
Report to South Hams District Council

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**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for
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REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION INTO THE CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

Document submitted for examination on 30 January 2006

Examination hearings held between 11 – 28 July 2006

South Hams Core Strategy DPD 2016 – Independent Examination Report

1. Introduction and Summary

1.1 I have carried out an independent examination of the South Hams Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2016 Development Plan Document (DPD) in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Following para 4.24 of Planning Policy Statement 12 – Local Development Frameworks (PPS 12), the examination has been based on the 9 tests set out. The starting point for the assessment has been that the Core Strategy (CS) is sound unless the evidence before the examination indicates otherwise. Consequently, this binding report makes changes to the document only where there is a clear need in the light of the tests in PPS 12.

1.2 An important feature of the new planning system is “front-loading”; the adoption of that approach meaning that changes following submission would not be expected and should be proposed only in exceptional circumstances (para 4.18 - PPS 12). At this early stage in the evolution of the new system, the “front-loading” process has clearly not worked as it should in this case, partly because the Council did not undertake a “self assessment” of the soundness of the document before submission. This has led the Council to propose a series of proposed changes in response to representations received and further ones as a result of discussions at the examination sessions. This has complicated my task by the need to assess the soundness of all the Council's proposed changes, as well as the submitted document, and this CS should not therefore be seen as a template for others to follow. It has also had to be reflected in the form and content of my report which differs from that which might otherwise have been expected as a result.

1.3 There is a limit to my ability to recommend the adoption of changes to the submitted document because of the need for community involvement at all stages in the generation of the plan and for any significant matter to be subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA). Fortunately, nearly all of the Council's proposed changes are either minor changes of policy wording, additions of text, or otherwise editorial in nature. They do not alter the spatial vision or the aims and objectives of the strategy and therefore I am satisfied that a fresh SA is not required in this case. I am therefore able to endorse those which improve the coverage, clarity and/or accuracy of the document and recommend that the Council's list of proposed changes in Appendix Two to this report to add to, clarify, amend and/or correct the submission version of the CS of January 2006, to which my report relates, be adopted.

1.4 The document has been prepared in the context of RPG 10 and the Devon Structure Plan of October 2004 (DSP) and is in general conformity with both, as well as with the emerging South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). In part, it is intended to supersede the South Hams Local Plan adopted in April 1996 (SHLP), although some of the policies of the adopted Local Plan are to remain in place until the completion of a new

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Development Control Policies (DCP) DPD and Area DPDs, in accordance with the approved Local Development Scheme (LDS).

1.5 Whilst addressing all of the tests of soundness, this report follows the chapter sequence of the plan to assist readers. All the issues considered are followed by conclusions referring as necessary to any proposed changes suggested by the Council. My binding recommendations are set out in bold after each chapter and are additional to the proposed changes put forward by the Council set out in Appendix Two that I have endorsed. There is also a list of abbreviations used in the report in Appendix One.

1.6 In most respects, this is a sound plan, albeit not one that provides a good example of a high quality, concise and focussed document. The spatial vision is articulated in somewhat general terms and the strategic objectives for the district would benefit from a more local focus. Nevertheless, they clearly apply the adopted DSP policies, including in relation to the major development area at Sherford. There is also an appropriate spatial strategy with a defined settlement hierarchy for new development in the remainder of the district outside the Plymouth Principal Urban Area (PPUA). Overall, it is generally well written with a sensible structure and a logical explanation of the overall strategy adopted. Moreover, it is based on a thorough analysis of realistic alternatives in sustainability terms that has been endorsed by independent scrutiny via SA.

1.7 On the information before me, I am also satisfied that, in general terms at least, there has been more than adequate information provided about and public consultation on the strategy as a whole during the various stages and specifically the proposals at Sherford, in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Consequently, I consider that the document complies with the requirements of PPS 12 and the relevant legislation in these respects. I also find that the plan meets the procedural tests, i) to iii), and test vii) in terms of preparation, in that it considered meaningful alternative strategies and proposals within the context set by the DSP at the issues and options stage.

1.8 I agree with the overall conclusion of the SA process endorsing the Council's strategic approach to largely concentrate new development outside the PPUA firstly and mainly in the Area Centres (ACs), then the Local Centres (LCs) and finally the larger villages with facilities, as the most sustainable of the options available. Within that hierarchy there is also a recognition that Totnes is, currently at least, the most sustainable location in the district, with a larger allocation of new housing and employment development as a result, compared to the other towns.

1.9 In my view, nothing in the various regional and local studies quoted by representors, referring to levels of self containment amongst other things, undermines the sustainability of this strategic approach. In contrast, a robust and credible evidence base, including the latest Housing Needs Survey (HNS), supports the logic of the settlement hierarchy outside the PPUA identified in the CS, with Totnes (rather than Ivybridge,

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the largest town in population terms) at the top. However, for these reasons, and in order to retain the necessary focus on the strategic policy level, without over-complexity and excessive detail, it seems to me that consideration of the relative sustainability of individual villages in the district is best addressed in the Area DPDs, which will include land allocations, rather than the CS.

1.10 As stated above, I fully endorse the strategy of concentrating development largely on the main towns for sustainability reasons. Nevertheless, taking into account the evidence base, the latest national guidance, the examination debates and other relevant factors, including the potential for delays in new housing provision at Sherford to meet the requirements of the DSP to 2016, I conclude that the submitted document is not sound in some specific respects.

1.11 For the above reasons and to ensure that the document provides the necessary and appropriate strategic guidance, I also recommend that the level of detail in some policies should be reduced and another deleted/combined for the sake of clarity and brevity. I have also concluded that the submitted document is unsound in respect of the policies relating to affordable housing, which conflict with government guidance in certain important respects and need to be changed for the reasons explained in the report. Without the additional wording suggested by the Council during the examination, it would also be deficient, and therefore unsound, in relation to the lack of co-ordination with transport policies and objectives, including the Devon Local Transport Plan (DLTP).

1.12 I have also found that, even with the additions proposed by the Council during the examination, the section on implementation and monitoring is inadequate. Moreover, there is insufficient flexibility in accord with the "plan, monitor and manage" approach to address any difficulties that may arise with progress on delivery, particularly in relation to the proposed new community at Sherford. Accordingly, these parts of the document are also not sound as submitted but can be made so by the inclusion of additional text and a list of key indicators/targets to be monitored, which I invited the Council to prepare. As they are largely derived from the published Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), with amendments for consistency with my other recommendations, they do not need to be the subject of additional public consultation or a separate SA.

1.13 I also recommend further changes to improve the "monitor" and "manage" elements of the strategy and introduce greater flexibility to respond appropriately to changes in circumstances. This will be important if, as I fear, the anticipated build rate for new housing at Sherford does not meet the Council's current expectations, which are acknowledged to be "optimistic" and "challenging". In my judgement, this is in accord with the most recent national guidance, including PPS 1, PPG 3 (revised) and PPS 12.

1.14 Although this report contains a number of recommendations, it is important to clarify that many are of a minor nature, incorporated for the

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sake of clarity, rather than the soundness of the policies themselves. Many derive from the Council's own suggested changes, arising from the somewhat belated "self assessment" of the contents of the document. Others emerged during the examination process in response to submissions from representors and reflect the positive approach on the part of Council staff to possible improvements to the contents of the CS. In my opinion, this should lead to a better final product for all plan users that is "fit for purpose" and provides a proper basis and justification for more detailed policies and site specific proposals in subsequent DPDs.

1.15 As I see it, none of my recommendations or those put forward by the Council that I have endorsed and listed in Appendix Two represents a fundamental change to the spatial vision or strategy thereby requiring a new SA. However, all should assist clarity, interpretation and/or practical implementation of the aims, objectives and policies, including in development control terms.

I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT, IN ORDER FOR THE DOCUMENT TO BE SOUND, THE COUNCIL'S PROPOSED CHANGES LISTED IN APPENDIX TWO OF THIS REPORT SHOULD BE ADOPTED.

Part One - Procedural Tests

2. Test 1

2.1 The CS is properly identified in the Council's approved LDS of December 2005 (CD 84). Taken as a whole, albeit with some omissions dealt with later in this report, the CS largely addresses the role, rationale and scope identified for it in the LDS. Therefore, I conclude that, in general terms, the test is met.

3. Test 2

3.1 Although the SCI was not adopted until June 2006, some months after the submission of the CS in January 2006, it is clear from the evidence before the Examination, including the Council's Consultation Statement (CD 79), that the minimum requirements set out in Regulation 28 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 have been complied with. I am entirely satisfied from the evidence that the public consultation procedures carried out during the preparation process of the CS have been undertaken in accordance with the subsequently adopted SCI of June 2006. Accordingly, this test is met.

4. Test 3

4.1 The independent Sustainability Assessment Report of January 2006, submitted with the CS, confirms that a comprehensive SA process has been undertaken at the appropriate stages during the preparation of the document, following initial scoping. Recommendations made at each stage have been taken into account to improve the document's contents, reinforcing the judgement that the SA process has been satisfactorily implemented in relation to the CS.

4.2 Regarding the issues debated at the examination session on sustainability, I acknowledge that, ideally, the initial SA of the options available to the Council should have been carried out before the publication of the Issues and Options report. Nevertheless, it was undertaken in the early stages of the preparation of the Preferred Options document and on a comprehensive basis.

4.3 The availability of earlier work relating to the analysis and consultations on detailed options for the former Local Plan Review and the evidence that changes were made to reflect the guidance offered by the independent consultants reinforces my conclusion that the "late start" of the SA process does not amount to a fundamental flaw in the preparation of the CS. Consequently, I am satisfied that this test is also met.

Part Two – Tests of Conformity, Coherence and Effectiveness

5. Role, Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives

5.1 In terms of consistency with national planning advice and general conformity with emerging regional guidance in the RSS and strategic policies in the DSP, I am satisfied that, as set out in para 4.3 of the CS, the Council's spatial vision for the area is clear, appropriate, and in line with government priorities, as expressed in PPS 1, PPS 12 and elsewhere. It is also consistent with the Community Strategy in respect of the key priorities, including the provision of affordable housing and good job opportunities. Moreover, the strategic objectives are clearly linked to each of the relevant policies throughout the document, although some additions are required for the sake of completeness (see Appendix Two).

5.2 In my judgment, it logically follows from this vision that the Council should seek to accommodate the majority of new development at market towns and larger villages over the plan period, in addition to the new community at Sherford and the 500 additional houses required in the rest of the South Hams part of the PPUA by the DSP. I also consider that the strategic objectives for housing (SO1 to SO5 and an extra one now proposed by the Council for Sherford) represent a suitable and reasonable local interpretation of the overall objectives of national guidance as set out in PPS 1 and PPG 3.

5.3 Regarding the economy, again, the vision and objectives in the CS seek to implement the main local priorities arising from both the Community and Prosperity Strategies through regeneration in towns, support for local businesses and help for the necessary restructuring of the rural economy away from an over reliance on low income/seasonal jobs. Accordingly, I consider that objectives SO6 to SO10 inclusive in the submitted CS are appropriate in the light of the above, as is the Council's suggested addition of a further SO concerning the regeneration of the PPUA to recognise the plan's important role in this respect.

5.4 Turning to transport matters, the Council has now, albeit somewhat late in the day, recognised the importance and relevance of transportation and access issues for the CS and proposes some significant additions to the document. For the most part these have been agreed with DCC, although some minor differences of view remain over the detailed wording. For my part, I consider that, despite the content of para 4.17, the CS would be unsound without a strategic objective dealing with transport and seeking to minimise the need to travel and increase the use of more sustainable modes where possible. In particular, it would be out of accord with PPG 13 and the relevant policies of the emerging RSS and the DSP. On the other hand, I am satisfied with the wording of the new SO now proposed to meet this omission and it should therefore be added into the CS, with consequent renumbering, before the current SO11 (see Appendix Two).

5.5 I also incline to the view that this section of the document should be titled "Transport and Accessibility", rather than just "Access", as it

provides a more comprehensive description of the contents. For the same reason I also prefer the DCC version of the suggested additional text (a new para before para 4.15 of the CS), with minor amendments for clarity, as giving a fuller and more accurate picture of what is required, even though it is less succinct than that proposed by the Council.

5.6 In relation to the environment, SOs 15 to 20 inclusive logically interpret national, regional and strategic guidance for the current local situation in the area and provide suitable general aims for its conservation and enhancement. I am therefore content that they meet the requirements of tests iv) b) and c) for consistency and general conformity, including with PPSs 7, 9 and 22 as well as PPGs 15, 16, 17 and 20, without simply repeating national guidance.

5.7 Notwithstanding, some other changes are also necessary to ensure that each of the SOs is fully sound and unambiguous. In particular, irrespective of the local importance understandably attached to the provision of affordable housing, the wider objective in relation to housing, currently in SO2, should come first to more accurately reflect national guidance in PPS 1 and PPG 3. It would also confirm the importance of the delivery of new housing of all types across the district during the plan period as a high priority for the Council. Thus, the present SO1 and SO2 should be reversed with the new SO1 reworded to say: "Ensure that the current and future housing needs of the community are met", and the new SO2 simplified to say: "Provide affordable housing to meet local needs".

5.8 Regarding the focus on the PPUA, as now recognised by the Council in the proposed new SO after SO10, it is likely to be more sustainable, in accord with the sequential test set out in PPG 3, for new development to be concentrated on key locations at the larger settlements, which are best served by existing transport links and other services and facilities, rather than to encourage a more dispersed growth pattern. Moreover, by allowing for additional residential and employment development over and above that required by the DSP in the rest of the district, the Council have also sought to ensure that scope remains for smaller settlements with appropriate facilities to prosper and meet their local needs through limited growth. I endorse this approach.

5.9 In the light of the above, I recommend that, in order to be sound, the following changes should be made to chapter 4 of the CS:

REPLACE SO1 AND SO2 WITH THE FOLLOWING;

"SO1: Ensure that the current and future housing needs of the community are met."

"SO2: Provide affordable housing to meet local needs."

