier Roman Temple stood on the site. Many of the current listed buildings relate to the 16th and 17th centuries and growth has been predominantly within the confines of the village of East Coker.

3.2 T.S. Eliot visited East Coker in the 1930s, in search of his ancestor Andrew Eliot who emigrated from there to Massachusetts in 1660. A Henry Elyott was a tenant of the Helyars' East Coker estate in the 16th century. Eliot twice visited East Coker and stayed with Sir Matthew Nathan, to whom Eliot had written, expressing his disappointment at not being able to find the specific house in which his East Coker ancestor had lived. Eliot quotes and versifies his ancestor's book, *The Governour*, in his poem 'East Coker', when describing the "daunsinge" and "matrimonie" of the village forbears. T.S. Eliot chose to have his ashes interred in St Michael's Church in East Coker. He remains an important figure in world literature, voted Britain's favourite poet and memorialised in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey. The poem 'East Coker' also shows respect, even excitement, that Eliot's intended last resting place would be near the memorial in St. Michael's Church to William Dampier, the writer, explorer and navigator. It would be very fitting if there was greater recognition of Eliot's links with East Coker.



T.S. Eliot

3.3 Hymerford House, a Grade 1 listed building in North Coker is believed to be the birthplace of William Dampier. The memorial plaque to William Dampier, erected in 1908, is on the south wall of St Michael's Church. Dampier circumnavigated the world three times and was the first Englishman to set foot in Australia. He was also the first to visit and describe the Galapagos Islands and was valued by Charles Darwin, as he was the first to recognise the different degrees of relationship between living things, as his use of the words sub-species and species indicate.



Hymerford House, East Coker



Mosaic from the Roman Villa, East Coker
Now housed in The Museum of Somerset

Community Engagement Key Themes & Issues

3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan draws upon evidence gathered from a range of sources and it builds upon other community projects such as the Parish Plan of 2005. These have helped inform policies set out in the Plan. The community engagement exercises held in October 2015 and March 2016 and March 2017 were considered to be particularly successful in engaging with the local community and securing local opinions.

3.5 The Consultation Statement demonstrates how the community has been kept well informed about progress on the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and how residents, employees and the owners/managers of businesses in the Parish have been involved in the Plan process and its preparation through surveys, questionnaires and exhibition/open days. Communication has also been undertaken through articles in the East Coker Society Newsletter which goes free into every household and business in the Parish, and an updated page on the Parish Council's NP Website.

Extensive consultation has therefore been the foundation for the development of the Plan and this has included the following events and activities:

Designation and Awareness Raising

13 January 2013 - Parish Council makes application for Neighbourhood Plan Designation.

10 September 2013 - SSDC approval of Neighbourhood Plan Designation Area.

26 October 2013 - East Coker Neighbourhood Plan Launch Day.

Consulting on what really matters to the community - issue gathering

October 2013 to January 2014 - Parish Survey distributed, collected and analysed.

2013 and 2014 - Fact finding, research and evidence base gathering.

February 2014 - NP Preliminary Survey Report finalised.

26 May 2014 - Evidence Base Report finalised.

Feedback to the community and consensus building - verification of vision and objectives

July 2014 - Village Fete feedback to Parishioners.

July to October 2014 - Work up Draft Vision and Objectives.

November/December 2014 - Consult on Draft Vision and Objectives.

June/July 2015 - Review SSDC response to policy intents.

July 2015 - Conservation Areas - preliminary work passed to Parish Council.

August 2015 - Engage new consultants - review progress and previous work. Framework and timetable for future development of the plan agreed.

September 2015 - Prepare up to date questionnaire and plan: 'Your Parish, Your Plan' Open Day.

16 October 2015 - 'Your Parish Your Plan' Open Day with Neighbourhood Plan Group and advisers on hand to explain the Plan and answer questions.

January 2016 - Update of Neighbourhood Plan included in Parish Newsletter.

March 2016 - Further exhibition informal 'Drop In' consultation event in Village Hall on Draft Plan and Policies; with Plan Group members and advisers on hand to explain the Plan and answer questions.

May 2016 - Further engagement with East Coker School & Update. Survey of Local Community Groups.

June 2016 - Presentation and plan review with Parish Council.

December 2016 - Approval by ECPC followed by consultation period.

See section 12 for a detailed time-line beyond this date.

Comparison of Survey Results 2013 & 2015 and Key Issues

3.6 In 2013, 740 questionnaires were distributed of which 159 (21.5%) were returned. In 2015 102 questionnaires were returned. 38 Business questionnaires were also circulated with 50% being returned. In both years the views of young residents were less represented compared with those of the 60+ age group. A summary of the results is included in the Consultation Statement.

3.7 Overall, the views of East Coker residents remain remarkably consistent. Slightly fewer questionnaires were completed in 2015 compared with 2013 but there was the increased focus from the Business Questionnaire. Some of the key results were that:

- More people than previously understood actually work within East Coker, many from home
- Many businesses plan to expand and see no serious hindrances to their plans
- Recent introduction of fibre optic cabling has improved broadband speed
- Travel is mainly by car and the problems associated with school traffic remain unchanged
- Road drainage and maintenance remain an issue although some remedial work has already been undertaken
- The majority of respondents are still happy with the existing leisure facilities, with many enjoying the new café /tea shop
- The lack of a post office remains a concern
- The lack of affordable housing for local young people remains an issue with the majority of people still supporting the development of small scale affordable housing schemes within the current built up area, provided that agricultural land is not compromised.

3.8 The results of these surveys have been referenced in the relevant policy sections, with the link between issues and opportunities identified by the community and land use policy being highlighted.

3.9 The results of the Regulation 14 Consultation exercise have been summarised into a matrix which is on the ECPC website: www.eastcokerparish.com/neighbourhood-plan/ This provides a summary of the representations, details of who has submitted them together with a summary of the Neighbourhood Plan group's response, with an indication where changes to the text of policies of the Plan were made. As there were a number of representations relating to strategic housing growth, the response to this issue is attached to the matrix as an additional appendix. In addition, where changes to Policies and their wording were proposed, these are shown in a further appendix A and B rather than including them in the matrix itself.

Your Parish, Your Plan

Come and find out what is happening in *your Parish* and how we are progressing with the Neighbourhood Plan.

SATURDAY 19TH MARCH
11.00 am - 2.00 pm
 The Dampier Room at the Village Hall.

Light refreshments available and some very interesting reading material which will affect the future of the Parish.






NP drop in day

A large, mature tree with a thick, gnarled trunk and a dense canopy of green leaves dominates the center of the image. The tree is situated in a lush, green field with tall grass and several dandelions in the foreground. Sunlight filters through the leaves on the left side, creating a bright, hazy glow and lens flare effects. The background shows a rolling green landscape under a clear sky.

Section 4

Vision & Objectives

4 Vision and Objectives

4.1 As a result of early consultation and discussion by the Plan group, the following final Vision and Objectives were developed and were supported by 90% of respondents at the consultation event held in October 2015.

Vision

The Vision for the Parish of East Coker is to make provision for an appropriate level of housing and employment growth, together with community facilities, to meet local needs, whilst maintaining an attractive environment with a strong sense of community that continues to protect and celebrate its unique history and heritage and will seek to pursue developments that contribute to health and the wellbeing of the community.

4.2 To help in delivering this overarching Vision for the Plan, a series of strategic Objectives were developed through community consultation and the natural progression of the Neighbourhood Plan, and these were supported by 90% of those responding at the consultation event held in October 2015. However, as the Plan has developed over recent months and in the light of consultations with South Somerset District Council, the Objectives have been rationalised and reduced in number but without diluting their purpose. The Objectives are also included within the policy sections in order to help demonstrate the linkages between the policies and delivering the vision of the Plan, which is an important part of the Neighbourhood Plan process.



Objectives

Section 6

Housing Objective - To encourage the delivery of housing which meets local need, including affordable housing, and provide everyone in the community with the opportunity to live in an appropriate home.

Section 7

Employment Objective - To support the retention, improvement and expansion of existing employment space and encourage a range of further businesses, including home-working.

Section 8

Transport Objective - To work with the Highway Authority to ensure that transport and movement within the Parish is appropriate and safe and to retain, promote and improve the network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths.

Section 9

Community Objective - To provide and support the retention of a range of services and community facilities supporting sustainable growth.

Recreation Objective - To protect open space, sport and recreation facilities to promote healthy lifestyles and the well-being of residents in the Parish.

Section 10

Conservation Objective - To support the retention and enhancement of the existing Conservation Areas in East & North Coker.

Design Objective - To secure good design in new development, and to protect, enhance and invest in the natural and built environment through a range of local projects and improvements.

Landscape Objective - To secure the protection, enhancement and interpretation of the distinctive rural landscape, settlement pattern, historical assets, natural environment and biodiversity of the Parish.

Agricultural Objective - To protect high grade agricultural land in order to increase sustainability of food supplies.

Section 5

General Policies



5 Plan Policies

5.1 This Neighbourhood Plan has to take account of policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and be in general conformity with the South Somerset Local Plan. Policies have been separated into different subjects and themes but it should be noted that any new development is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant policies that apply to a particular development.

Overarching Policies

Policy EC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within the National Planning Policy Framework will be viewed positively subject to other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Where applications are contrary to the policies within the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan, a statement setting out the material planning considerations that outweigh those policies should be submitted with the application, identifying and quantifying the economic, social and environmental benefits that will be achieved as a result of the proposed development.

Proportionate to the scheme, developers and applicants should demonstrate how they have proactively engaged and consulted East Coker Parish Council and other community groups and/or residents directly affected by their proposal.

5.2 This policy allows for local economic, social and environmental aspirations of the community to be delivered by the Development Plan including the Neighbourhood Plan and also requires new development to be subject to effective community engagement (which has not always happened in the past.)

5.3 This policy also incorporates the key principle from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) into the ECNP. Where planning applications are to be considered against the policies of this plan, then this policy will underpin the approach the Parish Council and local planning authorities will adopt in delivering sustainable development in the Parish.

5.4 The Parish Council have looked into the inclusion of a separate flood risk policy. However it considers that existing Policy addresses community concerns. The National Planning Policy Framework provides strict tests to protect people and property from flooding.

Section 106 Agreements & Community Infrastructure Levy - CIL

5.5 The CIL is part of the National Planning System and requires developers to pay a set amount of money per dwelling or for other development, to help support the provision and maintenance of local services and infrastructure. The SSDC as Local Planning Authority is in the process of developing a CIL schedule for the whole District, setting out the relevant payments for each land use, based on an assessment of need. However, once this has been prepared and agreed, the Parish Council will be entitled to receive 15% of any CIL raised as a result of development taking place within the Parish to spend on local projects, and this increases to 25% once the Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted.

Policy EC2: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and/or Section 106 Agreements

Contributions secured through Community Infrastructure Levy and/or Section 106 Agreements or, where appropriate, direct provision, will be used to improve or provide identified community infrastructure requirements or improvements, examples of which are given in Appendix 1.

Section 6

Housing in East Coker Parish



6 Housing in East Coker Parish

Housing Objective - To encourage the delivery of housing which meets local need, including affordable housing, and provides everyone in the community with the opportunity to live in an appropriate home.

Census Key Statistics - East Coker Civil Parish for 2011 and 2001

6.1 There is a wide range of housing types within the parish, ranging from detached listed properties many within the conservation areas, through to more recent smaller scale modern housing. In order to make reasoned judgements on future housing provision it is important to establish a sound baseline. The Parish data from the 2001 and 2011 Censuses provides the backdrop. The data in Table 1 is extracted from the key statistics for the Parish of East Coker with figures in brackets being from 2001:

Table 1

Houses	East Coker	East Coker %	Somerset %	England & Wales%
Total dwellings	796 (769)	100%	100%	100%
Detached	500 (463)	62.8	32.3	22.6
Semi Detached	150 (153)	18.8	30.4	31.1
Terraced	123 (126)	15.5	23.7	23.6
Flats	18 (32)	2.3	13.0	21.6
Tenure	East Coker	East Coker %	Somerset%	England & Wales%
Total Households	740 (746)	100 %	100 %	100 %
Owner Occupied	634 (644)	85.7 %	70.2 %	64.3 %
Social rented	44 (48)	5.9 %	13.5 %	17.6 %
Privately rented	52 (43)	7.0 %	14.7 %	16.7 %
Average household size (persons per household)	2.25 (2.28)			
Parish Population Profile	East Coker	East Coker %	Somerset%	England and Wales%
Total usually resident	1667 (1702)	100 %	100 %	100 %
Children 0-15 year old	223 (266)	13.4 (16)%	17.8 %	18.9 %
Working age (16-64 years old)	919 (1011)	55.1 (60) %	61.1 %	64.7 %
Older People (aged 65+)	525 (425)	31.5 (25) %	21.1%	16.4 %

Context of future housing provision

6.2 The South Somerset District Council's Local Plan 2006-2028 identifies East Coker Parish as the location for the Southern Yeovil Urban Extension of some 800 dwellings, as part of its strategic district-wide requirement under Local Plan Policy YV2.

6.3 The Local Plan also identifies East/North Coker as Rural Settlements under Policy SS2. This policy limits development in rural settlements as part of the wider strategic aims to focus development on Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Centres. In the context of the District Council's Settlement Strategy, development in the villages is to be limited to sustainable development meeting local need.

6.4 The District Council's Local Plan Housing Strategy limits housing growth in Rural Settlements to approximately 14% of the district-wide requirement. Future considerations for housing development in the Parish therefore must have regard to the strategic housing policies and should be in broad conformity with them.

6.5 Population is the driver for housing requirement and therefore establishing a sound projected population for the Parish by 2028 will help establish the level of future housing need. A reasoned assumption can be made on Parish population growth by 2028 based on expected South Somerset population growth and SSDC housing policies.

6.6 The Local Plan seeks to deliver an increase of 15,950 dwellings across the whole District, over the 22 years of the plan. The Local Plan limits Rural Settlement housing growth in favour of urban development and therefore this inevitably limits the scale of population growth in Rural Settlements, including the Parish of East Coker. However the Local Plan has identified an area to the North East of the Parish known as Keyford to accommodate 800 dwellings in a sustainable urban extension. Therefore the percentage growth in overall Parishes populations is planned to be lower than the percentage growth for the District.

6.7 The South Somerset Local Plan has a clear strategy to limit housing growth in rural settlements and focus growth in urban areas. To put this in context the local plan growth of 2,242 dwellings across the rural settlements over the 22-year local plan period. The percentage of households in East Coker Parish (including the Urban Edge) accounts for 3.11% of rural settlement households and 1.06% of district households.

The SSDC authority monitoring report dated September 2016 recognised the danger of over development in rural settlements and the impact on strategic housing policies.

6.8 The East Coker Parish 2011 Census is the latest Parish level data (shown in table 1) which shows a population of 1,667 and 796 dwellings, this is robust evidence and forms the baseline data.

6.9 The assessment of East Coker Parish's future housing requirement broadly accords with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) guidance and takes in account the comments provided by SSDC Officers during the regulation 14 consultation regarding use of the latest projections and evidence to assess a future housing target figure.

6.10 A reasonable assumption has been made that East Coker Parish (with rural settlements and a small urban edge) would expect to grow at a higher rate than smaller rural settlements but lower than the average growth rate across the district.

¹ PAS - Advice Note - Housing Needs Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans



A selection of types of housing you will find in the Parish

6.11 Assessment of future Parish housing growth excludes the future Urban Extension at Keyford.

6.12 Following comment by SSDC a Housing Technical Paper² has been produced to establish the best and most robust assessment of the future housing requirement in the Parish. The paper concluded that the most robust method was to follow the methodology detailed in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) dated October 2016 for objectively assessed need (OAN), which included the Communities and Local Government (CLG) 2014 Household Projections and the Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2014 Sub National Population Projections, as well as a 10 year migration trend. Assumptions were applied in order to establish a Parish level figure and the basis for these assumptions is explained in the technical paper.

² East Coker Parish Housing Technical Paper dated 02 May 2017

6.13 The issue is addressed in detail in a supplementary paper produced in response to the Regulation 14 Consultation and is available on the Neighbourhood Plan website

<http://www.eastcokerparish.com/consultation-statement/>

6.14 The Housing Technical Paper covers the following:

- Background
- East Coker in Context
- Age Profile
- Housing Types
- Household Composition
- Research of the evidence (assessments)
- Summary
- Conclusion

6.15 The prime findings from the evidence were:

- There will be an increased differential in the percentage of over 65's households in East Coker, when compared to South Somerset
- There is a significantly larger percentage of detached dwellings than the District with a higher average number of bedrooms per dwelling than the District
- The District Council's latest evidence shows economic growth is slower than that which was assumed to underpin the housing requirement in the Local Plan. Future jobs-growth is expected to be lower than predicted in the Local Plan
- The SHMA approach was to use a projection and migration trend based approach to the housing requirement in preference to the previous job-led approach

6.16 Based on the SHMA's projection and migration led approach a robust figure for the housing requirement in East Coker Parish could be established using the following assumptions:

- Excluding Keyford, East Coker Parish is predominately rural and therefore the assumption is that the Parish would account for approximately 1.03% of South Somerset households by 2028.
- Un-occupied dwellings rate of 2.5% in East Coker at 2028 was considered robust.

An extract from the East Coker Housing Technical Paper is at Table 2.

The Examiner considered that these figures were the best available and being expressed as a minimum, the policy does allow some flexibility to allow for more development to come forward in accordance with strategic Local Plan Policy SS2.

Table 2 - Data projecting East Coker Parish potential housing requirement

Projection	District Households	East Coker Households (1.03% of District at 2028)	East Coker Dwelling Stock at 2028 (2.5% unoccupied rate)
CLG 2014 Household Projection at the 2011 point.	69,883	740	N/A
CLG 2014 Household Projection (HH) for 2028	79,771	822	843 (822+21)
10 year Migration trend + CLG 2014 HH (@ +11% over 2014 projection) for 2028	80,848	833	854 (833 + 21)

6.17 Evidence from the census indicates that East Coker Parish was less affected by migration than the district as a whole and therefore to establish a robust figure an adjustment would need to be made to the 10 year migration trend figure.

The Parish housing figure at 2028 would be between 843 and 854 dwellings. Whilst the Parish is predominately rural it has an urban edge and this needs to be taken into account, therefore a housing figure towards the higher end would be reasonable. A robust figure emerges for East Coker; this is a total housing stock of 850 dwellings by 2028. This is an increase of 54 from the 2011 Census figure of 796 dwellings.

6.18 Table 3 identifies planning applications (approved or under consideration) between April 2011 and July 2017 that will affect the housing stock in the Parish. See Table p23.