6. Spatial Strategy and Policy CS1

6.1 Chapter 5 provides a locally distinctive analysis of the roles played by the towns and larger villages in the district and in relation to the larger urban areas of Plymouth and Torbay within the wider settlement hierarchy. It sets the scene for policies CS2 and CS3 to identify the broad locations for delivering the new housing, employment and other strategic development needs of the area to 2016. Save in respect of transport, which the Council now seeks to address via additions to the text, there is no evidence before the examination indicating that the overall strategic approach adopted is other than sound in principle. In my opinion, it amounts to a coherent strategy that has been co-ordinated with the objectives sought and is consistent with the plans of neighbouring authorities. It also seems to me to be capable of delivering the spatial vision set out. Accordingly, tests vi) and vii) are met in these respects.

6.2 The Council has responded to comment about the lack of information regarding new retail development at Sherford in the CS by proposing that the last sentence of para 5.16 be reworded to draw attention to the contents of the Sherford AAP. I am satisfied that this is necessary as it is not appropriate for the CS to deal with such matters of detail, beyond recognising that Sherford will have the status of an Area Centre within the plan period. I have however simplified the proposed wording.

6.3 As agreed by all present at the examination, it is necessary to amend the wording of the third part of the policy so that it is entirely clear which settlements will have defined town centre zones. It should therefore be reworded at the start as follows: "In Area Centres and at Modbury and Salcombe, Town Centre Zones will be defined to provide a focus for".

6.4 In all other respects, whilst there is no criticism of its content as such, the policy itself does little more than presage the more detailed content of policy CS2 and is therefore not strictly necessary. It should be combined with CS2 in the interests of brevity and clarity. The fact that it is titled "Settlement Designation and Town/Village Centres" and merely lists those in each category confirms that it is not in itself setting out the spatial strategy, which is better explained in chapter 5 of the supporting text and policy CS2. Accordingly, policy CS1 as it currently stands should be deleted, with a reworded part 3 thereof to become a new part 3 of policy CS2, with the present part 3 of that policy renumbered accordingly.

DELETE POLICY CS1 [FIRST TWO PARTS], ADDING REWORDED PART 3 AS FOLLOWS: "IN AREA CENTRES AND AT MODBURY AND SALCOMBE, TOWN CENTRE ZONES WILL BE DEFINED TO PROVIDE A FOCUS FOR...." AS NEW PART 3 OF POLICY CS2.

REPLACE LAST SENTENCE IN PARA 5.16 WITH "Retail issues associated with Sherford will be addressed in the Area Action Plan."

7. Policy CS2 – Location of Development

7.1 Arising from the clarification provided by the Council at the examination, as to the intent and application of the policy in relation to settlement boundaries as currently defined in the 1996 adopted SHLP (CD 73), a small but significant amendment is required to the first part of the policy wording for clarity and accuracy. Given that the "presumption in favour" of new built development is to be applied only to sites inside existing settlement boundaries, at least until they are reviewed in the next stages of the LDF process, the policy wording should be changed to "Development is acceptable in principle within the following settlements:", as distinct from "at the following settlements".

7.2 In contrast, the same expression applied to the existing employment estates listed in part 2 of the policy is deliberately intended to allow for potential expansion onto adjoining land and therefore the use of "at" should remain in the wording. Otherwise, I am content that policy CS2 represents an informative and clear general explanation of the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy, in accord with the interests of sustainable development and is therefore sound. This is subject to the above change in the first line and the addition of the former part 3 of policy CS1 as a new part 3 to allow that policy to be deleted, with consequent renumbering.

REPLACE "AT" BY "WITHIN" IN FIRST LINE.

ADD REWORDED FORMER PART 3 OF POLICY CS1 AS NEW PART 3 AS FOLLOWS "IN AREA CENTRES AND AT MODBURY AND SALCOMBE, TOWN CENTRE ZONES WILL BE DEFINED TO PROVIDE A FOCUS FOR ...". RENUMBER ACCORDINGLY.

8. Policy CS3 – Housing Provision

General

8.1 The Council's principal justification for proposing a level of new housing outside the PPUA that exceeds the requirement to 2016 deriving from the DSP is to increase the provision of affordable housing in market towns and villages (para 5.26 of the CS). Without such an increase, the remaining DSP provision of new housing outside the PPUA, after allowances have been made for those dwellings built and committed up to April 2005 and the pdl capacity identified in the UCS, would barely meet the latest (2006) estimate of annual average need for affordable housing, let alone market housing too.

8.2 In the absence of opposition from GOSW, RPB, DCC, PCC or any other neighbouring authority and with evidence of wide ranging support in principle from many other respondents, I consider that such circumstances help to provide a strong and credible evidence base for the Council's proposals in this respect. Moreover, I am also satisfied that the relatively limited increase proposed would not render the CS out of general conformity with the DSP, if only because both figures are targets and the actual delivery of completed new houses is the critical factor that the Council and others must address. The Council must make realistic provision for a 10 year supply of new housing land outside the PPUA as a high and continuing level of availability is essential to help overcome outstanding problems of delivery and affordability and build mixed and sustainable communities.

8.3 Indeed, the point was made firmly and repeatedly at the examination that, had they felt able to do so in relation to conformity with the DSP, the Council would have sought a higher figure still in view of the levels of local need for new housing. Should there be sufficient evidence to support it, I was invited to consider whether such a higher figure could be justified. In my view, it is firstly relevant that not all of the potential capacity for new housing identified on pdl will necessarily come forward to be redeveloped for housing in the plan period, if at all. In some instances existing uses may remain or alternative new ones prove more acceptable. This could apply within the PPUA as elsewhere so that the overall target for the "elsewhere in the PPUA" category in policy CS3 should be "500" and not "450", as per the DSP. I return to this point later.

8.4 Secondly, it is not the role of the CS to be site, as distinct from location, specific and therefore, as further explained later in this report, exact figures of new houses for individual villages should be omitted as too detailed. The allocations of new housing for the ACs and LCs also need to be sufficiently different to properly reflect their respective positions within the settlement hierarchy and spatial strategy in sustainability terms. For example Ivybridge, the largest town in population terms, is an AC thereby justifying a new housing allocation materially greater than that of any of the LCs as a more sustainable location. The allocations should remain approximate to acknowledge the hierarchy rather than just the current availability or otherwise of actual/potential

sites, if only because the circumstances of the latter may change over the plan period, whilst their policy status should not.

8.5 Thirdly, the need to achieve annual average house completions over the plan period of roughly double that in recent years requires a step change in the new build rate across the district, as demonstrated by the Housing Trajectory. Any delay to the presently anticipated start date at Sherford would only exacerbate the difficulties of meeting that target.

8.6 Taking these factors into account, I conclude that not only is the Council fully justified in seeking new housing provision slightly above the DSP requirement outside the PPUA, but that there is scope for the overall target to be a little higher, i.e. 6,000 new dwellings, rather than 5,880. This should slightly improve the flexibility available to the Council in site selection and the availability of a choice of size and type of sites in the event of delivery problems arising. It should also encourage a higher house building rate, albeit marginally, than would otherwise have been the case. Importantly, this small addition is also essential to facilitate a more cohesive and consistent form and content for policy CS3, including in terms of the allocated numbers of new houses directed to ACs, LCs and villages, without over prescription, as part of a sound spatial strategy. It would remain within the parameters of general conformity with the DSP.

8.7 I therefore recommend that the first part of this policy be amended by replacing "5,880" with "6,000" as the overall target in the policy to help ensure that there is a 10 year supply of land outside the PPUA. The supporting text of this policy, notably in para 5.26, will also need to be amended to accord with this recommendation. As noted by a number of representors, any material reduction in the amounts of new employment and housing anticipated in the SH part of the PPUA during the plan period would risk a lack of general compliance with relevant policies of the DSP, as well as, potentially, the emerging RSS too. Equally, I acknowledge the Council's position that any significant increase in the levels of growth sought in the SH part of the PPUA to 2016 could reduce the scope for directing appropriate development to the most sustainable locations in the remainder of the district to help meet local needs. I therefore conclude that the CS draws an appropriate and sound balance in this respect.

8.8 The spatial strategy allocates just over 60% of the new housing development to 2016 outside the PPUA to the 4 ACs, the largest and most sustainable settlements, even though they currently contain only about 40% of the total population in the area. This clearly represents a greater degree of urban concentration than has previously been the case in the district, in contrast to rural dispersal, and is consistent with the advice in national and strategic guidance, including PPS 1, PPG 3 and the DSP.

8.9 Below that the LCs (excluding Woolwell), with a lesser range of services, would play a complementary role by also accommodating a more modest scale of new development at around 13% of the total outside the PPUA. The evidence base confirms the respective functions of each in the settlement hierarchy and that there are no realistic or viable alternatives to the lists in the CS. Moreover, I am also content that the spatial

strategy embodied in these proposals is not only consistent with national guidance, but also policies ST15 and ST16 of the DSP dealing with such centres. In my judgement, it provides the necessary focus on the larger and more sustainable settlements, whilst also providing for the local needs of the more rural areas.

8.10 I am satisfied that the evidence base to justify the selection of the named centres and the relative amounts of new housing directed to each group is robust and acceptable with nothing tangible to indicate otherwise. Accordingly, I conclude that, overall, the spatial strategy is sound in respect of tests iv) a), vi) and vii). Nevertheless, certain adjustments, such as at Ivybridge, are required for the sake of appropriate comparability between ACs and LCs and so that the policy has a clear and consistent content, albeit without too much detail, to act as suitable strategic guidance for subsequent area (and site) specific DPDs.

Dartmouth

8.11 Of a similar size to Kingsbridge, Dartmouth's riverside location and historic character both enhance its role as a tourism destination and constrain its realistic potential for redevelopment and physical expansion. No doubt these factors have contributed to the relatively low levels of new housing completions in the town over the last five years. Nonetheless, it is also an important service centre for the locality and clearly meets the criteria for identification as an AC.

8.12 The town is therefore an appropriate location for suitable new housing and employment growth in the spatial strategy and capable of sustainably accommodating the 200 or so new houses envisaged under policy CS3. However, to avoid the use of over precise figures in the CS, which may become the source of unnecessary debate over the allocation of individual sites in the area specific DPD, I recommend that "200" should be substituted for "220" in the wording. This has the further advantage of consistency with Kingsbridge, an AC that plays a closely comparable role in the district's settlement hierarchy.

8.13 The suggestion that the dwelling allocation for Dartmouth should be increased to reflect the potential of the former shipyard at Noss (on Dart) to be redeveloped for housing, albeit as part of a mixed use scheme, does not accord with the spatial strategy for a number of reasons. Firstly, as the main "higher order" centre and most sustainable location, the largest percentage of new development for the ACs over the plan period should be directed to Totnes for sustainability reasons. Secondly, the scope to increase the overall level of new housing proposed outside the PPUA is not unlimited if the general conformity of the CS with current guidance in the DSP is to be achieved. Any reduction in the allocation to other ACs, or LCs, to allow more in Dartmouth, risks unbalancing a housing distribution across the district outside the PPUA that properly reflects the settlement hierarchy. Accordingly, I see no justification in strategic terms for increasing the new housing allocation in Dartmouth in relation to Noss.

8.14 Moreover, the site at Noss is, in my view, clearly outside and not, physically or functionally, directly related to the existing built up area of the town, particularly in its present largely leisure and recreation use. Its location on the other side of the river from Dartmouth with relatively poor transport links, within the AONB, and outside any settlement with community facilities reinforces my opinion that it is not a sustainable location for new housing. Nor does it justify the designation of a settlement boundary, either separately or as part of Dartmouth, irrespective of the possibility of establishing a new ferry service in connection with redevelopment.

Ivybridge

8.15 The largest town in the district, Ivybridge has been the focus for significant new housing over the last few decades, confirming its role as a dormitory settlement for Plymouth and contributing to a lack of "self-sufficiency", particularly in respect of local employment. It is also generally acknowledged that growth in the levels of retail provision, community facilities and other services has not matched that of the resident population during this time. The physical form of the town, tightly constrained by the railway and DNP to the north and the A38 to the south, also means that any peripheral expansion is only realistic to the east or west of the current settlement framework. A further constraint on new development is the single junction serving the town on the A38 and the opposition in principle of the Highways Agency to any possible second junction to the east.

8.16 In such circumstances, it seems to me that the Council has rightly recognised that, irrespective of any arguments that Ivybridge needs to "catch up" on the provision of support facilities, a process that would not be assisted by a moratorium on growth, the practical scope for new development over the plan period is limited. This conclusion is reinforced by the alternative development location offered at the proposed new community at Sherford not far away. I therefore endorse the Council's decision that growth outside the PPUA in this plan period would be more sustainably focussed on Totnes, a "higher order" centre, with a wider range of services and facilities, as part of the new overall spatial vision and strategy for the district, rather than Ivybridge.

8.17 Whilst acknowledging the continuing need for new local employment provision to increase the level of self containment in the town, I therefore accept that it is appropriate within the spatial strategy for Ivybridge to have the lowest allocation of new housing amongst the ACs, despite its relative size. However, given the acknowledged high level of local affordable housing need and the 10 year timescale of the CS, it would be more realistic and appropriate if the figure was increased slightly from 75 to 100. This would also help to emphasise the important distinction between the town as an AC within the settlement hierarchy of the district and the appropriately smaller new housing allocations at the less sustainably located LCs.

Kingsbridge

8.18 The current and future role of Kingsbridge as an AC within the spatial strategy appears to meet with universal agreement from those contributing to the CS. Although properly recognised, alongside Dartmouth, as something of a “lower order” service centre than Totnes, it provides a reasonable range of facilities for its “extensive hinterland” (para 5.6 of the CS) and therefore a sustainable focus for new development over the plan period. Accordingly, I conclude that the allocation of about 200 new dwellings is appropriate and consistent with the proposed spatial strategy.

Sherford

8.19 Although the Sherford new community does not yet exist, all the currently available evidence points to its deliverability, at least in part, as realistic and economically viable over the plan period, despite the considerable infrastructure provision required to facilitate its construction. Whilst I share some of the concerns about the likely start date and pace of delivery (addressed elsewhere in this report), based on present evidence and the work carried out to date, I have no doubt that substantial progress at least can reasonably be anticipated by 2016.

8.20 Bearing in mind the necessary emphasis to be placed on the early implementation of community facilities to serve new residents (and, in some respects, the surrounding area too), I am equally sure that it is appropriate for the Council to recognise the role that such provision will play in the future settlement hierarchy of the district. To do otherwise would paint a false picture of the likely role of other nearby settlements in the development pattern of the locality over the next decade and thereby contribute to a flawed spatial strategy for the district as a whole. For these reasons, I support the inclusion of Sherford as an AC in the CS.

Totnes

8.21 It was essentially common ground amongst participants at the examination that Totnes is effectively a “higher order” retail and service centre than Ivybridge, despite being about a third smaller in population terms. It is the main administrative centre of the district and has reasonably good public transport links, including a main line rail station with regular services, and to the A38. Totnes and its surroundings also has the highest level of need for affordable housing, above that of the other ACs, according to the most recent (2006) survey information, as well as some potential for the redevelopment of pdl within the existing built up area. Whilst geographical, environmental, transport and landscape constraints affect potential physical expansion of the town in some directions, recent work by the Council in respect of the uncompleted LP Review suggests some sustainable opportunities for new development in others, within and on the edge of the built up area that would be deliverable within the plan period.

8.22 For all of the above reasons, I agree with the general consensus that Totnes is currently the most sustainable location for new housing and employment development in the district outside the PPUA, in accordance with guidance in PPS 1 and PPG 3. It is therefore appropriate that the spatial strategy should recognise this situation and allocate a significantly larger quantum of new housing to Totnes than to the other ACs, or other parts of the area, in the interests of sustainable development. I therefore endorse the proposed figure of about 400 new dwellings for Totnes.

Local Centres

8.23 At the next level of the settlement hierarchy, the five LCs all have a recognisable role in providing services for the surrounding rural areas, albeit with a smaller range and scale of facilities than at the ACs. Overall, the Council's evidence base confirms that each is capable of accommodating modest new development as part of a sustainable pattern of growth across the district outside the PPUA. With the exception of Woolwell, respondents also largely endorse the choice of settlements defined as LCs and I see no reason or justification for any change.

8.24 Regarding Woolwell, given that it clearly performs similar functions to the other LCs, albeit with a somewhat larger population and in a suburban, rather than a rural, context, I consider that it is appropriately defined within the settlement hierarchy of the CS. However, unlike the other LCs, it is within the PPUA and therefore subject to other specific policies and proposals of the DSP and the CS. Accordingly, it seems to me that the detailed level of new development expected there for the plan period, as distinct from elsewhere in the PPUA, is largely a matter for the emerging Plymouth Urban Fringe DPD and does not need to be specifically addressed in the CS.

8.25 In the light of all of the above, to avoid unnecessary over prescription, to retain an element of flexibility in implementation and for the sake of consistency with other recommendations, it is necessary that the figures given for the approximate number of new dwellings in each LC outside the PPUA should be slightly amended to 50 each. This would add up to 200 new houses in the four LCs listed in policy CS3, amounting to just over 13% of the total outside the PPUA to 2016, properly reflecting their position within the settlement hierarchy and the interests of sustainable development. I therefore recommend that policy CS3 be amended by changing the figure of "40" to "50" in "Stokenham/Chillington" and from "45" to "50" in Salcombe.

Villages

8.26 The spatial strategy says relatively little about settlements below the level of LCs, although it does confirm in para 5.18 that each one has been assessed in terms of its potential for additional development. Factors such as needs, capacity, location, setting and character have apparently been taken into account to determine those to be listed in policy CS2, where new development is acceptable in principle within the existing settlement boundaries defined in the 1996 LP. Those generally

larger villages also included in policy CS3 are considered by the Council to have scope for limited further growth, with a figure for the approximate number of new dwellings expected (varying between 10 and 50) attached.

8.27 Firstly, it seems to me that policy CS3 gives a surprising amount of detail at this level of the settlement hierarchy for a spatial strategy. This is partly because, as para 5.1 of the document confirms, it is not appropriate to identify individual sites in a CS as deliverability over the plan period cannot always be properly assessed at this stage of the LDF process. I acknowledge that the Council has had the benefit of the work previously undertaken on the uncompleted LP Review regarding potential opportunities in some locations. I also accept that there is a strong and urgent need for action to bring forward new housing sites in villages to help provide affordable housing.

8.28 Nevertheless, I share the concerns of representors that, as set out, the CS is somewhat vague in respect of the actual policies to be applied in villages and yet at the same time too specific as to the numbers of new houses to be built in each village listed in policy CS3. In my opinion, there is inadequate justification of the reasons for the choices made, including the numbers given and why certain villages, including some without state primary schools, are in the list and others, such as those with a similar level of services and equally sustainable locations, are not.

8.29 Rightly or wrongly, the impression is given that the application of the sequential test for new housing development, as per PPG 3, having been applied in relation to the higher levels of the settlement hierarchy for ACs and LCs, does not also apply to villages. Accordingly, I find this element of the CS to be unsound as it stands and not in accord with tests iv) b) or vii). In my judgement, the local justification for directing a percentage of new housing to settlements smaller than the ACs and LCs, whilst acceptable in principle, does not override the necessity for compliance with the guidance in PPG 3 in this case nor the requirement to make clear how such decisions have been reached and derived from a robust and credible evidence base.

8.30 Fortunately, this situation arises largely from the inclusion of unnecessary detail in the CS, which may simply be omitted. It also derives partly from the lack of an adequate and clear explanation of how both policies CS2 and CS3 are intended to apply to villages and to be operated in practice, alongside those of the 1996 LP, at least until the area specific DPDs are completed.

8.31 From answers to questions at the examination, it is apparent that the Council's intended implementation of these policies would be essentially consistent with national guidance, such as PPG 3. However, to be sound the document needs to be explicit on this matter for the benefit of all concerned and to assist the preparation of subsequent DPDs. As I understand it, all existing development boundaries defined in the adopted LP are to be retained until reviewed in area specific DPDs. Therefore, the first line of policy CS2 must say "within" not "at" for clarity on this point.

Otherwise, it might reasonably be assumed that peripheral development outside existing built up areas would be acceptable in principle.

8.32 Next, a reference needs to be introduced into para 5.34 confirming that all existing settlement boundaries will be reassessed as part of site specific DPDs so that the most sustainable locations, in accord with PPS1 and PPG 3, can be considered for development in all settlements, not just the ACs and LCs. I therefore recommend that the words “, including a review of development boundaries,” be added after “proposals” in the second sentence thereof to cover this point. This would also address concerns that such boundaries, having first been defined over 10 years ago, are due for review in any event, if only to reflect recent take up of infill opportunities and relevant changes in circumstances.

8.33 Some respondents support the introduction of an entirely criteria based policy approach to new housing in villages and the omission of all development/settlement boundaries. However, the Council's evidence suggests that the latter is a tried, tested and well understood policy in this district. Provided that there are regular reviews and suitably worded policies (currently in the adopted LP and in the future in the DCP DPD), I see no reason to abandon an established and important part of the local planning strategy for new housing. In my view, it remains consistent with the sequential approach and the other housing policies of the CS. This is especially the case when the purported advantages of such an alternative in a mainly rural area are unclear and it would remove an element of certainty from the local spatial planning framework.

8.34 Whilst appreciating that there are some advantages in terms of certainty to the inclusion of a number of new dwellings for each village, I conclude that this is outweighed by the resulting lack of flexibility, particularly affecting the treatment of future opportunities. For example, the emergence of a new and otherwise entirely suitable redevelopment site within a particular settlement might be precluded, even though it would represent a more sustainable option than a greenfield site on the edge of another village with a higher allocation.

8.35 Accordingly, I consider that the CS should restrict itself to identifying the overall amount of new housing to be provided in the district's smaller settlements as part of the spatial strategy and omit all figures for individual villages at this stage of the LDF process. Site specific proposals, whether or not they were identified in the uncompleted LP Review, can then be subject to SA as part of the area DPDs and all other opportunities considered against the policies for new housing in villages that the Council intends to include in the DCP DPD, or those in the existing LP in the meantime.

8.36 As the Council says that sites at ACs and LCs are expected to come forward first and thereby contribute higher numbers of affordable units due to their generally larger size, these changes should not materially alter the Council's overall spatial strategy or new housing delivery targets. However, they would help avoid the difficulties referred to above and unnecessary arguments over the size of sites or respective allocations

between villages with similar facilities, which are not relevant to the soundness of the overall strategy. I therefore recommend that, whilst the list of villages in policy CS2 is retained, that in policy CS3 is omitted and the policy altered so that it concludes; "the villages listed in policy CS2 – 400".

REWORD AS FOLLOWS: "TO PROVIDE, ON SITES TO BE PROPOSED IN THE LDF, 6,000 NEW DWELLINGS BY 2016 DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS:

Sherford New Community – 4,000.

Elsewhere in the PPUA – 500.

Dartmouth – 200.

Ivybridge – 100.

Kingsbridge – 200.

Totnes – 400.

Stokenham/Chillington – 50.

Modbury – 50.

Salcombe – 50.

Yealmpton – 50.

The villages listed in policy CS2 - 400.

ADD ", including a review of development boundaries," AFTER "proposals" IN LINE 4 OF PARA 5.34.

AMEND PARA 5.26 ACCORDINGLY.

9. Policy CS3 – Affordable Housing Targets

9.1 The Council's top priority is said to be securing a supply of housing for local people at affordable levels and it is also one of the key aims of the Community Strategy. It has clearly been an important factor in the formulation of the spatial strategy for the district. In particular, the objective of securing more affordable homes has led the Council to exceed the DSP new housing requirement in the areas outside the PPUA and to allocate growth to a greater number of settlements than might otherwise have been considered. To emphasise this priority, a very high percentage target of affordable units is put forward for new housing sites, especially outside of the PPUA where a two thirds provision is expected.

9.2 The evidence base, including the Housing Market and Needs Assessment 2006 (CD 90), clearly defines the scale of need in the district, whereby over 600 new affordable homes per year would be needed to address the backlog and newly arising need. This exceeds the average new housing provision envisaged for the district in total under the DSP. The study also demonstrates the multiple and often inter-related factors influencing the levels of need, including high house price to average income ratios, demographic trends and the existing housing stock profile.

9.3 I also note that the district has a high level of second/holiday homes and a relatively small existing stock of affordable housing; each around 11% of the total. In the light of this firm evidence, I do not question the general scale of the problem in the district and agree that the highest target that is both viable and sustainable should be sought. Nevertheless, I have serious doubts about the soundness of the overall approach put forward in the CS. This is particularly in terms of viability and practicality, in circumstances where the spatial planning strategy can only, at best, deliver partial solutions to the local manifestations of a widespread national affordable housing issue.

9.4 Most importantly, the annual house building rate in the district has halved from 505 in 1998/9 to 255 in 2004/5. In circumstances where there is already a "backlog" against the requirements of the DSP, the adoption of an affordable housing target significantly higher than anywhere else in the country will not assist the overriding objective of delivering the total levels of new housing needed in the district over the plan period. This is especially so when the new community at Sherford is not anticipated to start producing new houses until 2009 at the earliest and no other suitable schemes of sufficient size are realistically capable of being brought forward to "fill the gap" (Housing Trajectory – p.21 - CS).

9.5 The next concern is that the policy provisions for affordable housing are split between CS3 and CS7. Other elements such as the site size thresholds and ensuring that affordable housing remains available in perpetuity are to be addressed in subsequent documents. Until such time as these documents are produced, the interim policy context would have to be formed from the CS policies, a saved LP policy and an SPG adopted in 2004. The latter contains thresholds of 15 units for windfall sites in

larger settlements with a population of 3,000 and above and only 2 units in smaller settlements.

9.6 The Council accepts that, as written, there is a lack of clarity within and between policies CS3 and CS7 and now suggests that the latter should be amended to make clear that it relates to all new housing schemes. Obviously, if the CS seeks to differentiate between the provision of affordable housing on allocated and windfall sites this must be made explicit in the policy. However, to my mind, there is a more fundamental lack of coherence and clarity that has been created by splitting the various policy considerations within and between various documents which have varying timescales and statutory weight. Moreover, as submitted, the CS contains no definition of affordable housing as such and does not refer to the necessary involvement of other parties in terms of implementation.

9.7 There would appear to be two realistic options as to how a CS can cogently deal with the matter of affordable housing. The first is a broad strategic approach as adopted in the London Plan, as cited by various representors. It sets out a strategic target for affordable housing of 50% of overall new provision. What it does not seek to do is to indicate specifically what each development site should provide within that overall target of 50% of all new dwellings to be affordable units.

9.8 The second option is to set out a more detailed policy that contains all the fundamental elements so it is clear about assumptions, expectations, implementation and delivery. At present, the policies in the CS create a hybrid approach setting out a location specific, rather than strategic, target and then delegating most of the important details, including the site size thresholds, to an adopted SPG or subsequent DPD. This approach gives rise to other concerns for a number of reasons.

9.9 Firstly, given the local importance of securing affordable housing as a fundamental element of the strategy, I would have expected the CS to be absolutely clear about the expectations, implementation and delivery of the policy. For example, the site size thresholds that trigger the application of the policy would seem to be a key element. In fact, it is unusual that the site size thresholds have been delegated to SPG and would therefore not be part of the statutory development plan. This adds to a lack of transparency in the CS and may well cause difficulties in an appeal context if any challenge is raised to their status or applicability.

9.10 Secondly, it is of considerable concern that the site size thresholds in SPG are lower than advised in current national guidance and have not been independently tested at any time. I note the GOSW view that if those thresholds had been in the CS they would have objected on the grounds of conflict with national policy. Whether or not the currency of Circular 6/98 has dated, the method of establishing thresholds lower than those indicated in the guidance remains through the development plan process. In consequence, if the CS were adopted in its current form, the implementation of policies CS3 and CS7 would be via a delivery mechanism that, without testing, would be contrary to national guidance.

I therefore conclude that the delivery mechanism as currently expressed is inherently unclear and must be changed.