Table 3 - Planning Applications April 2011 to June 2017
The location of these sites is illustrated on the Proposals Map

Planning Application	Site Location	Increase	Status	Date
12/01397/FUL	39 Wraxhill Rd	1	Approved	06/07/12
12/03727/FUL	Forge, Main St	2	Approved	01/11/12
12/02013/FUL & 15/04147	Hymerford Con- version garage & flat to 2 dwellings	1	Approved	6/9/12 & 4/11/15
13/02051/FUL	Firsvew 1 - 2	1	Approved	18/07/13
13/03162/FUL	Witches Way	1	Approved	28/07/14
13/04356/LBC	Key Farm	2	Approved	23/12/13
14/00257/FUL	133 West Coker Rd	1	Approved	20/03/14
14/00603/FUL	Primrose Hill Fm	1	Approved	21/05/14
14/00905/FUL	Old Coach House	2	Approved	30/04/14
14/03277/OUT	Longfurlong Lane	2	Approved	08/09/14
15/01536/FUL	Huntsfield, Burton	1	Approved	28/05/15
15/02974/FUL	Townsend Farm	8	Approved	29/7/16
15/04212/FUL	Mill Lane (1 to 2)	1	Approved	24/11/15
15/05325/OUT	Broadacres	14	Approved	21/03/17
16/01628/FUL	Moor Lane	1	Approved	16/6/16
16/03258/FUL	115 West Coker Road	1	Approved	9/9/16
16/04744/FUL	Mushroom Farm	3	Approved	23/01/17
16/05414/FUL	Land off Moor Lane	1	Approved	09/01/17
Total Approved		44		
Total		44		
15/01000/OUT	Keyford (Strategic Housing Allocation)	800	Under Consideration	
Including Yeovil Southern Urban Extension - Keyford		844		

6.19 Between April 2011 and June 2017 a total of 44 dwellings have been approved and a further 800 are under consideration giving a total of 844. There are further proposals also at pre-application stage, which if approved would add to this figure.

(Clearly, additional planning consents have been granted or supported by the Planning Authority since June 2017, including 90 dwellings at Holywell.)

Policy ECH1: Housing Provision

Excluding development coming forward under Local Plan Policy YV2 (Keyford), it is proposed that at least 54 additional new dwellings will be provided within East Coker Parish, over the period April 2011 – March 2028 inclusive, subject to any change in higher level policies as a result of the Local Plan Review, once it has been adopted.

6.20 The South Somerset Local Plan identifies East Coker as a Rural Settlement; this higher-level policy has the intention of limiting housing growth to that which meets local need. While there is an element of flexibility within Local Plan policies regarding levels of housing development, disproportionate levels of development in Rural Settlements have the potential to undermine the Local Plan's overall Housing Strategy. The level of housing indicated in Policy ECH1 is based on what is considered to be a realistic level of population and housing growth, compared to past trends and future projections. In addition, all proposals for housing will need to address general planning considerations as set out in Policy ECH2 in order to ensure that high quality development is achieved and that a mix of house sizes and types is provided.

Policy ECH2: General Housing Considerations

Applications for new housing development will be supported if:

- They assist in meeting local housing need by providing a mix of housing type, size and tenure including the provision of smaller and accessible units. Providing the opportunity for people living locally to remain in the community, as they become older;
- They demonstrate high quality of design, compatible with the character of East Coker, especially in respect of the scale of overall development and individual properties; and
- Where appropriate, they use materials and detailing that reflect local distinctiveness; notably local stone within the Conservation Areas of East & North Coker.

6.21 In order to help provide high quality development, it is important that amenity space, internal space and, where applicable, public open space is provided with new housing development.

Policy ECH3: External Space Requirements

All new development will be expected to provide for:

External amenity space that takes into account;

- a) accessibility from living areas; and
- b) orientation to maximise sunlight; and
- c) be of a sufficient size and functional shape to meet the needs of the likely number of occupiers; and
- d) be designed to take account of the context of the development, including the character of the surrounding area.

6.22 The Local Plan Policy HW1 in respect of open space will be further relied upon to show standards are met.

Affordable and Social Housing Provision

6.23 During Neighbourhood Plan consultations, the community expressed the wish for development to be small-scale and incremental, but biased towards more affordable housing to meet any need for young local people/families to remain in the community, as well as suitable housing for older members of the Parish who might need to downsize, but remain living in the Parish. A recent application granted at Broadacres for single storey dwellings will help meet this need for older persons' accommodation.

6.24 Affordable housing may include a mix of Housing Association rented, shared ownership and starter homes (sold at 80% of market value). For older people there may be a future need for warden-assisted and smaller more accessible homes.

6.25 The Parish Council will work with agencies and Housing Associations. It is anticipated that future housing needs for those without a Parish connection will be met by the district-wide strategy focussing on Yeovil (including the YSUE), Market Towns and Rural Centres.

6.26 Affordable housing provision within the Parish will be dictated by identified local need through housing needs assessments by the Parish Council and housing agencies. If possible, affordable houses should form part of mixed tenure development, rather than be stand alone.

6.27 Recent Government changes in policy based on court decisions indicates that all sites of more than 10 or more dwellings or a maximum combined gross floor space over 1000 square metres are required to make provision for affordable housing on site.

6.28 This change in Government policy provides a significant challenge to the delivery of rural affordable housing on small sites other than through 'Rural Exception' sites. However affordable housing to meet local need remains the priority for new housing in the Parish.

Policy ECH4: Affordable Housing

All new housing schemes within the plan area on sites where there is a net increase in more than 10 dwellings and where dwellings would combine gross floor space more than 1000 square metres (not including replacement dwellings) must contribute towards affordable housing need.

The mix of affordable housing will vary through negotiation and shall be provided taking into account South Somerset District Council and any East Coker Parish Council's housing need evidence and any viability constraints identified. However the target provision for affordable housing (other than starter homes) is typically in the following tenure proportions:

- 11% intermediate housing
- 10% affordable rented, and
- 79% social rented.

These should be allocated in accordance with the District Council's Local Connections Policy.

As and when supported by the Housing and Planning Act (2016) and subsequent Regulations, the provision of affordable housing may include an element of Starter Homes to meet the needs of qualifying households.

Planning obligations will be used to ensure that affordable housing is provided and (where possible) retained for eligible households.

Any off site contributions must be broadly equivalent in value to on site provision and secured to support the delivery of affordable housing through a planning obligation.

6.29 Development proposals, whose primary purpose is to provide affordable housing to meet local needs will be supported where they are clearly affordable housing led and would be related well to the settlement and appropriate in scale and character and appearance.

6.30 The number, type, size and tenure of affordable dwellings should reflect identified local needs as evidenced through South Somerset's Housing Register, any East Coker Housing Need Assessment or any specific local surveys carried out.

6.31 The Council will secure the first and future occupation of the affordable homes to those with a housing need and local connection in line with the Council's adopted local connection policies.

6.32 The final tenure mix of the affordable housing on individual sites will be determined taking account of up-to-date assessments and the characteristics of the area. The affordable homes should be distributed across the development and integrated with the scheme design and layout such that they are indistinguishable from the market housing on the same site.

6.33 The East Coker Parish Council will seek advice of local housing associations and other appropriate organisations in determining the appropriate size and form of housing required.

Conversion of Rural Buildings for Housing

6.34 Notwithstanding the recent changes to 'Permitted Development' in relation to agricultural buildings and their conversion, there will be cases where planning applications are required. In a rural locality, future development opportunities that do not impact upon the wider landscape are limited. Conversions of old barns and farm buildings can, however, provide opportunities for new accommodation and a valuable and appropriate re-use of buildings which could make a positive contribution to the local character of the area, as well as meeting housing needs. Such developments also make use of past investment in building materials and the energy used in their construction, and so contribute towards a more sustainable form of development.

6.35 Against this background the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan proposes that the conversion of rural buildings, other than those in isolated locations with poor access and no nearby built development at all, be considered for residential use, subject to planning criteria being met. East Coker Parish is committed to addressing the issue of redundant rural buildings and to help enable East Coker to grow and meet housing need in a diverse and flexible manner.

Policy ECH5: Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside

The conversion of redundant or disused rural buildings of substantial and permanent construction which positively contribute to an area's rural character for residential uses will be supported where:

- a) A suitable access to the building is in place or can be created without damaging the surrounding area's rural character and the road network can support the proposed use; and
- b) The building can be converted without significant alteration, extension or rebuilding; and
- c) The design will retain the original character of the building and its surroundings; and
- d) The development will retain any nature conservation interest associated with the site or building, and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible.

6.36 All of the above housing policies are aimed at ensuring that new housing meets required standards and the needs of all parts of the community and that any new housing development is successfully integrated within the Parish.

Section 7

Employment & Business



7 Employment & Business

Employment Objective - To support the retention, improvement and expansion of existing employment space and encourage a range of further businesses, including home-working

7.1 Over the last 70 years the businesses in the Parish have changed greatly, away from a farming-dominated economy. Farms in the Parish were small and mixed, all of them having a dairy herd. Some years ago, there were 12 farms in the Parish; now there are only 4 working farms, 2 dairy/mixed and 2 subletting land for crops and pasture.



Dairy farm

7.2 Subsequently, the two main businesses in the Parish in the past were East Coker Saw Mills and Drakes Twine Works, which employed a relatively high proportion of people who lived in the parish and were therefore able to cycle or walk to work. The Twine Works closed in the 70s and the Saw Mills in the 80s. The Twine Works now has a housing estate (Drakes Meadow) built in its place and the Saw Mills is now a thriving location of small units, housing 15 businesses.

2015 Business Survey

7.3 A specific survey of local business has been undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan and in the 2015 survey 38 questionnaires were sent out and 21 were returned: a 55% response, with business types varying from Industrial firms, Educational, Farm Shops, Tea Rooms, and Beauty Salons.

7.4 Out of the businesses that replied:

- 152 people are employed, of which 52% are full time
- 44% are part time and 4% are apprentices/trainees
- 37% provide formal training for their employees
- 47% were interested in offering opportunities to young people in the area, through apprenticeship and formal training schemes

7.5 Places of residence of employees were;

- 28% in East Coker; 23% in surrounding villages
- 26% in Yeovil and 10% elsewhere, which demonstrates a relatively localised workforce.
- Over 63% of the business owned their premises, whilst 37% were leasehold and 16% were home based
- Local business was relatively locally generated with East Coker at 21 %; within 5 miles 16%; Yeovil 20% and elsewhere 27% and don't know 16%

7.6 The overall conclusion of the survey is that East Coker has a sound and stable business community that is generally content with its current situation; premises etc. If the development proceeds, additional employment land is planned at the Keyford site as part of a mixed use development within the Parish. This would provide further opportunities for economic growth, in order to create jobs and prosperity, reduce the need for people to travel to work greater distances by car, and could provide opportunities for the expansion and growth of local enterprises. A summary of the survey results is included in the Consultation Statement.