9.11 Thirdly, the ability to monitor the success or otherwise of the policy is similarly unclear. There is no mention in the CS of how provision of affordable housing would be monitored, what indicators would be used, what the timescales for implementation would be, or the commitments from other relevant organisations such as RSLs and funding bodies. If monitoring shows that the delivery of affordable housing is not happening as expected, it is crucial that the Council seek to take action, such as greater use of their own resources. As the success of the spatial strategy is heavily based on affordable housing provision, this monitoring regime assumes even greater importance. It needs to be in place and to be seen to be in place by all concerned.

9.12 In summary, the overall policy situation as expressed in the CS is less than satisfactory and has been progressed in a way which does not accord with national guidance. There is a further problem created by separating out the site size thresholds into a supplementary document. In my opinion, the suitability and viability implications of a percentage target are related to the relevant thresholds. The viability implications of applying a target of two thirds to sites over 25 units (1 ha) are very different from applying it to sites of only 2 dwellings in the rural areas.

9.13 Whilst the target is in simple terms an indication of the starting point for negotiations, it will also be the figure that guides developers when calculating land price and option valuations. There is clear evidence from examination participants and the reduced level of new housing completions in the district since the Council's introduction of the current SPG that the threshold and targets therein are acting as a material deterrent to the emergence of suitable new housing sites in the district.

9.14 The evidence base for the two thirds figure relies largely on the very high level of local need. The relevant draft RSS policy indicates that provision should be made for at least 30% affordable housing of all new housing development annually across each local authority and housing market area, with rates up to 60% or higher in areas of greatest need. However, this policy is proving to be a controversial element that will be challenged. It is for the RSS EIP to resolve this matter, but it may well have to change in the face of comparison with national guidance. In any event, it is emerging guidance only and therefore I give it limited weight.

9.15 Parallels were also drawn with the London Plan. However, the percentage figure in that document is not a site specific target but that 50% of overall housing provision should be affordable and this means 50% from all sources, not just sites subject to legal agreements with developers. The percentage target of 66% outside the PPUA therefore has no direct support in extant national, regional or strategic guidance or by reference to specific examples elsewhere in the country.

9.16 In my judgement, an unrealistic percentage figure would undermine the credibility of including a target in the plan at all and this one already

appears to be deterring otherwise suitable sites from coming forward. I therefore take seriously the concerns that this approach would so fetter the working of the local housing market to the extent that new housing schemes, and therefore affordable housing provision, would not be economically viable to develop in many cases, especially on smaller sites in villages. If the target is simply not being attained or delivered, it will be discredited within a short time as unworkable. The strong evidence of the scale of local need (and the one or two examples of sites that have delivered two thirds affordable dwellings or higher, albeit with the provision of public subsidy) does not alter this conclusion.

9.17 A viability study (CD 70) was undertaken for the Council by Baker Associates in April 2004. As the study is part of the evidence base and not a submitted DPD, it is not my role to test the soundness of that document. Nor have I any reason to question the detailed methodology adopted. Nevertheless, I recognise the limitations of its general application and that at para 1.13 it acknowledges that the valuations were carried out at a specific point in time (June/July 2003). It shows that for a cross section of sites a target of 66% was considered reasonable and, in most cases, deliverable. However, whilst much is made of the 17 out of 19 sites assessed being viable, 5 of the 19 were only marginally viable (just over 25%).

9.18 Moreover, the study looked only at allocated sites and set out to indicate whether a pre-determined figure was viable. It did not seek to determine an optimal percentage figure, nor did it systematically test a range of figures for each or every site or the impact of thresholds. As with any such study, the methodology involved a number of assumptions and a small change in any of those variables could have a comparatively larger effect on the outcome. I therefore conclude that it would be unreliable to accept the specific findings of this study alone to justify two thirds as a realistic and reasonable target for affordable housing on all sites outside the PPUA.

9.19 Trite though it may seem, the argument that “two thirds of nil is nil” and that a high target but less overall new house building as a result will actually produce fewer new affordable units per year, compared to a lower target encouraging implementation and delivery, has some merit in this situation. In this context, I take particular account of the low completion figures for market and affordable units in recent years, which representors say is as a result of the current high targets and low thresholds for affordable housing provision, especially on smaller sites.

9.20 In any event I doubt that it is due to the hiatus in setting in place new site proposals and a proper policy as the Council suggests and the lack of clarity in what is now proposed adds to my doubts on this matter. In addition, I understand the concern that sites in smaller settlements would also be most likely to be subject to disproportionately higher unit build costs in practice. What is economically achievable on larger sites with economies of scale, such as in the PPUA, may well not be on smaller and more complex ones in market towns and villages for any number of good reasons. My recent experience elsewhere coincides with the views

of some examination participants to the effect that achieving the highest percentage targets for affordable housing invariably relies on public subsidy of one form or another. And this may not always be available.

9.21 As drafted, I am not persuaded that the CS provides a coherent and effective overall policy approach to affordable housing. It is also not evident that an implementation and monitoring regime is in place that will provide adequate feedback of problems regarding viability or deliverability within an effective timescale. In my judgement, the very challenging percentage target outside the PPUA is too high and aspirational, rather than realistic and practical. Nor am I reassured that if it proves to be unachievable, the necessary mechanisms are in place to address the matter urgently.

9.22 The affordable housing figures for specific locations in policy CS3 overly complicate the policy and are unnecessary as they only repeat the provisions of parts 2 and 3. Inclusion of a figure for each settlement might well be appropriate in subsequent site specific area DPDs, with individual targets for specific sites following their identification and detailed assessment, but not in this CS.

9.23 In all of the above circumstances, I conclude that it would be most appropriate to have a consistent strategic percentage target figure applicable to all new housing sites above a certain size threshold or thresholds, whether allocated or windfalls, across the district, in policy CS3. The principal factors to be taken into account and subject to negotiation in each case should also be set out in an amended policy CS7. A more detailed policy or policies could then follow in the forthcoming DCP DPD to address more technical matters such as the issue of perpetuity and the split between social rented, intermediate and key worker housing.

9.24 I therefore recommend that all elements, including parts 2 and 3 and the figures given for each of the settlements, relating to affordable housing provision in policy CS3 should be deleted as unsound. Policy CS7 should therefore be amended so as to apply to Sherford, the rest of the PPUA and the remainder of the district on the same basis. In contrast, the Note following the policy wording is an important consideration in relation to all new housing development, deriving directly from PPG 3, and should therefore be "upgraded" to form part 2 of the policy.

DELETE ALL REFERENCES TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE POLICY, INCLUDING PARTS 2 AND 3 AND THE PARA FOLLOWING.

INSERT THE NOTE AT THE END OF THE POLICY AS NEW PART 2.

10. Policy CS4 – Employment Land Provision

10.1 The CS contains an over provision of new employment land relative to the requirements of the DSP, of just under 3 ha in the PPUA and about 7.5 ha in the remainder of the district. Noting that this has not raised any objections from GOSW, the RPB, DCC, or PCC, I recognise the local importance of seeking to create the conditions for the “growth and maintenance of quality economic activity”, to which such relatively generous provision would contribute, in accord with the Council's second corporate priority.

10.2 Given the limited scale of over provision and that the purpose is also consistent with the Community Strategy, I consider that it is not so great as to render the CS out of general conformity with either the DSP or the emerging RSS. Taking into account the relatively slow take up of new land in the district over recent years (about 4 ha per annum 1994 – 2005), it may reasonably be anticipated that any actual increase in local employment provision over and above that envisaged in the DSP will probably not occur until the later stages of the plan period in any event. By that time the detailed contents of the DSP will no longer be a relevant material consideration, in contrast with the RSS. Progress both within and outside the PPUA will also be monitored over the plan period. Consequently, I am able to conclude that this policy and the overall level of new employment proposed in the CS are consistent with the relevant national and strategic guidance and thereby meet the requirements of tests iv) b) and c) in this respect.

10.3 With regard to the distribution of new employment development, I am equally sure that, outside the PPUA, a strategy of concentrating provision in the ACs first, the LCs second and other sustainable locations thereafter is in full compliance with national, regional and strategic guidance. Moreover, it also represents the most appropriate approach across a relatively large rural district, with limited public transport provision and main road links, in sustainability terms. The alternative of dispersing such development to smaller settlements would be likely to lead to increased overall travel demands, mainly involving private car journeys and often on roads unsuited to such increases. Equally importantly, it would fail to meet the needs of the market.

10.4 This would potentially prejudice the chances of successful implementation and delivery of the policy's overall objectives and a priority of the Council's prosperity and community strategies. In contrast, the evidence base confirms the concentration of current demand around Plymouth, in the A38 corridor, and at the Area Centres, especially Totnes. Provision should therefore be focussed on these locations to enhance the prospects for the improvement of the local economy that is sought, particularly in view of the relative lack of success in delivering new employment premises over recent years.

10.5 I also note that there are no suggestions that this policy is other than consistent with the relevant plans, policies and strategies for adjoining areas (tests iv) a) and vi)), apart from perhaps in respect of

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Roborough, to which I return below. However, in order to emphasise the importance of delivery to all plan users, I consider it necessary to delete the words "for the development of", so as to make it clear that the aim is to ensure that all 62 ha of new employment land is provided in the plan period to 2016, in fulfilment of strategic requirements. The sub total figures for the South Hams part of the PPUA and the remainder of the district are also clear from the table by simple addition and therefore do not need to be set out separately within the policy.

10.6 Concerning Roborough, this is a relatively small allocation compared to those at Langage and Sherford. It provides an additional choice of location on the edge of the PPUA to accommodate new employment provision, in circumstances where there are generally acknowledged to be insufficient opportunities within the city itself at present. Accordingly, it may provide a suitable alternative for smaller businesses that do not necessarily require the more prestigious types of premises and locations. This availability could be particularly useful in the event of delays or difficulties in bringing forward the infrastructure necessary to service and develop the larger sites in the early part of the plan period.

10.7 Therefore, I agree with the Council that its removal from the allocations could unnecessarily limit the availability of new employment land in this part of the PPUA and lead to an over concentration of provision on the two main locations, with the attendant risks to achieving the Council's objectives if their implementation does not go to plan for any reason. Bearing in mind the need for an element of flexibility within the strategy for these reasons, I conclude that the Roborough employment allocation of 4 ha is sound and should remain in the CS.

10.8 Turning to Dartmouth, I recognise the significant physical constraints imposed by its location and also the need for a thorough SA to examine all available opportunities for new employment development as part of site specific proposals in an area DPD, as referred to in para 5.44 of the CS. It seems to me that this would be the appropriate context in which to reassess all existing or allocated employment land in and around the town and any potential for alternative uses, including mixed development, in compliance with policy ST20 of the DSP, policy E4 of the draft RSS and para 42a of PPG 3, rather than in the CS itself.

10.9 No doubt this will include the previously developed land at the former shipyard at Noss (on Dart), on the opposite side of the river from the main town, when its sustainability credentials can be properly compared with other possible development and redevelopment sites available during the plan period. In relation to the notation on the KD, the limited scale of the redevelopment opportunity available at Noss and the fact that it is essentially an existing established use, with no additional land envisaged for allocation, reinforces my conclusion that the future of this location is not sufficiently important to the overall strategy for the district that it needs to be directly addressed in the CS. Instead, it should be considered in the site specific DPD for the Dartmouth area.

10.10 In relation to Ivybridge, the proximity to Plymouth emphasises its role as a "dormitory" settlement and the generally acknowledged need to enhance the level of self containment, which is referred to in the CS. However, according to the Council, no detailed site evaluations relating to the potential development of new employment land in or around the town have as yet been undertaken. In this light, the last sentence of para 5.43 seems to be somewhat contradictory in this respect.

10.11 I am also concerned that neither the last sentence of para 5.43, the rest of the supporting text nor the Council's evidence base provides a full or proper explanation of the phrase "Due to the difficulties of identifying adequate land at Ivybridge and Kingsbridge". This has apparently led the Council to propose significant new employment land allocations at Wrangaton and Torr Quarry respectively, in rural areas outside any settlements, without a proper justification for the selection of what appear to be relatively unsustainable locations, at least in comparison to those within or on the edge of existing settlements. On the information before me, including the Rural Devon Employment Land Review of September 2006, I am not satisfied that the Council has demonstrated that there is a robust and credible evidence base for the choice of Torr Quarry or Wrangaton as suitable and sustainable opportunities for the significant expansion of employment uses onto new land over and above existing provision.

10.12 In such circumstances, the new employment land allocations required to meet local needs in both the Ivybridge and Kingsbridge areas should not be effectively pre-selected via the CS but rather subject to a proper SA in the next stage of the LDF process via the site specific area DPDs. In the case of Ivybridge, my conclusion on this matter is reinforced by the Council's confirmation during the examination that, despite the constraints affecting land on some of its present boundaries, possible alternative new employment sites exist on the edges of the town, including close to the railway station. Consequently, I find that these allocations are not sound as submitted and should be omitted from the CS, to be reconsidered in detail in the relevant area specific DPDs. As I understand it, this would be consistent with proposals for Totnes and Dartmouth, the other two Area Centres, via their area specific plans involving new employment land allocations.

10.13 Overall, in order to be sound, this policy needs to be changed to more accurately reflect the most sustainable distribution of new employment land allocations in that part of the district outside the PPUA. This would recognise that the requirements essentially arise in relation to the Area Centres and that the approximate employment land totals should be altered as a result. Accordingly, the latter part of policy CS4 should be changed to comply more closely with the overall strategy in relation to the concentration of new development (both employment and housing) at the Area Centres by giving figures in hectares (and without decimal points) only for the Area Centres.

10.14 Furthermore, an overall allowance for small sites at Local Centres and elsewhere in the more rural areas would avoid unnecessary detail that

might otherwise provide a constraint on the selection and delivery of the most sustainable sites in the next stage of the LDF process. Sites at Malborough and Moreleigh are simply too small to justify specific reference in a strategic policy and should be omitted for that reason as well. The policy should be reworded as follows after "South Hams part of the PPUA":

"Sherford New Community – 18.
Langage Employment Estate – 20.
Roborough – 4.

Outside of the PPUA

Area Centres

Dartmouth – 2.
Ivybridge – 5.
Kingsbridge – 5.
Totnes – 5.

And about 3 ha in total on small sites of no more than 0.5 ha in the Local Centres of Stokenham/Chillington, Salcombe and Yealmpton, as well as other sustainable locations."

10.15 In the case of Yealmpton, the small employment allocation envisaged recognises its designation as a Local Centre with existing facilities and businesses, helping to serve the needs of the surrounding rural area. Therefore, it is a more sustainable location for new built development than the former MOD site at Collaton. Although partly constituting pdl, the latter is relatively isolated and physically separate from the nearest settlements, without good access and with little or no community support services or facilities. As a result, application of a sequential test indicates that it would not be an appropriate location for new employment development in principle.

10.16 Albeit nearby, Dartington is essentially a separate village, rather than being within the existing built up area of Totnes, and thus I see no reason to include any specific reference to new employment provision there as part of any allocation to the Area Centre.

10.17 In order for policy CS4 to be sound, the following changes are necessary:

DELETE "FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF" FROM LINE 1.

REWORD AFTER "SOUTH HAMS PART OF THE PPPU" AS FOLLOWS:

**"Sherford New Community – 18.
Langage Employment Estate – 20.
Roborough – 4.**

Area Centres

Dartmouth – 2.
Ivybridge – 5.
Kingsbridge – 5.
Totnes – 5.

And about 3 ha in total on small sites of no more than 0.5 ha in the Local Centres of Stokenham/Chillington, Salcombe and Yealmpton, as well as other sustainable locations.”

11. Policy CS5 – Sherford

General

11.1 Appendix 1 of the CS confirms in paras 14-16 that various studies and reports over recent years have concluded that the Sherford locality is the favoured location for the most sustainable strategic growth of Plymouth outside the present built up area of the city. It emerged as the strategic choice via the DSP and its EIP process and was endorsed in the Panel Report of October 2003 (CD 36). None of the alternatives studied was able to meet strategic requirements in terms of scale, accessibility, landscape impact or relationship to the existing urban area and there is no robust or credible evidence before the examination now to suggest otherwise.

11.2 The suggestion that the focus of development, at least initially, should be the A379 corridor to the south is a matter for the Sherford AAP and the master plan, in terms of detailed implementation, rather than the CS, which is not directly concerned with the exact boundaries of the new community at this stage. Notwithstanding some concerns about the timing of implementation, I consequently endorse the strategic selection of Sherford as the location for the new community in the CS, following an appropriate process of appraisal of alternative options. The fact that this was largely carried out as part of the DSP, rather than via the CS itself, is essentially an accident of timing in relation to the introduction of the new development plan system and does not affect the outcome.

11.3 The proposal is a strategic requirement of the DSP to help meet the development needs of the PPUA and its sub region. Policy ST8 thereof envisages 4,000 new dwellings by 2016 plus employment, community and other necessary facilities and services. Bearing in mind that part of the proposal lies within the PCC boundary, the CS properly acknowledges the importance of joint working and consistency with the emerging CS for Plymouth and the North Plymstock AAP as well. In this context, I note that the latter is being produced to a similar timescale as this Council's AAP for Sherford to help ensure "cross border" co-operation. Taking all of the above into account, I am satisfied that the proposals of the CS in relation to Sherford and specifically policy CS5 meet the relevant requirements of tests iv) and vi).

11.4 The Council's aim is clearly stated to be a high quality, locally distinctive, sustainable development involving the creation of a mixed and balanced community, with all necessary services, utilities and community facilities to be provided as part of the new development. Parts 2 and 3c) of the policy confirm these requirements, as well as the key role of new transport infrastructure such as the improved A38 junction at Deep Lane and a high quality public transport system linked to Plymouth from the commencement of development. Accordingly, I conclude that the Sherford proposals and policy CS5 in particular have had regard to the Council's Community Strategy and that test v) is also therefore met by this part of the CS.

11.5 In para 5.52 of the CS, the Council acknowledges that "it is probably not realistic" to expect more than 4,000 new dwellings at Sherford by 2016. Nevertheless, the scheme must "be planned in such a way as to allow further development beyond 2016" (also para 5.52 of the CS). Therefore, part 4 of the policy properly refers to "growth westwards into Plymouth" after that date. In view of the regional and strategic significance of the proposal, I am satisfied that this is an appropriate and essential part of the policy to help ensure the continuing sustainable development of the new community to its full potential.

11.6 It is also necessary to guide all those concerned with its implementation so that they are able to plan their contributions to its successful delivery in accordance with the aims and objectives of the CS and in co-operation with proposals on the Plymouth side of the border. Overall, I conclude that this policy provides a clear spatial vision and strategic objectives for the new community, incorporating local distinctiveness and a co-ordinated approach to implementation within the plan period.

Economic Viability

11.7 The overall scale of development proposed at Sherford inevitably raises questions as to whether the project is economically viable and if it can realistically be delivered within the timescale envisaged. In particular, it is common ground that the cost of providing the extensive infrastructure necessary will be high and require the close co-operation of a number of agencies in implementation. For example, the required transport improvements, including those at the Deep Lane junction on the A38, are likely to require some element at least of regional public funding.

11.8 Concerns have also been raised about the practicality of providing the "high quality, high capacity, high frequency, public transport link with Plymouth from the commencement of development" referred to in part 3 c) ii) of policy CS5. In response, the Council, supported by DCC and PCC, express confidence that all the major elements of infrastructure are already understood and quantified from the preparatory work undertaken to date on a co-ordinated basis. Moreover, one organisation, which is expected to act in the "lead developer" role, controls the majority of the land and has been involved in exploring matters of implementation for some time with the Council and other stakeholders on a partnership basis.

11.9 Their evidence is that not only is the route to delivery largely agreed and mapped but that some funding, including for improvements to the Deep Lane junction, is already in place from other schemes in the locality. Due to the sub regional significance of the overall Sherford development and that of the Langage employment scheme nearby, there is also a strong justification that further regional level funding will be forthcoming to assist in bringing forward this and other important transport elements.

11.10 The promoters also state that the costs of dealing with main gas and overhead electricity lines have been factored in and are not likely to give rise to delays. From the examination evidence, I am also content

that key infrastructure provision such as education, health, social, recreation and other community/cultural facilities has also been taken into account in the project management work undertaken to date. Accordingly, I conclude that, in principle, the requirements of part 3 of the policy should not render the overall scheme economically unviable.

Delivery

11.11 However, I am less certain of the ability to deliver the required public transport links to Plymouth at the commencement of development. The involvement of other landowners, the possible need for a CPO to resolve potential difficulties over links to the A379 to the south and the delayed availability of the former railway corridor until perhaps 2014, all suggest that implementation problems may occur. Alternative solutions may be available, albeit temporary in some instances, and their scale is unlikely to significantly affect the viability of the overall project.

11.12 Nevertheless, the time and money involved could result in delays to the start of building, the first housing completions and/or the rate at which new dwellings can be provided on the site. Such matters need to be addressed in more detail in the Sherford AAP and the masterplan for the scheme before the commencement of development and delivery to the timescales envisaged can be assured. In such circumstances, I share the view of those respondents who seek recognition within the CS that such difficulties may arise and the inclusion of a firm commitment to, at least, an early review of the document in that eventuality.

11.13 The above conclusion emphasises the absence of any "risk assessment" in the CS in relation to the possibility that, for whatever reason, Sherford does not provide the number of new house completions anticipated and that no "slippage" has been allowed for. In my experience, there are nearly always unexpected delays to the actual start of building on site in connection with major developments, recent South West examples of which were given by participants at the examination.

11.14 Factors such as land transfers, CPOs where necessary, legal agreements involving numerous parties, infrastructure provision and environmental assessments, as well as layout and phasing details, all take time to plan, design and negotiate. Whilst recognising that some progress has already been made at Sherford, the success of the EbD process, and that the willingness of those directly involved to continue a joint working relationship will all help, much remains to be done before any houses are built and occupied by new residents.

11.15 In this case, the reliance on this one major development site also means that either a later than expected start and/or a lower than assumed rate of annual completions will have a proportionately more harmful effect on the achievement of the new house building rate needed to meet the requirements of the DSP (and the emerging RSS). In a situation where a "backlog" of new housing provision in relation to the DSP figures has already built up, due to previous delays in bringing Sherford (or some other appropriate alternative) forward, the potential

harm is exacerbated and the impact on the local housing market increased if delivery is not as expected. It is therefore essential that the CS considers the implications for the spatial strategy of any delivery failure at Sherford and an appropriate response thereto if the document is to be sound and its overall aims and objectives achieved.

Affordable Housing

11.16 Para 6.9 of the CS confirms that special consideration has been given to the proposals for Sherford in respect of affordable housing. The Council recognises that factors such as the extensive infrastructure requirements and the aspiration to achieve a socially balanced community mean that approximately half of the new homes should be affordable. This would include a significant percentage of intermediate and key worker, as distinct from social rented, dwellings. Moreover, the same target would apply to other sites within the PPUA.

11.17 As I understand it from the examination evidence, the scheme's promoters are content with this target and confident that it can be delivered in practice. Whilst I have no reason to disagree I am nevertheless struck by the significant difference between the target apparently agreed for Sherford and the PPUA and that for the remainder of the district. Not only is it inconsistent for the Council to accept that the specific circumstances of the Sherford scheme require a lower target than elsewhere but there is also no proper explanation given for also applying that lower target to the rest of the PPUA unlike the rest of the district.

11.18 The fact that the overall levels of need are very high in both areas is not an adequate justification in itself as both are above the total level of new housebuilding to be provided under the DSP and cannot therefore be realistically met in the plan period. More importantly, in my view, there is a clear and obvious risk that necessary development in the district outside the PPUA will continue to be deterred from coming forward by such a high target, whilst that in the PPUA will be treated relatively more favourably and thereby encouraged. In my judgement, this is unreasonable as well as impractical and could create an incentive for development activity to focus only on the PPUA over the plan period, rather than also in the ACs and LCs as the CS intends and the spatial strategy requires. Accordingly, I conclude that a consistent strategic target for affordable housing should be adopted across the district in the CS. I return to this matter in relation to policy CS7 below.

Rest of the PPUA

11.19 Some respondents propose that other new housing sites in the PPUA should also be specifically allocated in the CS to make up for any shortfall in delivery at Sherford. Whilst understanding these concerns and recognising the risk that the previous shortfall of new housing in this area could be made worse in the short term at least, there are considerable difficulties with this approach. Firstly, the CS examination is not the appropriate vehicle in which to undertake a SA of the potential opportunities or even a comparative analysis of the alternative sites

available. In order to be included in the CS this should have been carried out previously and been subject to a full SA and public consultation.

11.20 The role of the CS in this respect is to provide the spatial vision and strategy but not to allocate sites or even identify specific locations below the strategic level, as with Sherford. In my judgement, this is achieved by the division of the district's total new housing provision over the plan period between the broad strategic locations of Sherford, the rest of the PPUA within SH, and the remainder of the district, where the majority of new development is to be directed to the ACs and, to a lesser extent, the LCs.

11.21 The fact that the rest of the PPUA within the district is a relatively small geographical area reinforces this conclusion. Moreover, the choice of any additional site or sites is by no means straightforward, as all, with the possible exception of the one at Staddiscombe recently granted permission on appeal, have acknowledged constraints of one form or another. Furthermore, their "deliverability" needs to be assessed in each case and subject to public comment. As a result, I agree with the Council that such decisions are properly delegated to a separate DPD, dealing with site specific allocations in the Plymouth Urban Fringe, which has recently reached the Preferred Options stage.

Conclusions

11.22 In conclusion, I consider that the Sherford proposal itself is sound in principle and capable of implementation as a vital part of the spatial strategy of the district and sub region. The same is true of policy CS5. However, for the CS to be sound overall in relation to test ix), it is also essential that the Council formally assumes some at least of the direct responsibility for the implementation of the spatial strategy. Therefore, the CS needs to refer specifically to the implications of any failure to deliver. In particular, the Council must commit to an early review and the identification of alternative/additional sites in the PPUA if monitoring reveals a material deficit in achieving the challenging house building rate required in the new community. This should take place after the adoption of the emerging RSS, which in draft form currently envisages a continuation of development beyond 2016, albeit at a slower rate, so that a total of 5,500 new dwellings are provided by 2026.

11.23 I therefore recommend that the following new para 5.56 be added to the CS as follows: "The delivery of new housing at Sherford and elsewhere in the PPUA will be closely monitored via the AMR and appropriate action taken in the event of any significant under (or over) provision arising for whatever reason during the plan period. In particular, this will include a review of the CS on the adoption of the new Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West to ensure that its vision and spatial strategy remain consistent and that implementation is taking place as planned.". I also recommend other changes to the Monitoring and Implementation section which are connected to and consistent with the above for the same reasons.

11.24 On a related point, policy CS3 includes a figure of “up to 450” as the appropriate number of new dwellings for the “elsewhere in the PPUA” element of the overall new housing supply in the district to 2016. However, policy ST17 of the DSP effectively refers to 500 new units as the relevant figure for this area. The discrepancy is apparently an adjustment to reflect a recently identified pdl site in the area. Nevertheless, this cannot have been developed as yet and the policy is intended to set a target for the plan period against which actual provision can be monitored and action taken if it is not met (or materially exceeded) for whatever reason. Accordingly, notwithstanding the availability of a possible new site or sites, the policy target figure to 2016 should remain at 500 for that reason alone. The emergence of such sites would, of course, still be taken into account in assessing the need for new allocations in the emerging site specific DPD.

ADD NEW PARA 5.56 AS FOLLOWS: “The delivery of new housing at Sherford and elsewhere in the PPUA will be closely monitored via the AMR and appropriate action taken in the event of any significant under (or over) provision arising for whatever reason during the plan period. In particular, this will include a review of the CS on the adoption of the new Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West to ensure that its vision and spatial strategy remain consistent and that implementation is taking place as planned.”.

REPLACE “UP TO 450” WITH “500” FOR “ELSEWHERE IN THE PPUA” IN POLICY CS3.