Business in Sawmills

7.7 Halves Lane employment site remains an important part of supporting employment growth in the Parish and it is important that it be protected. The Local Plan policy EP3 safeguards existing employment land and premises, subject to certain criteria, and this will be relied upon to protect these employment uses.

Policy ECEM 1: Business development

New business development on land already in employment use in East Coker will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- The scale and nature of the proposals would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of adjoining activities
- The scale and nature of the proposals would not have unacceptable conflicts with other land-use activities
- The proposal would not have unacceptable impacts on the local road network
- They provide sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy
- Provision is made for parking appropriate to the needs of the development
- They would contribute to the character and vitality of the local area
- They would not adversely affect residential amenity
- They would not adversely impact upon road safety

Policy ECEM 2: Promotion of Diverse Businesses

Proposals that support the development of small scale social enterprises and other businesses that meet the needs of the community, such as the creation of 'live-work' units within established villages/settlements, will be permitted provided that they would:

- Contribute to the character and vitality of the local area
- Not adversely affect residential amenity
- Not adversely impact upon road safety

These policies reflect the views of the local business community and the importance of ensuring local business development can occur to retain and provide local jobs, whilst ensuring the effective use and re-use of land and buildings. They also help to retain the Parish's ideals of community, supporting commerce and their opportunities for growth.

Conversion of rural buildings for business

7.8 Notwithstanding the recent changes to 'Permitted Development' in relation to agricultural buildings, there will be cases where planning applications may be required for conversion for business use.

7.9 In a rural locality, future development opportunities that do not impact upon the wider landscape are limited. Conversions of old barns and farm buildings can however, provide opportunities for new business space and development and this can be a valuable and appropriate re-use of buildings, which could make a positive contribution to meeting business space requirements.

Working from Home

7.10 Whilst working from home may not be a suitable option for everyone, using the home as a working base for at least part of the week offers a number of benefits for business. For example, home-working can help working parents with childcare responsibilities and reduce the need to travel. Working from home does not usually need planning permission. Whatever business is carried out from home, the key test is whether the premises are still mainly a home, or are they used primarily for business and has there been a 'material change of use'; assessed by, for example; the number of people working at the premises, the nature and number of deliveries and/or storage that takes place. For those who simply use a room in the house as an office and undertake most business by telephone and the use of IT, then this type of work does not require planning permission.

7.11 Residents and businesses alike are generally keen to promote economic prosperity and encourage the retention of local employment, particularly for young people. The Plan is designed to achieve this by helping existing employers to stay on their sites enabling the Parish to continue to provide employment for people living in the locality.



Business in Sawmills

Section 8

Traffic, Transport & Infrastructure



8 Traffic, Transport & Infrastructure

Transport Objective - To work with the Highway Authority to ensure that transport and movement within the Parish is appropriate and safe and to retain, promote and improve the network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths.

8.1 A significant number of comments from the local community have been consistently received about traffic and transport issues through surveys and engagement events. The community also supports the encouragement of cycling and walking as safe options. Accordingly, the Plan aims to take opportunities to improve highway safety and minimise conflicts between road traffic, cyclists and pedestrians.

Public Transport

8.2 The results of local household surveys undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan show that the vast majority of journeys in and out of the parish are made by car. The use of the Bus service is predominantly by those who qualify for a Bus Pass. The details of the services available are as follows: Public transport provision within the Parish is limited to a day time hourly Bus service from West Coker Lakefields to the Yeovil Bus Station. The bus travels through North Coker and Wraxhill, but not the East Coker village part of the Parish. The Bus service is a Demand Responsive Service (DRT) on Monday to Friday and so potentially may be able to pick up in the East Coker area if requested in advance.

8.3 There are other bus services on the periphery of the Parish that run to Bridport and Chard, in proximity to Nash Lane and Helena Road. These run several times a day, dependent on the route. Two services connect Yeovil/Dorchester along the A37 but do not access the Parish. South Somerset District Council has indicated in its Local Plan that provision of public transport will form part of a requirement for the Urban Extension at Keyford, if it is developed. Providers of the service to Dorchester have indicated that they would be interested to explore serving a future Urban Extension, subject to early years subsidy.

8.4 Train services are provided from Yeovil Pen Mill Station to stations on the Weymouth – Bristol line whilst at Yeovil Junction trains can be accessed on the Exeter to London Waterloo line. Both these stations are over 3 miles distant from the Parish, so not accessible on foot.

Alternative Public Transport Provision

8.5 There are alternative providers of transport to communities, including South Somerset Voluntary Community Association, which provide community transport (either via a community car scheme or community bus). There is a charge for these services but they can provide helpful transport for doctor or hospital appointments, shopping etc. The community bus can provide transport for not-for-profit organisations and is an alternative to commercial bus/coach hire. The Red Cross also provide a 'home and transport referral service' manned by volunteer drivers for hospital appointments etc.

Footpaths

8.6 Routes for pedestrians within the built up part of the Parish are limited. The route to the school from Tellis Cross housing area does not have the benefit of a pavement, only a white line painted on the edge of the highway carriageway, which to a degree acts as a 'virtual pavement'. This is an issue of concern to local residents and it is proposed that approaches will be made to Somerset County Council with a view to this being surfaced in a different coloured material so that it is more clearly visible to both drivers and pedestrians. There are other villages nearby where this has been done and the same is required at East Coker.

8.7 The Parish benefits from numerous footpaths/ public rights of way and bridleways and is on National Cycleway routes 26 and 30. However there are no footpaths which are accessible for people with disabilities. This is an area for potential improvement and future projects as part of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan, with the support of community infrastructure levy or other contributions that may be secured through any new development.

Any changes which have to be made to footpaths in order to accommodate disabilities must at all times take into consideration the natural environment.

Policy ECT 1: Walking, Cycle Routes & Bridleways as part of New Development

Proposals that enhance existing walking and cycle routes and bridleways and/or will deliver new provision as part of new development will be supported and required where practical. New routes must connect with existing networks within the Parish. Enhancement of the existing network, and provision of new routes must demonstrate the following:

- Well designed, safe, secure and appropriately surfaced routes
- Remain as car free routes (excepting emergency access where relevant)
- Satisfactory access for disabled people where possible
- Limited lit routes and where lit no upward light spillage
- Suitable street furniture, including benches, litter bins and dog waste bins.

Key Transport & Traffic Issues

8.8 Traffic is a considerable concern to local residents with a summary of comments being as follows:

- Parking at the school is a major concern.
- Limited visibility of the 'virtual pavement' within the highway from Tellis Cross on the Yeovil Road, as described above.
- Speed of traffic through the Parish has drawn considerable comment.
- There are pinch points for parking which prevent sight of oncoming traffic in Higher Burton.
- A similar situation arises near 'Ten Houses' close to the eastern entrance to East Coker.
- The historic sunken lanes make driving difficult from Higher Burton to the A30, especially as they are used by school buses and large vehicles.

8.9 In the light of the above, discussions have taken place with Somerset County Council Highways Department which has confirmed that it is supportive of the following which is welcomed:

- the development of safe, sustainable travel, to encourage residents to walk and cycle more; engagement with developers during the planning process will assist in delivering this.
- active participation in relieving congestion.
- the provision of speed limit signs in order to remind drivers of the speed limit, something that is currently missing.
- the principle of road safety. SCC would encourage the Parish Council to continue discussions with the Highways Area Office.

8.10 With regard to parking problems and congestion associated with school drop off and pick up, this causes disruption to other motorists and is partly due to the fact that many children come into the Parish to attend the village school from the wider hinterland including Yeovil. In addition staff parking takes up road space during the day and extends along the adjacent roads up the Yeovil Road and towards the Village Hall. It is proposed therefore to develop community based solutions to address and resolve congestion to and from and outside the school in partnership with the School and Somerset County Council.

8.11 Permission has been given for parents to park in the Village Hall car park at drop off and pick up times. Consideration has been given to making a pedestrian access from this car park directly into the school grounds. However there is a culvert that would need to be bridged plus an industrial yard that would need to be crossed, with the most direct route severing this area of land, which would not be compatible with or acceptable to the industrial use and storage activities. Permission would also need to be sought from the landowners.

8.12 An alternative could be the provision of a car park on land just to the east of the School on North Coker Road close to the junction with Halves Lane, subject to the agreement of the landowner and any necessary consents. Discussions have also taken place with the School with regard to enhanced green transport policies being introduced.

8.13 Speed of traffic is an issue, although parked cars do in fact act as a traffic constraint in places. However there are no speed restriction signs in East or North Coker and it is proposed that such signs be introduced, but only at the key entrance points to the villages. This will be pursued with Somerset County Council as Highway Authority, and should assist in reducing the speed of traffic in the various pinch points referred to above.

8.14 The resurfacing of the virtual pavement from Tellis Cross in a coloured surface as found elsewhere in Somerset Parishes, is to be pursued with a view to its provision by Somerset County Council as Highway Authority with responsibilities for pedestrian safety.

8.15 The sunken lanes are very much part of the character of the locality. Their widening would be detrimental to this historic character although more regular maintenance to keep the road widths to their maximum would be beneficial and this issue has been discussed with representatives of the Highway Authority who all support the Neighbourhood Plan's Policies.

Policy ECT 2: Highway safety

Proposals to improve access and car parking as part of any redevelopment of the existing Primary School and Village Hall site, will be supported where they accord with other development plan policies.

8.16 There are existing traffic problems within the Parish of East Coker and new development will increase pressure on the existing infrastructure. The plan supports the concept of some housing and economic growth but the impact of traffic must be addressed, working in partnership with Somerset County Council as Highway Authority and South Somerset District Council as appropriate.



Traffic outside the school

Policy ECT 3: Parking and accessibility

Development should encourage provision for safe and suitable access for all people and not cause a significantly adverse impact on the local road network that cannot be managed or mitigated.

Development proposals that minimise car parking other than in designated parking areas and discourage on street-parking will be supported.

Infrastructure

8.17 Although there is no mains gas in those parts of the Parish outside the environs of Yeovil, the majority of dwellings are on mains drainage and electricity. High speed broadband is available but mobile phone signal within the Parish is poor and patchy.

8.18 Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are designed to encourage opportunities to utilise layout to take account of street parking and accessibility.

Footpaths

8.19 East Coker provides a number of diverse walks in the area and this policy seeks to ensure that new development is well linked to existing footpaths and cycle routes. It will also help raise the profile of East Coker's unique natural, heritage and cultural assets and support one of the Plan's projects to provide much enhanced information and interpretation, linked to footpaths within the Parish.



Footpath

Section 9

Community Services & Facilities



9 Community Services and Facilities

Community Objective - To provide and support the retention of a range of services and community facilities supporting sustainable growth.

9.1 The evidence provided by both the 2013 and 2015 local community questionnaires suggests a full range of community activities are being enjoyed by local people. The 2013 survey highlighted that whilst most local people are satisfied with the leisure opportunities on offer, there are a number of ideas for more; particularly active pursuits. Many also felt there should be more organised activities locally for young people to help them advance and make positive use of their leisure time. The follow up survey in 2015 endorsed the importance of maintaining and enhancing community facilities for all ages.

East Coker in the context of Yeovil

9.2 It will come as no surprise that due to the size and rural nature of the parish of East Coker, not all community facilities are provided locally. The neighbouring town of Yeovil; 2 miles to the north, has many additional facilities such as doctors and dental surgeries, supermarkets, banks, post offices, library, restaurants, cafes, ten pin bowling alley, multiplex cinema, health and fitness clubs.

East Coker Parish/Village Facilities

Village Hall

9.3 The present Village Hall, owned by East Coker Charitable Trust, is run by a committee representing regular users. The venue can be hired for wedding receptions, parties, antiques fairs, craft fairs and more and has regular users for parish groups involved in a range of activities. The Hall has a large enclosed parking area at the side and rear. This parking is not only used by groups that have booked the Hall but is available for use by parents dropping children to and from the local school.



Village Hall

The Pavilion

9.4 The Pavilion is owned and maintained by East Coker Parish Council and is situated in Long Furlong Lane Recreational Ground. The premises are used by the East Coker Pre-school on a daily basis from Monday to Friday. The Pavilion is also the meeting venue of the Parish Council and other local organisations.

Parish Church & Cemetery

9.5 The church of St Michael and All Angels in East Coker sits at the heart of the religious community being part of the Coker Ridge Benefice serving the parish of East Coker and the neighbouring communities.

Village Shop Facilities

9.6 The 2013 local community survey revealed that 90% of the respondents felt the village shop to be important and would like the services to be extended to include a post office, longer opening hours, a cash machine, more 'fruit and veg' fresh meat and produce. In the same survey 80% of respondents supported a community-run project such as a tea-room. In the 2015 local survey 97% of respondents supported the promotion of retail provision in the parish despite the closure of the village shop earlier in the same year.

9.7 Alternative retail provision is available by way of a convenience store at the White Post garage on the West Coker Road. There is another convenience store/Post Office on the crossroads of Sandhurst Road and West Coker Road. Goose Slade Farm, located within the Parish, is a farm shop selling local produce. Despite these alternatives, the feedback from the October 2015 Open Day suggests there remains an appetite to take another look at the provision of a village shop, maybe even on a community run basis.

Café Tea Room

9.8 The Courtyard Café opened for business in November 2013. It is also the meeting venue for a number of local groups. Goose Slade Farm also has a popular tea room.

Public Houses/Hotel

9.9 The feedback from the 2013 community survey made specific reference to the need for a 'decent pub/restaurant' which is 'more village-friendly'. The Helyar Arms, a 15th century inn, is in the village of East Coker whilst the other pubs in the Parish are The Foresters in Holywell and The Red House on the A37 to the east of the Parish. Yeovil Court Hotel on the A30 is the only hotel in the Parish.

9.10 Clearly the above facilities and especially businesses can only thrive if local people, as well as visitors and others, continue to use and support the services they offer. It is therefore important that the local community appreciates this and responds accordingly.



Public House, The Helyar Arms

Mobile Library

9.11 A mobile library service at The Helyar Arms is available every second Tuesday of the month. Permanent library facilities are available in Yeovil.



East Coker Primary school

Education

9.12 East Coker Community Primary School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged between 4-11 years. The core catchment area is the Parish of

East Coker together with the surrounding villages of East Chinnock, Pendomer and Hardington, as well as an area of Yeovil. A growing proportion of pupils are from outside this area, from other villages and other parts of Yeovil. The school has a total of 9 classes and in September 2015 the total number of pupils attending the school was 261. Traffic problems linked to school traffic movements are referred to in the Transport section.

9.13 Children from the Parish attend a wide range of secondary schools including Westfield Academy, Preston School, The Park School, Bucklers Mead Academy, Gryphon, Sherborne Girls, Sherborne Boys, Perrott Hill, Hazelgrove, Kings Bruton, Leweston, Beaminster and Sexy's all of which are outside the Parish. The 2013 survey identified that all secondary school children in the Parish travelled to school either by bus or car. None walked or cycled.



Recreational Ground/Play Park

Recreational Ground

Recreation Objective - To protect open space, sport and recreation facilities to promote healthy lifestyles and the well-being of residents in the Parish.

9.14 The playing fields at Long Furlong Lane include provision for a range of sports, the most popular of which include rounders, football and cricket. The ground is owned and managed by East Coker Parish Council. The 2013 survey identified that there is a demand for more adventure-type sporting activities and that participation in organised team sports seemed to have declined in the previous few years. The October 2015 Open Day encouraged feedback on any additional leisure activities that could be provided and suggestions such as a skate park, tennis court, and bowling were made. Further comments were received requesting improved play areas at Tellis Cross and at the Recreation Ground.

9.15 Local access to facilities will bring health, welfare and community benefits. Offering a range of services and community facilities will support sustainable living and future growth of the Parish.

Policy ECCF 1: Local Sporting, Leisure & Recreational facilities

The following East Coker local sports and recreation facilities will be protected from built development:

- Cricket Field
- Playing fields
- Children's play area
- The Pavilion
- Tellis Cross Play Area

Proposals to enhance and improve these facilities will be supported where they:

- a) Do not have an adverse impact on residential amenity; and
- b) They provide suitable access and car parking.

Social & Health

9.16 Just over 30% of the community is aged over 65. Provision of services for the elderly is limited and not considered sufficient to meet the demands of an ageing population. This will put pressure on local services including: social and healthcare - greater likelihood of long term illness; public transport - through decreased mobility; recreational facilities - people are living longer and have more spare time; changing housing needs - smaller properties, adaptations and a dependence on others to provide care and support. However the proposed development at Keyford will assist with this provision as a care home is planned at this location.

9.17 There are over 30 community Groups and Clubs who meet regularly in the Village Hall and Pavillion and are very well attended. The Clubs and Societies involved cover a whole range of activities and interests for all age groups.

(List of Groups and Societies can be found www.eastcokerparish.com/community-groups/)

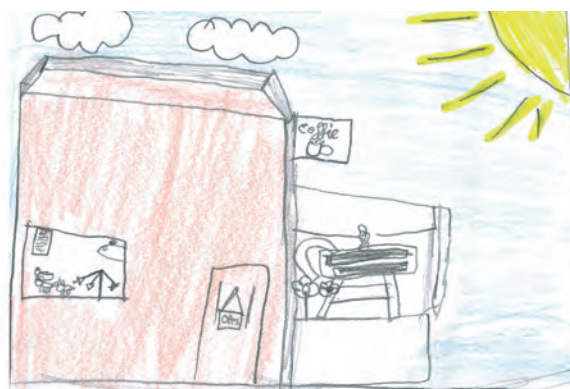
Policy ECCF 2: Protection of Community Assets

Community assets and facilities that are valued will be protected and changes of use resulting in the loss of these assets will not be supported unless the following can be demonstrated:

- a) The proposal includes alternative provision, on a site within the Parish, of equivalent or enhanced facilities. Such sites should be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and have adequate car parking; or
- b) Satisfactory evidence is produced that there is no longer an economic or social justification to protect the asset and all reasonable efforts have been made over an 18 month period to secure alternative business or community or social enterprise re-use.

These assets include the following:

- East Coker Community Primary School
- Village Café
- Helyar Arms
- Foresters Arms
- St Michael's and All Angels Church
- Village Hall
- The Pavilion
- The Cemetery
- Red House Public House
- Yeovil Court Hotel



'East Coker in the future' Drawings from East Coker Primary

Section 10

The Built & Natural Environment



10 The Built & Natural Environment

Conservation Objective - To support the retention and enhancement of the existing Conservation Areas in East & North Coker.

Design Objective - To secure good design in new development, and to protect, enhance and invest in the natural and built environment through a range of local projects and improvements.

Built & Historic Environment

Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings

10.1 The East and North Coker Conservation Areas were first designated in 1975 and 1978 respectively. The Adopted South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028 forms the current context for the conservation area policies. Overarching national policy on the protection and management of the conservation areas is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. There are over 90 listed buildings within the overall Parish.