12. Policy CS6 – Previously Developed Land

12.1 The current national target is that 60% of new houses should be built on pdl and an average of about 58% has been achieved in the district over the last five years, albeit in the context of a relatively small amount of new housebuilding. However, it seems to me that, based partly on the UCS of the main settlements and reflecting the largely rural character of the area outside the PPUA, the target of "at least 50%" in this policy is actually quite a challenging one for the plan period to 2016.

12.2 The fact that the UCS was undertaken in November 2001 and looked only at land within the settlement boundaries defined in the 1996 Local Plan does not, in my view, undermine the relevance of its overall conclusions in relation to the application of a realistic general target for the re-use of pdl in this policy. Moreover, the inclusion of a percentage target is essential, in my judgement, if only to focus attention on the objective and facilitate effective monitoring over time. In all the relevant circumstances, a higher target would be unrealistic and potentially soon discredited, whilst a lower one would fail to give the necessary impetus and emphasis for the re-use of pdl where available and suitable in sustainability terms.

12.3 The target percentage is consistent with that for the South West Region as a whole, yet still properly reflects the relative paucity of suitable large scale redevelopment opportunities for new housing within the district's main towns and villages. Accordingly, I see no justification for any change to this policy, which is sound in its submitted form and the most appropriate in all the relevant circumstances.

13. Policy CS7 – Affordable Housing

13.1 The Council had to accept at the examination that the use of the term "should" in the policy would be more appropriate than "is required to"; the latter being contrary to national guidance (Circular 6/98 and PPG3). There was also agreement that the CS should contain a definition of affordable housing, with that provided by David Coultie Associates proving generally acceptable. I therefore support its inclusion. Also, in the face of representations emphasising their relevance, which I endorse, the Council do not oppose the view that, in order to be sound and accord with Circular 6/98, the policy could be more explicit about the economic viability factors associated with the provision of affordable housing. I therefore recommend that a fourth point "economics of provision" be added to the policy for clarity.

13.2 Availability of subsidy/grant funding is also a variable that will impact on the economics and viability of any proposed scheme. It is, however, a matter of detail and there is no need to separate it out from others. If necessary, it could be expanded upon in the DCP DPD but it will necessarily inform site by site negotiations in any event. In the same way, direct reference to a "viability toolkit" is not essential in the CS but a matter of detail that could help inform more specific policies.

13.3 My overall conclusion in relation to policy CS3 is that the approach of the CS to the provision of affordable housing is unsound in respect of tests vi), vii) and viii). Although with the changes to include a fourth point relating to viability and "should", the wording of policy CS7 itself is reasonable and appropriate, part of its supporting text at paras 6.7 and 6.10 should therefore be removed. Importantly, I have concluded that this policy should provide the overall strategic target for affordable housing from new residential development, as recommended in relation to policy CS3. This would apply on a consistent district wide basis, including at Sherford, the rest of the PPUA and outside the PPUA and for the period 2006 – 2016, as it would be unrealistic and impractical for it to be effectively "backdated" to 2001 in line with the DSP.

13.4 Whilst I have concluded that "two thirds" is clearly too high, unrealistic and likely to actually result in less affordable units being built per annum, the promoters of the new community are confident that a target of "approximately half" can be achieved in that scheme, despite the acknowledged high infrastructure costs. Acceptance of such a target for Sherford alone should ensure that about two thirds of the total new housing to be built in the district over the plan period would deliver this level of affordable housing. In addition to the robust and credible evidence of a high level of local need in the South Hams, even in national terms, the above reinforces the conclusion that 50% is an appropriate and more practical strategic target for the district as a whole. It also has the advantages of consistency and clarity for all concerned, as well as being more straightforward to implement in practice.

13.5 In such circumstances, I conclude that, subject to the caveats incorporated within the revised wording of policy CS7, a strategic target of

50% affordable provision from all sources of new housing on sites above appropriate size thresholds should be supported across the district as the highest that is both sustainable and viable. The Council could then introduce a more detailed policy into the DCP DPD dealing exclusively with affordable housing, including thresholds. This would then be subject to public comment and independent examination. Of course, the "exceptions" policy would remain in place for rural areas.

13.6 I recognise that the resulting overall policy context arising from this plan would be less than ideal in the interim and that it may hinder the Council's ability to secure an additional quantum of affordable housing outside Sherford in the short term. Nevertheless, this cannot outweigh my conclusions that the current policy approach of the CS lacks clarity and coherence, that the implementation mechanisms are unsatisfactory and that some policy elements are clearly contrary to current national guidance and must be omitted or changed.

13.7 Although it would have been better in the CS itself, the DCP DPD document will have to deal with the important and presently outstanding question of site size thresholds. Especially for the smaller settlements, these will need to be low enough to secure a reasonable level of affordable housing provision but not so small as to deter otherwise acceptable development schemes from coming forward, as appears to be the case at present. The currently anticipated new national guidance replacing Circular 6/98 should be of particular relevance in this respect.

13.8 Therefore, policy CS7 itself must be amended to say "should" and not "is required to" in the first line. The reference to "targets" in line two should now be to a single district wide strategic target of 50% and to reflect my conclusions set out above a fourth point; "economics of provision" should be added.

13.9 The Council has also proposed further changes and additions to the text in this part of the CS in the light of representations received and the debate at the examination (see Appendix Two). However, I see no need for the first part of the suggested extra text for para 6.8 in this case as it would add nothing that is not already said elsewhere in the CS.

13.10 Along with GOSW, I have no option but to accept that, due to unforeseen delays with the necessary survey work, sufficient evidence does not yet exist regarding the local needs for gypsy and traveller sites for this CS to include a specific policy or even indicative figures for such provision. Consequently, this matter will have to be addressed by the inclusion of a criteria based policy in the DCP DPD and in the first review of the CS following the adoption of the RSS for the South West.

REWORD FIRST PART OF POLICY AS FOLLOWS: "NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONSISTENT WITH THE OVERALL STRATEGIC TARGET OF 50% FROM ALL SOURCES AND HAVING APPROPRIATE REGARD TO THE:-"

ADD "ECONOMICS OF PROVISION" AS A FOURTH POINT.

DELETE PARA 6.7 AND REPLACE WITH:

"The Council's definition of affordable housing is that provided with subsidy, both for rent and intermediate housing, for people who are unable to resolve their housing requirement in the local private sector housing market because of the relationship between housing costs and incomes."

ADD NEW SECOND SENTENCE TO PARA 6.8 AS FOLLOWS:

"A new Housing and Market Needs Assessment of the whole Plymouth Housing Market Area has also been carried out. Its results for South Hams demonstrate that the severity and scale of the problem continue to increase and that over 600 affordable homes per year would be needed in order to address the backlog and newly arising need."

DELETE PARA 6.10

14. Policy CS8 – Design

14.1 Para 2.30 of PPS 12 advises that generic development control policies, such as CS8 – CS11 inclusive in this document, should not simply repeat national planning policy statements but should explain how they apply to the local area. I am concerned that each of these policies, including CS8, is somewhat lacking in local distinctiveness. However, I am equally aware that the equivalent policies in the SHLP are now effectively out of date, the relevant DSP policies were written before the latest government guidance, such as PPS 1, PPS7 and PPS9, was published and that the RSS is still emerging. On balance therefore, I consider that the policies, as now rewritten by the Council, should be retained in the CS, at least until the first review, to help provide a more comprehensive and up to date policy background for the district in the interim. This is a relevant but unusual circumstance that is unlikely to apply to other areas in relation to their core strategies.

14.2 In the light of the above and in order to protect and, where possible, enhance the built environment of the area, I accept that the CS for this district needs a policy requiring that all new development be of a high quality design that respects the location, without simply repeating the contents of PPS 1. It is also helpful to have a strategic level policy to which more detailed guidance in the forthcoming DCP DPD can be related and which is consistent with national advice, such as "By Design" produced by DETR/CABE in 2000. The proposed wording builds on the guidance in policy CS8 of the DSP and would supersede that in policy SHDC 15 of the SHLP, which is now out of date in relation to the most recent guidance in PPS 1 (February 2005). I am satisfied that this policy is therefore essentially sound in relation to the relevant tests.

14.3 However, as became common ground between those debating this matter at the Examination, the wording of the first line needs to be altered to add "include and" before "promote", if the policy is to operate as intended in development control terms and in accordance with the guidance in PPS 1. Similarly, given that design itself cannot "prevent" crime as such, the last line of part 1 should be amended to substitute "deters" for "prevents". In both cases, I am entirely satisfied that these small but important changes, agreed by the Council, serve to provide a more appropriately worded and useful policy in practical terms. There are no such criticisms applicable to the submitted wording of part 2 of the policy, which is sound as it stands.

ADD "INCLUDE AND" BEFORE "PROMOTE" IN LINE 1 OF PART 1.

REPLACE "PREVENTS" WITH "DETERS" IN LAST LINE OF PART 1.

15. Policy CS9 – Infrastructure

15.1 For the same reasons set out in relation to policy CS8 above and with the same reservations, I endorse the inclusion of this policy to develop policy ST4 of the DSP for the local situation and acknowledge the absence of a direct equivalent in the SHLP. The Council now agrees that the words "to serve the development" should be added after "inadequate" in the third line. This would make it clear that any additional provision sought would be directly related to serving the development proposed and confirm that the intent and application of the policy would be consistent with national guidance. I see no need to refer additionally and specifically to "arising directly as a result of the development" or to make specific reference to the tests in Circular 05/05 in the supporting text as this would effectively just repeat national guidance.

ADD "TO SERVE THE DEVELOPMENT" AFTER "INADEQUATE" IN LINE 3 OF POLICY.

16. Policy CS10 – Landscape and Historic Environment

16.1 PPS 7 (August 2004) advises that local landscape designations should only be retained where it can be demonstrated that criteria based policies cannot provide the appropriate degree of protection. Having taken this advice on board and following policy CO1 of the DSP, the Council now favours the landscape character approach endorsed in national guidance. It therefore proposes a rewording of the first three parts of this policy (as well as the deletion of the Coastal Preservation Area from the Key Diagram) as a result.

16.2 Notwithstanding my doubts about the lack of local distinctiveness in parts of the policy, I consider that this will provide a more appropriate form of guidance than in the SHLP, whilst continuing to protect the valued local landscapes of the South Hams. In particular, the proposed changes will make the revised policy sound in relation to the test of consistency with national guidance and the emerging RSS, despite differences with policies CO4 and CO5 of the DSP. Part 4 is sound as submitted.

16.3 In order to provide the necessary reasoned justification and explanation for the new policy approach, I also endorse, with minor variations of wording for the sake of simplicity, the Council's proposed addition of two new paras to the text to support the revised policy.

ADD NEW PARA 6.23 AS FOLLOWS:

"In previous versions of the South Hams Local Plan, policies have identified Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs) and Coastal Preservation Areas (CPAs). Government advice is that planning authorities should move away from these designations and adopt a landscape character approach, setting a clear framework to help ensure that development takes place in the right locations and is sensitive to local landscape character in its design, form, materials and layout. In pursuing this approach the Council will not therefore identify AGLVs or CPAs in the Local Development Framework."

RENUMBER EXISTING PARA 6.23 AS 6.24.

ADD NEW PARA 6.25 AS FOLLOWS:

"It is recognised that all of the South Hams, whether within or outside a protected landscape has distinctive local landscape characteristics, which the Council will identify (together with individual features which contribute to this character) and use to guide the location, form and detail of new development. The Council will also seek opportunities for the conservation, management or enhancement of landscape character through development and land management".

17. Policy CS11 – Nature Conservation

17.1 A strategic policy on nature conservation would not normally be necessary in a CS, particularly if an equivalent up to date version was available in a RSS. However, the advice in PPS 9 (August 2005) including paras 1 i), ii) and iii), 4 and 5 i) thereof, postdates both policy CO10 of the DSP and policy SHDC 17 of the SHLP. Therefore, I am satisfied that it is appropriate in this CS, at least for the time being, to fill what would otherwise be something of a policy "vacuum", despite the fact that it adds relatively little to local distinctiveness. However, the Council now accepts that the wording could be improved to provide greater clarity and accuracy and in a version more appropriate for a CS. In addition, given the above changes, it is also necessary to add further explanatory text to para 6.27 of the CS and a new para 6.28 as the Council now proposes (see Appendix Two).

18. Policy CS12 – Climate Change

18.1 In view of the increasingly urgent importance of addressing this issue, as reflected in national guidance, including PPS 1 and PPS 22, the need for such a district-wide policy in the CS for the area is clear. The Council now proposes that a direct reference to the on site generation of renewable energy resources, where possible, should be added to part 3. Whilst welcome, it seems to me that the proposed change does not go far enough in recognising the international level of priority surrounding this matter (to be addressed in the forthcoming PPS on climate change) or, more particularly, the specific content of the Minister's letter of 14 June 2006 to all local planning authorities. Accordingly, I consider that the words "of at least 10% of the scheme's requirements" need to be added to the Council's proposed change. Importantly, in my judgement, such a further change would not only assist the Council in negotiating over the details of otherwise acceptable proposals but also act as an "anchor" within the CS for the more detailed policy anticipated in the later DCP DPD.

18.2 In relation to part of the policy, and again taking into account emerging national guidance; in this case the Consultation on PPS 25 (December 2005), I consider that the proposed change to refer to "flood plain" is actually less appropriate than the original "flood storage capacity" in the submitted CS. Specifically, it would probably be more accurate if the policy sought to ensure no net increase in flood risks but, as the guidance remains in draft at present, I am content that the wording in the submitted CS should be retained in the knowledge that it will need to be revisited in the first review of this document, following the publication of the new PPS 25, in due course. The submitted wording is also consistent with that put forward by the Council in their new list of key indicators and targets to be monitored.

18.3 The Council also now proposes some additional wording for para 6.33 of the supporting text to clarify what is said in the last sentence regarding Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

ADD "INCLUDING ON SITE GENERATION OF AT LEAST 10% OF THE SCHEME'S REQUIREMENTS, WHERE POSSIBLE," IN PART 3.

19. Policy CS13 – Tourism

19.1 Tourism is an important part of the district's economy. It is therefore appropriate that the CS should include strategic guidance on this matter, thereby contributing to local distinctiveness. Bearing in mind the changing nature of the UK market and the largely rural character of the district with significant stretches of mainly undeveloped coastline, I also agree with the Council that this policy should incorporate a sequential approach to the provision of new tourism and leisure facilities, in accordance with national guidance in PPS 7, notably paras 3.5 and 37.

19.2 In recognition of the above and in response to comments received, the Council now proposes that the policy should be reworded to better reflect the local application of the sequential approach in practice. The designated Town Centre zones would be first, followed by other locations in the Area and Local Centres and then sites within the development boundaries of other settlements. I endorse this revised policy format, with minor changes compared to the wording put forward by the Council for clarification and consistency with the advice in PPS 7, including para 36 thereof.

19.3 As all relevant policies of the CS, as well as those saved from the adopted Local Plan and to be included in the DCP DPD, will need to be read together in relation to the assessment of specific proposals, it is not necessary to include reference to "no unacceptable harm to national and local interests", nor to refer specifically to the source for the Town Centre Zones designation (which would now be in policy CS2). I therefore recommend that policy CS 13 be reworded as follows:

REWORD POLICY AS FOLLOWS:

"NEW TOURISM AND LEISURE FACILITIES, INCLUDING ASSOCIATED ACCOMMODATION, SHOULD BE PROVIDED IN LOCATIONS WHICH ACCORD WITH THE FOLLOWING SEQUENTIAL APPROACH, USING PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND OR BUILDINGS WHEREVER POSSIBLE;

I. IN THE DESIGNATED TOWN CENTRE ZONES, WITHOUT UNDERMINING THEIR PRIMARY FUNCTION AS A HUB FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS,

II. IN AREA AND LOCAL CENTRES,

III. WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES OF SETTLEMENTS,

IV. OUTSIDE BUT ADJACENT TO SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES,

V. ELSEWHERE."

20. Policy CS14 – Rural Diversification

20.1 Taking into account the importance of agriculture and rural business to the economic and social well-being of the district, I am satisfied that this policy is not only consistent with para 30 (ii) of PPS 7 but also provides an element of the local distinctiveness necessary in a CS. In particular, I endorse the stance taken that "diversification" should relate primarily to business and employment development, rather than residential, with priority given to the re-use of existing buildings rather than the construction of new ones, as stated in paras 6.40 and 6.41. Given that more detailed guidance on rural/farm/agricultural diversification will be included in the proposed DCP DPD to follow, I conclude that this policy is sound in relation to the relevant tests.

21. Monitoring, Implementation and Flexibility – Tests viii) and ix)

21.1 The Council has recognised that, as submitted, the CS does not fully meet the requirements of test viii). Accordingly, it suggests that three further paras be added to this section of the CS (with the existing para 7.5 being renumbered to 7.8) to provide greater clarity on implementation (see Appendix Two).

21.2 Also, the Council now agrees that SO13 (different numbering to the CS) of Appendix 1 of the AMR should be split to include separate specific targets for the PPUA and the remainder of the district to reflect the existing levels of accessibility, especially involving public transport, already available in those different areas. This would be helpful in better informing the Council of the effect of the CS's policies in encouraging the use of sustainable means of travel rather than car journeys.

21.3 In order to enhance the quality and value of the information provided, the Council also now proposes that there should be a further indicator to monitor the progress and levels of new development in the PPUA and elsewhere, including in the Area Centres, Local Centres and villages, separately. I also endorse this addition as without it the Council would find it difficult to accurately assess the impact of the policies of the CS on rates of new employment development, for example, in these parts of the district or to quickly develop sensible alternative approaches in the event of a failure to deliver.

21.4 However, whilst helpful as far as they go in providing further information on implementation through the next stages of the LDF process, these additions do not address the fundamental weaknesses of the submitted version of the CS in respect of monitoring and the implementation response thereto. One aspect of this is the complete absence from the CS of any key indicators or targets against which its policies will be monitored. Total reliance on the AMR is not sufficient in this respect.

21.5 Another is the lack of direct references to specific actions to be taken by the Council in the event that annual monitoring reveals policy failures, such as the absence of implementation in practice, inactions for whatever reason, or significant changes in the circumstances that lead to the adoption of the original policy. In my judgement, this also contributes to a general lack of flexibility in the CS to potentially respond to important changes or problems arising over the plan period.

21.6 For example, there is no contingency plan or allowance, nor even a firm commitment to an urgent review of the CS, in the event that new housing delivery at Sherford, which makes up a very significant percentage of the new housing planned for the district over the plan period, should not come forward at the rate currently expected or the anticipated start date be delayed for whatever reason. To my mind, this is a fundamental flaw of the submitted CS and demonstrates that it fails to meet tests viii) and ix). As submitted, it is unsound in these respects.

21.7 The new development plan system is inherently more flexible than that which it replaced in a number of respects. Not only should it prove easier and quicker to prepare partial, as well as complete, reviews of DPDs but AMRs should also provide the necessary information to underpin such exercises in a more regular and comprehensive fashion than in the past. However, the success of the new system, involving "plan, monitor and manage", relies partly at least on an appropriate monitoring and implementation framework, referred to as "crucial to successful delivery" in para 4.45 of PPS 12.

21.8 In particular, it requires the identification and monitoring of a set of key indicators and targets, such as the delivery of new housing completions and the implementation of new employment development opportunities. It also depends on the means of implementation being clearly identified (para 1.8 of PPS 12) and an effective response to difficulties arising with delivery as revealed by the AMR, as well as to new issues arising during the plan period. In this context, I note that the SA of the CS (CD 77/78) said, in para 9.2, that the strategy for monitoring and implementation should be clearly set out. Therefore, it is essential that the CS itself should contain a list of key indicators and targets, together with commitments to relevant actions in response to the monitoring thereof, where necessary, rather than reliance on the content of the AMR alone. In this respect, the CS is deficient at present and therefore not sound in relation to test viii).

21.9 I acknowledge the Council's point that it might take up to 3 years to properly assess progress on the implementation of the policies and proposals in the CS, including for example the start date and level of new housing completions at Sherford. Nevertheless, I share the concerns of some representors that the heavy dependence on Sherford to provide the majority of housing required in the PPUA in particular and the district as a whole over the plan period involves risks in the event of difficulties with such a major project. Experience elsewhere, including in the South West, suggests that even with the establishment of joint working arrangements between local authorities, developers and infrastructure providers, unexpected problems sometimes give rise to implementation delays.

21.10 The fact that there has been a recent history of lack of delivery against DSP requirements in the South Hams part of the PPUA (albeit not so much in the remainder of the district) adds to my concern that this issue must be adequately addressed in the CS. Consequently, I consider it essential that the CS should acknowledge the risks surrounding the early commencement and speedy implementation of the Sherford scheme and, more importantly, that the Council should accept some responsibility, via the planning process, for addressing any significant shortfalls in new housing delivery that might occur as a result.

21.11 This conclusion is reinforced by the acknowledged ambitious nature of the housing strategy (para 5.26 of the CS), involving much higher (almost double) annual average house building across the district than has been achieved over the last ten years or so. The reliance on an early start to new housing at Sherford and the high rate of completions

expected there towards the end of the plan period, relative to past trends and experience in the PPUA and elsewhere in the South West, demonstrate the necessity of an early review procedure. However, there is no indication to this effect in the CS. Although the Council says that this is their intention, I believe that the CS must include a specific reference to action regarding new housing delivery following any significant shortfall relative to requirements, as identified in future AMRs.

21.12 Whilst this could take the form of a full or partial review of the CS, an alteration to a relevant DPD or otherwise, I consider that, especially in view of the demise of the DSP in three year's time, reliance on a general reconsideration of other opportunities in the wider PPUA alone would not be an adequate response. In short, if Sherford does not deliver as currently anticipated, for whatever reason, then the Council must be prepared to act positively in response, rather than simply relying on others to do so. Moreover, the CS needs to say as much, explicitly, to be sound in respect of test ix), otherwise it could be inflexibly wed to a set of no longer reliable assumptions.

21.13 Although an Employment Land Review has recently been completed and the Council says that future AMRs will also look at the level of utilisation of existing employment sites, similar considerations apply in respect of the implementation of new employment provision. This adds to the justification for an unequivocal statement in the CS that a speedy review of proposals would be triggered by any significant failure to deliver the new opportunities identified, as revealed by the AMR. This need not extend to a commitment to re-examine all defined settlement boundaries outside the LDF process as circumstances may well be different across the district, requiring action in some areas but not others and the Council should retain the flexibility to act accordingly in that eventuality.

21.14 I therefore conclude that, in order to be sound, the CS needs to include both a list of key indicators and targets to be monitored in the AMR and a specific commitment to positive action or actions by the Council in the event monitoring reveals significant problems or new issues arising, including in respect of new housing and employment delivery over the plan period. In response to my invitation, the Council has therefore prepared a new Core Strategy Monitoring Framework (CSMF), incorporating a list of key indicators and targets, suitable for inclusion as a new Appendix to the CS.

21.15 Accordingly, in addition to the changes proposed by the Council to introduce new paras 7.5 – 7.7 etc, a version of the CSMF, amended to be consistent with my other recommendations in this report, should be added as a new Appendix 1. The lists of strategic objectives in the CSMF will need to be completed by the Council in relation to each policy according to the revised numbering to accommodate the 3 new ones now endorsed.

21.16 The following additional text should also be included as new para 7.9: "Should annual monitoring of the key indicators set out in Appendix 3 reveal any significant failure(s) to meet targets, the Council will take action to rectify the situation as soon as possible. This will include a

review of one or more policies or of the whole CS. In the event of a material deficit arising in the delivery of new dwelling completions against the district housing trajectory, the Council will bring forward suitable sustainable alternative/additional sites as soon as possible via the area specific DPDs and/or the development control process to meet the requirements of the DSP and RSS.”.

ADD NEW APPENDIX 1 (REPLACING EXISTING) AS PER APPENDIX THREE TO THIS REPORT.

ADD NEW PARA 7.9 AS FOLLOWS;

“Should annual monitoring of the key indicators set out in Appendix 1 reveal any significant failure(s) to meet targets, the Council will take action to rectify the situation as soon as possible. This will include a review of one or more policies or of the whole CS. In the event of a material deficit arising in the delivery of new dwelling completions against the district housing trajectory, the Council will bring forward suitable sustainable alternative/additional sites as soon as possible via the area specific DPDs and/or the development control process to meet the requirements of the DSP and RSS.”.

22. Key Diagram

22.1 In accordance with policy DP6 of the SHLP of 1996 (CD 73), which identifies it as an Employment Policy Area, the former boatyard and deep water quay at Noss (on Dart) is shown on the Key Diagram (KD) for Proposed Employment Development. However, the Council now recognises that this is inconsistent with all the other employment development locations shown in that no additional development or new land beyond that which is already available is expected to be involved at Noss, unlike elsewhere.

22.2 Given that the intention of the notation is to show where new, as distinct from the redevelopment of existing, employment land is to be brought forward in the plan period to 2016, I agree with the proposed change to delete the relevant symbol from the KD at Noss. In my judgement, this is simply a matter of clarity and consistency for the CS and has no direct implications in itself for the future potential redevelopment of the site for employment and/or other purposes, bearing in mind the long established existing uses.

22.3 Nor does the present identification impart any greater "status" or "importance" to the site than already exists, in my view. Consequently, deletion of the symbol would not materially alter the national, strategic and local planning policy background against which any proposals for the redevelopment of the site, for whatever use or uses, would need to be considered. Accordingly, I endorse the change to the KD in this respect.

22.4 In accordance with my conclusions in respect of policy CS4, I also conclude that the specific identification of Torr Quarry and Wrangaton as locations for significant new employment development should be deleted from the KD, pending the outcome of a full SA in respect of employment land provision in the area specific DPDs for Kingsbridge and Ivybridge respectively.

22.5 Suggestions that the KD should contain additional information, for example about habitat types, fail to recognise that this is a strategic document and that the KD is intended only to represent the main elements of the planning strategy for the district in diagrammatic form, rather than on an Ordnance Survey (OS) base. Apart from anything else, it is of a scale that renders it inadequate for such detailed interpretation. Instead, such matters should be addressed in the Area DPDs that will follow the CS and include a site specific proposals map on an OS base.

22.6 In the light of the advice in PPS 7, the Council now considers that the landscape character approach recommended therein should be adopted across the district. This obviates the need for "rigid" local designations, such as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs), which have no statutory backing, unlike National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). This will provide a more appropriate form of guidance and protection for valued local landscapes, such as the definition of an "undeveloped coastal zone" in the later DCP DPD. Consequently,

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changes are put forward by the Council for policy CS10 of the CS and the supporting text thereto.

22.7 Given that the former approach relates to the 1996 SHLP (CD 73) and government guidance in PPG 7 that has now been superseded, I have no doubt that these changes are necessary to comply with the relevant up to date national guidance in PPS 7, as well as the emerging RSS, and should be endorsed. In their absence this policy would not be sound in relation to tests iv) b) or vii). Accordingly, the "Coastal Preservation Area" designation should be deleted from the KD, as now proposed by the Council. In recognition of the need for consistency with the designation south of Torbay on the KD, I also support the change to add the remainder of the Tamar/Tavy AONB to the KD to the north west of Plymouth, albeit that it covers land outside the district boundary.

DELETE THE "PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT" DESIGNATION SYMBOLS AT NOSS, TORR QUARRY AND WRANGATON FROM THE KD.

23. Appendix 1

23.1 In response to criticisms of the text of Appendix 1, particularly paras 13 – 20 regarding Sherford, the Council now accepts that paras 17, 18 and 19 could be improved by clarifying which elements of the wording are direct quotes from other reports and which are a Council summary of their content. It was also common ground at the examination that minor amendments would be helpful to the wording of paras 17 and 18 for accuracy. These should better reflect the up to date position in relation to Woolwell, where recent improvements have been carried out to the A386, and Newnham, which had not been considered as a candidate for a single site new settlement as an alternative to Sherford. However, even as amended, Appendix 1 would add nothing of benefit to the CS that has not already been adequately addressed in the Preferred Options document and does not need to be included. Accordingly, it should be deleted.