10.2 A heritage asset is defined as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. This includes designated heritage assets such as listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas, and undesignated sites that can include archaeological sites, locally listed assets.

10.3 All heritage assets have significance and importance, usually reflected in levels or grades of designation. The greater importance the asset has the greater level of assessment would be expected, and when considering the impact of a proposed development on significance, the greater weight will be accorded to the asset's conservation.

10.4 The significance of a heritage asset can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the asset or development within its setting. Any harm or loss, including cumulative impacts and less than substantial harm, will require proportionate, clear and convincing justification to allow the harm to be balanced against any public benefits of the proposal.

10.5 Proposals for development should be informed by and will be determined in line with specific relevant guidance, principles and best practice. At present this includes relevant Historic England Guidance.

10.6 Non-designated assets can be buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, places, areas or landscapes positively identified in a Neighbourhood Plan as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.

10.7 Development proposal might draw attention to a heritage asset that had not previously been identified or assessed. The absence of an asset from the heritage asset register at the time an application is submitted does not indicate that the asset has no heritage value.

10.8 “Local Heritage Listing Historic England Advice Note 7” (2016) sets out Historic England’s guidance on local listing of heritage assets. This advises that communities can play a key role as a Neighbourhood Plan may indicate buildings and sites which merit inclusion on the local list. However, the guidance explains that identifying potential properties is only the first stage of the process of preparing the local list. Identified sites then have to be assessed and ratified by the local authority following consultation with property owners and the local community before the list is published. The generation of a formal Local Heritage List will be pursued with South Somerset District Council as per guidance.

East Coker & Conservation Area - Location and Context

10.9 East Coker forms one of a cluster of communities within the Civil Parish of East Coker. It lies a few miles to the west of the A37 Roman Yeovil to Dorchester Road and is also in close proximity to the Somerset/Dorset County boundary. East Coker is bounded to the south by the Coker Ridge line and historic Coker Court parkland. To the north of the village is open farm land at Coker Moor, the flood plain of the River Od and beyond the land rises towards the crest of the Coker dip-slope at Keyford. To the northwest, and almost continuous, is the settlement of North Coker, with which a strong relationship exists and parishioners consider it as one community. The East Coker Conservation Area was designated on 28th August 1975 and extended on 1st July 1998.

Some of the key characteristics of the area include the following:

- An example of the formation of a village in Norman times and a linear street form running East/West along the Northern foot of Coker Ridge
- Prominent historic buildings including the Grade I Listed Coker Court Manor House and Grade II* Listed St Michael’s Church together with a distinctive group of 12 original 17th Century Alms-Houses, the historic Helyar Arms Public House and West Wells washing place
- More than 45 listed historic buildings within the conservation area
- ‘The Paddock’ provides a focal point linking from the Church and Manor to the village scene
- The boundary walls and buildings are built of local stone; many with Ham Stone dressing
- Mature trees that have prominence and relate closely to the built environment
- The historic Coker Court parkland provides a backdrop to the village and conservation area

North Coker & Conservation Area - Location and Context

10.10 The village of North Coker forms one of a cluster of communities within the Parish of East Coker. It lies a few miles to the south of Yeovil and is closely related to the two Roman Villa Scheduled Ancient Monuments at Dunnock’s Lane and Chessels. North Coker, essentially including the settlements of Burton and Naish, is bounded to the South by the River Od and to the North, the parkland associated with North Coker House. Open farmland provides a clear delineation with the urban form at Sandhurst Road. The land rises from North Coker towards the crest of the Coker dip- slope at Keyford.



Naish Priory

10.11 The North Coker Conservation Area was designated on 28th August 1978 and some of the key characteristics include the following:

- Significant Grade I Listed Hymerford House (of Tudor origin) also known as Grove Farmhouse was built, or added to, in the 15th Century and is an imposing feature of the Parish
- North Coker Hall (not listed and now a residence) provides a strong focal point of the Parish at the junction of Main Street and Yeovil Road
- The Parish school, built in 1851, also forms a focal point, with the Old Forge opposite
- The buildings and boundary walls are built of local stone; many houses are finished with Ham Stone dressing
- A number of chantries and chapels existed including Chapel Row (formerly Chapel of Our Lady Burton) which subsequently became a workhouse. The 18th century building called 'The Chantry' off Yeovil Road may have been the site of a previous Chantry
- Several listed buildings extend along the elongated village street from the River Od at Main Street to Burton
- The character and plan form of North Coker is dictated by the linear nature of the settlement extending along Main Street towards Burton. The focus of the Conservation Area remains the Parish centre and the important listed buildings relating to Tudor times and earlier. However it extends to include North Coker House and The Chantry. The hamlet grew around the junction of the roads running West from East Coker and South from Yeovil. To the North West of the conservation area is the 14th Century Grade I listed Naish Priory and associated buildings. These have a strong relationship to North Coker via the parkland and sandy lanes.

10.12 Public consultation has demonstrated that a large proportion of respondents support the protection of heritage assets. There has been discussion about extending the two conservation areas, both locally and with South Somerset District Council. As this is a matter that falls entirely within the statutory responsibilities of the District Council as Planning Authority, it is being left for the District Council to progress and so is not being proposed or progressed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. For more information visit the Somerset Heritage website www.somersetheritage.org.uk

However it is important that any new development has full regard to the existing conservation areas. Furthermore it is proposed that a Design Guide be prepared in due course.

Policy ECCN 1: Design in the Conservation Areas

Development proposals will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of East and North Coker Conservation Areas, especially positive elements that may be identified in any Conservation Area Appraisal. Consideration will be given to the impact of development on the setting of the Conservation Areas, including views in and out of the village.

General Design

Although much of the built development is within conservation areas, it is important that high quality design applies throughout the Parish, including Keyford.

Policy ECCN 2: General Design

Development will be expected to demonstrate a design process that has clearly considered the existing context, and how the development contributes to the social, economic and environmental elements of sustainability through fundamental design principles of:

i) being of an appropriate scale, density, layout, height and mass; and it must also

ii) provide continuity with the existing built form and respect and work with the natural and historic environment; and

iii) provide building structures that can be easily altered, particularly internally, to respond to both climate change and changing social and economic conditions; and

iv) does not contribute to or suffer from adverse impacts arising from noise, light or air pollution, land instability or cause ground and surface water pollution; and

v) utilise sustainable construction methods, minimises the use of non-renewable resources and maximises the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials; and

- vi) incorporate the principles of Secured by Design (SBD); and
- vii) undertake community engagement, involvement and consultation in the design process proportionate to the scheme; and
- viii) appropriate drainage including sustainable drainage systems (SUDS), including arrangements for future maintenance, and connection of foul drainage to a mains sewer where available; and
- ix) protect individuals and property from:
 - a) overlooking and unreasonable loss of privacy; and
 - b) overshadowing and overbearing impacts; and
 - c) unreasonable noise and disturbance

Landscape Objective – To secure the protection, enhancement and interpretation of the distinctive rural landscape, settlement pattern, historical assets, natural environment and biodiversity of the Parish.

South Somerset Landscape Character Assessments

10.13 The original landscape character assessment which dates from 1993 includes the East Coker area as being part of the 'Ridges & Vales South and West of Yeovil'. Reference is made to the series of east-west Jurassic ridge formations which are rich in wildlife, with strong hedgerows and banks, together with blocks of woodland. Reference was made to the traditional and aesthetically pleasing balance between the basic elements of lowland English landscape, thick winding hedges, many hedgerow oaks, tree lined brooks, copses and larger blocks of broadleaved woodland. Reference was also made to attractive villages and dwellings many of which were thatched cottages. At that time, the area was described as amongst the least changing and unspoilt with a more dispersed settlement pattern and it is this character of the landscape and countryside setting that residents value. Planning applications which have the potential to impact on biodiversity and geodiversity will need to be accompanied by ecological statements, which describe the ecological value of the site, nature and extent of any impact of the proposed development and outline any mitigation measures necessary to make the application acceptable in planning terms.

10.14 Although prepared over 20 years ago this study still forms the basis for, and is quoted within, the recent Yeovil Peripheral Landscape Study that was prepared in connection with the current South Somerset Local Plan. This study includes the

following description: "The second sub-division of the 'Yeovil Sands dipslopes and escarpments' local character area, is the Coker dipslope. This is land that falls gently south from the head of Yeovil's southern escarpment, and it is predominantly rural in character, other than where residential form has spread south from the escarpment head, notably in the area off Nash Lane, and primarily to the south of West Coker Road. Much of this area is open, with a varied, irregular field pattern that is lined by mixed hedges, and encloses farmland that is primarily in arable production, or improved grassland. Pasture is apparent adjacent stream corridors, or within the smaller fields at the Parish edges. The field-scale is intricate by the Parish edges of West and North Coker, and by Nash hamlet, whilst areas of relic parkland remain intact by North Coker and West Coker Hall. Specimen trees abound within these parks, and by the mature edge of the villages, and are also a feature of the stream corridors, and old hedge boundaries. A number of locally distinctive holloways criss-cross the area, cut deep into the Yeovil Sands and lined by mixed hedgerows, inclusive of mature oaks". Overall the area is graded as being of 'high sensitivity' in landscape terms.

Policy ECCN 3: General Landscape Character

The siting, scale, form, layout, design, materials and landscaping of any development that may be permitted within the areas of East Coker Parish, including the proposed Southern Yeovil Urban Extension (Keyford) should respect, conserve and enhance, wherever possible, the rural nature and existing visual landscape quality of the area, its wildlife and the heritage value of the open countryside of the Parish, as well as maintaining a open rural gap between the villages of East and North Coker and Keyford, to retain their separate identities.

Any development should also respect the important contribution the open countryside makes to the setting and visual quality of East and North Coker, and will make to the setting and visual quality of the new urban extension.

In particular, new development should, wherever possible:

- Maintain existing hedgerows, trees and woodland and provide for the planting of new trees and hedgerows on boundaries and within sites and the creation of wildlife habitats and corridors
- Include new tree planting that should be of appropriate disease resistant native species

Local Greenspace

10.15 Areas that are proposed for designation as Greenspace in Neighbourhood Plans need to be carefully assessed to ensure the required criteria is met. They cannot simply be areas of open countryside, but must demonstrate proximity to local communities and have a special nature, by virtue of some or all of the following: beauty; historical significance; recreational value; tranquillity; and value for wildlife. This approach has been followed in East Coker and as a result a series of open undeveloped areas are identified as Greenspace, to be retained as such into the future. Some of these link physically and visually to areas of adjacent parkland and countryside which are also highly valued and most attractive and so perform an important function for flora and fauna and biodiversity. These larger open areas are not, however, included as greenspace as they are already protected by general planning policies aimed at protecting the countryside.

Policy ECCN 4 Local Greenspace

The areas shown in the table on the following page and listed in schedule on p45 are designated as Local Green Spaces.




Development on these areas will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances.



Green space at Mill Close

Local Green space Table

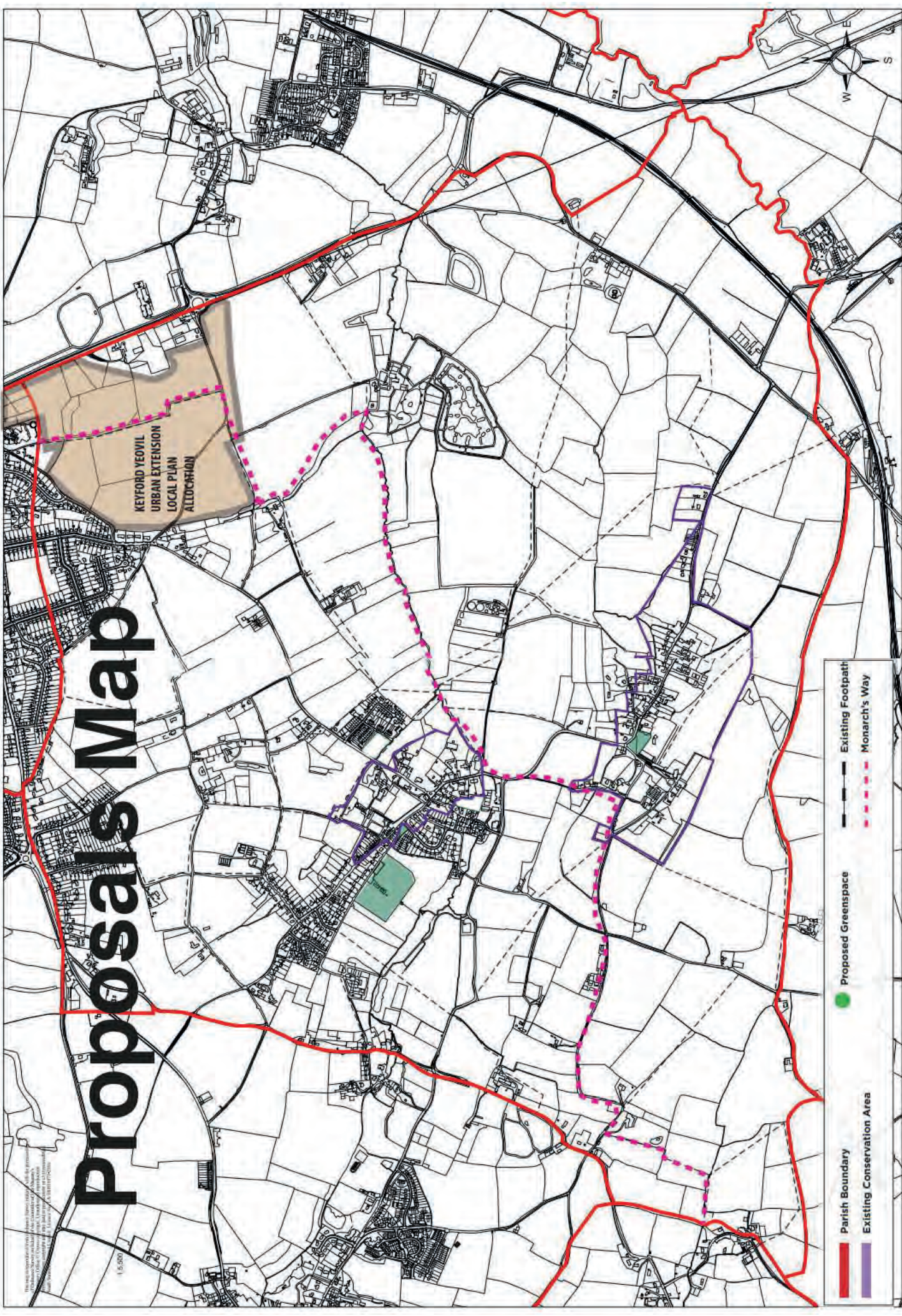
The location of the areas of Green space are shown on the Proposals Map and cross referenced to the schedule but for clarity and also provided on larger scale plans below.

Ref	Proposed Green space Sites & Locations	Characteristics	Community benefits
1.	Playing Fields at Long Furlong 	Important open space within Parish for range of sporting activities	Health, well-being and physical activity benefits for both local community and those from wider area. Visually attractive large open area that opens into wider countryside
2.	Junction Mill Close/Long Furlong 	Small but attractive area of open land with mature trees	Important focal point within this part of the Parish. Seen and passed by the whole community on regular basis
3.	The Paddock 	Wooded and planted open space area in historic part of the Parish close to church, alms-houses and parkland	Extremely attractive and beautiful, open area well used by public providing a valuable setting for the Church as well as the entrance to Coker Court

Proposals Map

KEYFORD YEOVIL
URBAN EXTENSION
LOCAL PLAN
ALLOCATION

- Parish Boundary
- Existing Conservation Area
- Proposed Greenspace
- Existing Footpath
- Monarch's Way



Agricultural Objective - To protect high grade agricultural land in order to increase sustainability of food supplies.

Agricultural Land

10.16 East Coker has a high proportion of Grade 1 agricultural land which is land of the highest quality representing only 4% of farmland (Statement from Natural England). The Southern Urban Extension is largely Grade 1 and so is being lost to food production, which means that there is even more reason for the remaining Grade 1 land in the Parish to be protected, wherever possible.

10.17 Grade 1 agricultural land and its potential for food production is recognized as an intrinsic element in supporting the sustainable growth of East Coker Parish.

10.18 Section 112 of the National Planning Policy framework and Policy EC1 of the Local Plan will be relied upon to protect this high quality agricultural land.

The Natural Environment

10.19 East Coker Parish does not contain national or internationally designated nature conservation sites. There is however an SSSI and a National Nature reserve at Hardington Moor (750m to the west of EC boundary, aligned with Holywell) – but as the Neighbourhood Plan does not involve allocation of a major infrastructure development there is no potential for adverse impacts. However, East Coker has a small number of local wildlife sites and a large area of historic parkland. The emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy being developed by South Somerset District Council and Natural England identifies principles of enhancement but there are not considered to be any adverse implications. Generally Natural England is supportive of policies that encourage and facilitate the conservation and enhancement of the local wildlife sites, green infrastructure and opportunities for new development to contribute to the provision of green infrastructure.

10.20 Planning applications which have the potential to impact on biodiversity and geodiversity will need to be accompanied by ecological statements, which describe the ecological value of the site, nature and extent of any impact of the proposed development and outline any mitigation measures necessary to make the application acceptable in planning terms.

10.21 The rich natural and cultural environment is a highly valued asset to East Coker and should be protected. Planning applications which have the potential to impact on biodiversity and geodiversity will need to be accompanied by ecological statements, which describe the ecological value of the site, nature and extent of any impact of the proposed development and outline any mitigation measures necessary to make the application acceptable in planning terms.

Policy ECCN 5: Natural Environment

Planning applications which have the potential to impact on biodiversity and geodiversity will need to be accompanied by ecological statements, which describe the ecological value of the site, nature and extent of any impact of the proposed development and outline any mitigation measures necessary to make the application acceptable in planning terms. The Plan would also endeavour to protect endangered and local species such as the Sandy Skilt (Puff Ball) and Water Voles.

Environmental Information & Interpretation

10.22 East Coker has a wealth of built and natural environmental assets that have been subject to some interpretation in the past. However as part of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is proposed that an Information and Interpretation Strategy be developed. This is aimed at developing the content and providing an integrated series of information panels, as well as potentially developing an 'App' for use by visitors and local people when out and about walking the extensive footpath network and within the parish generally. This would be supplemented by an updated website and updated series of walk leaflets.

10.23 As with other projects referred to in the Neighbourhood Plan, it is planned that this project will be funded from contributions secured from new development and/or through bidding for grant funding from external organisations.

Section 11

Implementation, Monitoring & Review



11 Implementation, Monitoring and Review

11.1 Subject to positive support through the Examination and Referendum, with over 50% of those voting being in favour of the Plan, it will become part of the Statutory Development Plan for the area.

11.2 Monitoring and review of the plan is an important part of the plan-making process in terms of how the document is applied and carried forward. Implementation is expected to be principally through three main organisations: South Somerset District Council (SSDC) as local planning authority for determining planning applications; East Coker Parish Council (ECPC), in responding to consultations on planning applications and other matters; and Somerset County Council (SCC), as Highway Authority and with its responsibilities for education and adult, social & health care. There may be input from other organisations as appropriate. The main roles are anticipated as follows:

SSDC

- Local Plan adoption and subsequent Plan Review
- Decision-making body determining planning applications
- Agreement to Neighbourhood Plan
- Administration arrangements for Neighbourhood Plan, Examination and referendum

ECPC

- Develop formal indicators to monitor the Plan in the years ahead
- Review this Plan as considered necessary and consider any changes required
- Respond to SSDC on Local Plan Review
- Work with SSDC and Somerset County Council (SCC) in regard to local initiatives and actions
- Input toward determining planning applications
- Follow up on non-policy recommendations of this Plan (projects and actions)

SSDC and ECPC

- To maintain positive working relationship in dealing with future planning documents relating to the Local Plan and this Plan

SCC

- Input required - particularly as Highway Authority; Education Authority & Public Rights of Way

SCC, SSDC & ECPC

- Co-operate regarding developer contributions to community infrastructure
- Work with others on initiatives e.g. Public Rights of Way

11.3 A number of projects are identified in the Policy EC2 and in the schedule within Appendix 1 in more detail. Whilst some of these can be delivered without a Neighbourhood Plan, the opportunity to secure Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from some new developments could assist in funding these schemes, as well as the Parish Precept and potential grant funding.

11.4 The Parish Council will report on progress of the Plan's implementation to all households in the Parish and the Plan will be subject to review in partnership with South Somerset District Council to assess the success or otherwise of the policies when required, for example, every five years or so.

Section 12

Timeline, Next Steps & Stages



12 Timeline, Next Steps & Stages

12.1 The following is the anticipated timetable for progression of the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan through to adoption and being 'made', as part of the Development Plan for the area.

'Your Parish - Your Plan' - East Coker Neighbourhood Plan

The Next Steps & Estimated Timetable

December

Final approval of Draft NP for Regulation 14 consultation

January/March 2017

Formal Pre-Submission Consultation with public and statutory organisations: Environment Agency, Historic England etc.

March 2017

Analysis of formal consultation responses

Amendments to Plan if required

April

Completion of Basic Conditions & Consultation Statement

May

Submission of Neighbourhood Plan to SSDC in accordance with Regulation 15 with view to further consultation by SSDC and formal Examination by Independent Examiner

July 2017

Meeting with SSDC Planning officers to discuss Plan

August 2017

Some revisions to Plan made

September 2017

Plan submitted for 'Health Check' via Locality following confirmation by Parish Council

November 2017

Response from Health Check Received
Minor amendments to Plan in accordance with recommendations of Health Check

May 2018

Submission of Neighbourhood Plan to SSDC in accordance with Regulation 15 with view to further 6 week consultation by SSDC and formal Examination by Independent Examiner

May/June 2018

Submission of Plan to Examiner by SSDC

July 2018

Examiner's Report Received and Modification to Plan if required

Date to be determined

Local Parish Referendum, aiming for more than 50% support for the Plan from those who vote

Date to be determined

Completion and 'Making' of Plan by SSDC

Implementation of Plan which is then part of the Statutory Development Plan to help in determining Planning Applications, together with NPPF and South Somerset Local Plan

Appendix 1 - Community Issues, Projects and Actions

The issues, projects and actions set out in the schedule below are linked to Policy EC2 in the Neighbourhood Plan, which addresses the raising of financial contributions as a result of new development through Section 106 Agreements and/or Community Infrastructure Levy Contributions. These issues and funding for the potential projects will need to be taken forward with South Somerset District Council as Local Planning Authority and Somerset County Council as Highway Authority.

Issues	Projects/Actions	Responsible Body/Partners
Examine speed issues in Halves Lane, Main Road, Cemetery Hill, 10 Cottages, Holywell, Gulliver's Grave, Higher Burton and Burton, Yeovil Road (Triangle to Tellis Cross)	Discussed with SCC Highways at site meeting. Agreed that speed restriction signs are needed at village entry points. Included within the Plan transport section	Somerset CC (SCC) in liaison with East Coker Parish Council (ECPC)
Address parking and speed issues at the School	Meeting with SCC Highways to discuss issues and with Headteacher of School. Community/School focused solutions being sought, car sharing etc. Referred to in the transport section of the Plan	East Coker School/ Parish Council in liaison with Somerset CC
Address parking issues/blind spot in Higher Burton. Main Road and Yeovil Road	Discussed with SCC Highways at site meeting. Agreed speed restriction signs would assist traffic entering this part of the village at speed. Included within the Plan transport section	Somerset CC in liaison with East Coker Parish Council
Poor quality of surfacing of the pedestrian route from Tellis Cross to the School/North Coker with resultant highway/pedestrian safety concerns between	Improve and provide clearly marked coloured surfacing for the pedestrian route from Tellis Cross to the School & Parish centre	SCC/SSDC/ECPC
Dog waste and the need for additional bins	Look into dog bins situation	Parish Council to progress with South Somerset District Council (SSDC)
Consider need for grit bins for winter weather	Identify need and opportunities for locating grit bins and engage with SCC as highway authority	ECPC/SCC
Examine flooding and drain clearing	Parish Council to investigate and resolve	Work undertaken satisfactorily and to be monitored
Need for improvements at play areas at Tellis Cross and the Recreation Ground	ECPC to discuss with Yarlinton Housing and residents with view to agreeing actions	SSDC as lessee/Landowner/ECPC
Improve signage - Finger Posts and 'Children at Play'	Identify need and key locations	ECPC/SCC/SSDC

Issues	Projects/Actions	Responsible Body/Partners
The need to improve footpath links generally and with the proposed new community at Keyford	Identify opportunities for enhanced signage and footpath links within the Parish and notably linking to Keyford	ECPC/SSDC/SCC/Keyford Developer
The need and opportunity to promote the historical and cultural assets in the Parish to both local people and visitors	Development and implementation of an environmental and historical information interpretation strategy and action plan to highlight and promote the environmental and historical assets of the Parish	ECPC/SSDC/Appointed Specialists
Improve facilities at Long Furlong Lane	Work with Football & Cricket teams to identify their needs and to assess the viability of increasing the number of football pitches. Purchase adjoining land to The Pavilion to accommodate Football Club expansion and give the ability to reinstate the Cricket facility. Build a new sports pavilion and install an outside gym and upgrade the children's play area	ECPC/SSDC/East Coker Coker Cockerels, East Coker Cricket Club
Raise the awareness of the contribution and significance of T S Eliot to East Coker	Assess the viability of and identify sites to house 'The TS Eliot Centre' which would be a multi-purpose space for meetings, study centres, library and exhibitions	ECPC
Consider converting the Chapel in the cemetery	Undertake a viability assessment of the Chapel to identify the opportunities for future use	ECPC/Appointed Consider Refurbishment
Improve youth activity	Work with local youth groups and East Coker School to identify opportunities for enhancing the youth facilities and activities in the Parish	ECPC/East Coker Primary School/ Local youth groups
Improve communications across the Parish	Assess ways of enhancing the mobile reception in the Parish and identify other communication improvements	ECPC/Associated specialists
Create a Parish Design guide	Appointment of specialist to help prepare Parish Design guide	ECPC

Other Issues of concern raised in Public Consultation	Projects/Actions	Responsible Body/ Partners
Communication about Parish Council meetings	Email network established, regular East Coker Society newsletters issued and distributed to all houses in the Parish, website improvements made	East Coker Society and ECPC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cycle paths and bridleways • Additional leisure (Playground, skate park, tennis courts, swimming pool and bowling) • Saturday Bus • Amenities for young people • Under 50s involvement in Parish life 	All local issues to be considered over the coming months and years	

Definition and Criteria of Local Connection and Local Need

Local Connection

For the purpose of applying the policies in the Plan 'local connection' refers to people who are aged 16 years or above and who meet 2 or more of the following criteria:

- The person was born in East Coker Parish or lived in the area as a child up to the age of 16; and/or
- The person normally resides in the parish and has done so for at least 3 years out of the last 5 years; and/or
- The person has family who are currently resident in the Parish of East Coker and have been so for at least 15 years; and/or
- The Parish of East Coker is the person's permanent place of work (defined as at least 16 hours per week).
- Members of the Armed Forces and former service personnel, where the application is made within two years of discharge.

Local Need

For the purposes of applying the policies in the Plan, 'local need' means people who meet the 'local connections' criteria, who are in need of housing locally, but they either cannot afford to buy a suitable home which may be currently available, or cannot identify a suitable home in the parish that meets their needs to rent or buy, and they fall into one of the situations listed below:

- An existing resident or family who have lived in the Parish of East Coker for at least the last 3 years and is seeking to establish a separate household or
- People from outside the parish who meet the criteria of having a 'local connection' or
- Households currently living permanently within the Parish in a dwelling that is either shared but not self-contained, overcrowded, or is otherwise unsatisfactory by health standards or
- People who have to leave tied accommodation within East Coker Parish or
- People who are taking up permanent employment in an already established business within the Parish or
- People who do not live in the parish but who are proposing to locate a viable business in the Parish, which will help promote the sustainability and viability of East Coker Parish.

Eligibility and Occupancy Cascade Arrangements

For the purposes of applying the policies in the Plan and in preparing controls over future sales, lettings and occupancy arrangements for affordable housing, a cascade arrangement will be set out in planning obligations associated with the grant of planning permission for new affordable housing (by new build or conversion) so that a clear hierarchy on eligibility to occupy the dwelling is made known when permission is granted. Properties will be sold or let first to people in need in the local area before being advertised more widely.

Homes will first be made available to residents in the Parish of East Coker. If, after advertising for 4 weeks there are no applicants who meet the eligibility criteria, then applications will be invited from residents in the surrounding parishes of Hardington, West Coker, Barwick and Closworth. If no eligible applicants come forward after advertising for a further 4 weeks then an invitation to apply to occupy the dwelling will be opened out to all South Somerset residents. Finally, after a further 4 weeks, applications to occupy the dwelling may be accepted from any person outside of South Somerset.