DELETE APPENDIX 1.

24. **Glossary**

24.1 Following suggestions made during the examination process, the Council now acknowledges that it would be helpful for readers if the CS were to contain a glossary of the numerous technical planning terms used in the document and I fully endorse this change. The glossary in the Sherford AAP (submission stage) provides a good example of what is required.

Appendix One - List of Abbreviations

AC – Area Centre

AONB – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

AMR – Annual Monitoring Report

CABE – Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

CD – Core Document

CPA – Coastal Preservation Area

CPO – Compulsory Purchase Order

CPRE – Campaign to Protect Rural England

CS – Core Strategy

CSMF – Core Strategy Monitoring Framework

DCC – Devon County Council

DCCP – Development Control Policies

DETR – Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions

DLTP – Devon Local Transport Plan

DNP – Dartmoor National Park

DPD – Development Plan Document

EA – Environment Agency

EbD – Enquiry by Design

EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment

EIP – Examination in Public (of the Structure Plan)

ES – Environmental Statement

FRA – Flood Risk Assessment

GOSW – Government Office for the South West

ha - Hectares

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HNA – Housing Needs Assessment
HNS – Housing Needs Survey
KD – Key Diagram
LC – Local Centre
LDS – Local Development Scheme
Panel – The 2016 Structure Plan EIP Panel
PCC – Plymouth City Council
pdl – Previously Developed Land
PPG – Planning Policy Guidance
PPS – Planning Policy Statement
PPUA – Plymouth Principal Urban Area
RPB – Regional Planning Body
RSS – Regional Spatial Strategy
SA – Sustainability Appraisal
SCI – Statement of Community Involvement
SFRA – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SHDC – South Hams District Council
SHLP – South Hams Local Plan (Adopted April 1996)
SPD – Supplementary Planning Document
SPG – Supplementary Planning Guidance
UCS – Urban Capacity Study

Appendix Two – Recommended List of Council's Proposed Changes

Para 1.9 – Amend Council e-mail address.

Para 2.6 – Delete sixth sentence and reword as follows:

“The preparation of the RSS has been informed by a number of sub regional studies, including those for the Plymouth and Torbay sub regions, which are relevant for the South Hams. The submission version of the RSS was published for consultation in June 2006 and is due to be adopted in 2008. The RSS documents are available at www.southwest-ra.gov.uk.”

Para 3.1 – Delete “local” from last line.

Para 4.9 - ADD NEW SO AFTER SO5 AS FOLLOWS;

“SO6: Develop a high quality, sustainable new community at Sherford, including the provision of 4,000 dwellings.”. RENUMBER ACCORDINGLY.

Para 4.13 - ADD “using previously developed land” AFTER “hinterlands” AND DELETE “re-use” FROM PRESENT SO6/NEW SO7.

ADD NEW SO12 (AFTER PRESENT SO10) AS FOLLOWS;

“Support the economic and urban regeneration of the Plymouth Principal Urban Area through sustainable development, including strategic employment development adjoining the urban area.”. RENUMBER ACCORDINGLY.

Para 4.14 - REPLACE “Accessible Services” WITH “Transport and Accessibility” AS SECTION HEADING.

ADD NEW PARA BEFORE PRESENT PARA 4.14 AS FOLLOWS;

“The overall approach to transport and accessibility within the South Hams, as set out in the Devon Structure Plan and Devon Local Transport Plan, is to support the development strategy by meeting the social and economic needs of all sectors of the community in a way which improves safety, reduces the need to travel and its environmental impact, and minimises the use of resources. In doing so it prioritises the need to co-ordinate land use and travel planning, manage travel demand, and promote sustainable travel and modal choice. It also prioritises the need to develop more effective and integrated transport and freight networks, take an integrated approach to transport investment and minimise the impact of transport on the environment.”. RENUMBER ACCORDINGLY.

MOVE PRESENT PARA 4.17 TO BE NEW PARA 4.16 AND REWORD BY SWAPPING "reducing unnecessary car use" AND "encouraging walking and cycling". RENUMBER ACCORDINGLY.

ADD AT END OF PRESENT PARA 4.15/NEW PARA 4.17 AS FOLLOWS;

"Whilst for many people personal mobility has increased significantly in recent years, many households still have no direct access to private transport and find access to services and facilities difficult. Increased mobility has mainly come about through increased car ownership, resulting in increased travel and higher rates of congestion and pollution."

Para 4.18 - REPLACE "accessible services" WITH "access" IN LINE ONE OF PRESENT PARA 4.18.

Para 4.22 - MOVE PRESENT SO14 TO BE NEW SO11. RENUMBER ACCORDINGLY.

ADD NEW SO13 AS FOLLOWS;

"Develop an integrated transport system which minimises the need to travel, optimises the choices between travel modes and reduces the impact of travel on the environment." RENUMBER ACCORDINGLY.

ADD ", architectural" AFTER "historic" IN FORMER SO17/NEW SO20.

Para 5.2 - REWORD THIRD SENTENCE AS FOLLOWS; "Exeter is also identified as a PUA and is strategically significant. The role of Newton Abbott is that of a market town providing the focal point for the provision of locally significant development in Teignbridge, currently functioning as a Sub Regional Centre."

ADD NEW PARA 5.3 AS FOLLOWS; "The distribution of development must also be informed by an integrated spatial approach to land use and transport. This will involve finding a sustainable balance between meeting the economic and social needs of all sectors of the community, reducing the need to travel, improving safety and minimising the use of resources. The rural nature of the South Hams makes this a difficult balance to strike, with many communities suffering problems of accessibility and needing improved access to services. These difficulties are particularly acute in the remotest rural parts of the district. The focus for most new development should be at settlements where accessibility can be maximised and modal choice made available. Such a focus inevitably points towards the district's larger settlements, especially the market towns and the new community at Sherford, as being the most sustainable locations for new

development. However, the needs of more deeply rural communities must also be addressed in order that their sustainability and potential self sufficiency can be improved."

Para 5.13 - ADD NEW THIRD SENTENCE AS FOLLOWS; "Within such towns, the Devon Local Transport Plan indicates that pedestrian and cycle routes should link residential areas to main destinations and investment in the road network should allow for improved public transport effectiveness and reduce congestion."

Para 5.16 - REPLACE "town centre zones" WITH "(the Area Centres and the towns of Modbury and Salcombe) Town Centre Zones"

Para 5.18 - ADD SOs 12, 13, 14 and 15 TO LIST.

Para 5.37 - ADD REFERENCE TO FIGURES IN TABLE 2 BEING IN HECTARES.

Para 5.40 - ADD NEW SENTENCE AT START AS FOLLOWS:

"Employment allocations at Langage and Sherford will help to meet the wider needs of the economic and urban regeneration of Plymouth. The Langage allocation will help meet the strategic needs of the city. The Sherford allocation is primarily about meeting more local needs in support of the concept of a sustainable new community."

Para 5.46 – CHANGE "Chillington" to "Stokenham/Chillington"

Para 6.6 - ADD AT THE END:

"Other important housing needs in the district include meeting the needs of the homeless, older people(particularly those with mobility problems), vulnerable young people and those with other special housing needs (such as physical disability and mental health problems). An action plan to help meet these needs is included in the Housing Strategy, and will inform policies for inclusion in the LDF."

Para 6.8 - ADD AT THE END:

"The provision of affordable housing will require innovative approaches, a range of delivery mechanisms and involvement of public and private sector partners. A key element will be the availability of subsidy, which may come forward through public and/or private sector funding, including the provision of land."

Para 6.19 - ADD PRESENT SO19 AND SO20 TO LIST.

ADD NEW SENTENCE AT START AS FOLLOWS:

"The provision of a range of services and facilities is key to the delivery of sustainable development and to meeting the various needs of the community."

DELETE "roads, footpaths, cycleways," AND ADD TO SECOND SENTENCE "transport facilities and related infrastructure (e.g. footpaths, cycleways, busways, roads),"

ADD "transport services including" BEFORE "public transport" AND DELETE "electricity, gas" and REPLACE WITH "power generation and supply, including renewables" IN SECOND SENTENCE.

Policy CS10 - DELETE EXISTING PARTS 1, 2 AND 3 AND REPLACE WITH THE FOLLOWING:

"1. IN DESIGNATED AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY THEIR CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT WILL BE GIVEN GREAT WEIGHT. ON SITES OUTSIDE AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY AND THE DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHICH WOULD DAMAGE THEIR NATURAL BEAUTY, CHARACTER AND SPECIAL QUALITIES OR PREJUDICE ACHIEVEMENT OF THEIR DESIGNATED PURPOSES.

2. THE CHARACTER OF THE UNDEVELOPED PARTS OF THE COAST WILL BE PROTECTED AND DEVELOPMENT NOT REQUIRING A COASTAL LOCATION WILL NOT BE PROVIDED FOR.

3. THE QUALITY, CHARACTER, DIVERSITY AND LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT WILL BE CONSERVED AND ENHANCED. WITHIN IDENTIFIED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS DEVELOPMENT WILL CONSERVE, ENHANCE AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, RESTORE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER. SPECIFIC LANDSCAPE, WILDLIFE AND HISTORIC FEATURES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO LOCAL CHARACTER WILL BE CONSERVED AND ENHANCED."

Policy CS11 - REWORD AS FOLLOWS:

"1. INTERNATIONAL SITES WILL HAVE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF PROTECTION. THEIR INTEGRITY WILL BE PROTECTED AND THEY SHOULD BE MANAGED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES.

2. SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST WILL BE SUBJECT TO A HIGH DEGREE OF PROTECTION. DEVELOPMENT ADVERSELY AFFECTING A SSSI WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

3. HABITATS AND FEATURES OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION WILL BE PROTECTED

AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, ENHANCED THROUGH BENEFICIAL MANAGEMENT.

4. APPROPRIATE CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO NATIONALLY PROTECTED SPECIES, WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATION TO EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES.

5. THE BIODIVERSITY AND GEOLOGICAL INTEREST OF THE DISTRICT WILL BE MAINTAINED AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, CONSERVED AND/OR ENHANCED THROUGH NEW DEVELOPMENT. OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE THE CONNECTIVITY OF BIODIVERSITY SITES WILL BE SOUGHT, WHERE POSSIBLE."

Para 6.27 - ADD AT END:

"Clause 3 of the policy reflects the need to protect and, where possible, enhance habitats and features designated as being of regional or local importance. The Development Control Core Policies DPD will address the protection and management of regionally and locally important sites in more detail, including:

- i. Devon County Wildlife Sites and Devon County Geological Sites,**
- ii. Ancient Woodland,**
- iii. Important natural habitats (including those identified in the National, Regional and Devon biodiversity planning process),**
- iv. Sites on the South West Nature Map.**

ADD NEW PARA 6.28

"The Council will seek opportunities to conserve, enhance and restore habitats through the planning process and will, in particular, look to enhance the connectivity of sites in order to improve the robustness and survival of currently isolated habitats and species."

Para 6.33 - DELETE LAST SENTENCE AND REPLACE WITH;

"The issue of flood risk and flood risk assessment will be dealt with by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). The Council has produced a background paper entitled "Strategic Flood Risk Assessment", which deals primarily with the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. It sets out what the full SFRA will investigate and produce. This background document is available on the Council's website; www.southhams.gov.uk."

Para 6.36 – DELETE SECOND SENTENCE AND REWORD AS FOLLOWS:

"Specific tourism objectives include maximising the economic benefits of tourism to the district in support of a broader strategy of economic development and supporting the careful visitor management of the district and developing sustainable tourism."

ADD NEW FINAL SENTENCE:

“Proposals for large new tourist and leisure facilities will need to be accompanied by green travel plans.”.

ADD NEW PARAS 7.5, 7.6 AND 7.7 AS FOLLOWS;

“7.5 - Implementation of the policies contained in the Core Strategy will require concerted action by a range of public, private and voluntary sector bodies working in partnership. The Council has neither the powers nor the resources to implement the Core Strategy alone. The document's role is to provide a clear and robust framework for development in order that investment and action can be co-ordinated and geared to efficient and effective delivery.”

“7.6 – Detailed action plans are set out in a variety of strategy documents from regional to local levels. At the regional level the Regional Spatial Strategy, Regional Housing Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy and others will combine to deliver targeted funding investment and action through the integrated Regional Strategy “Just Connect”. At the local level, under the umbrella of the South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy, partners will be guided by strategies such as the Housing and Prosperity Strategies, all of which are designed for adoption not only by the Council but by other partners and the community at large through the Local Strategic Partnership.

“7.7 – The LDF's Local Development Scheme (LDS) will also play a crucial role in implementing the policies and proposals in the Core Strategy. This project management tool sets out the programme for producing the raft of other general and area specific LDF documents that will follow the Core Strategy. In doing so the LDS can ensure that the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy are implemented in such a way that ensures areas of greatest priority and need are tackled first. This co-ordinated approach will help to secure implementation and timely delivery of the Core Strategy's objectives.”.

Para 7.5 (new 7.8) - ADD REFERENCES TO NEW INDICATOR TO AMR TO MONITOR THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE PPUA AND ELSEWHERE, INCLUDING AREA CENTRES AND LOCAL CENTRES AND AMENDING TARGET SO13 IN AMR APPENDIX 1 TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC TARGETS FOR THE PPUA AND OUTSIDE THE PPUA.

DELETE THE “COASTAL PRESERVATION AREA” DESIGNATION FROM THE KD AND ADD THE ADDITIONAL AREA OF THE “TAMAR/TAVY AONB” NORTH WEST OF PLYMOUTH TO THE KD.

ADD A GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS AT THE END OF THE DOCUMENT.

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Appendix Three – Core Strategy Monitoring Framework

Core Strategy Policies		Strategic Objectives	Indicator	Target
Spatial Strategy				
CS2	Location of Development	New List	Amount of housing/employment provided at Area Centres and Local Centres	Provide 60% of new residential and 60% of new employment development at Area and Local Centres.
			Amount of retail/leisure/entertainment facilities provided at Town Centre Zones	Provide 90% of new retail/leisure and entertainment development at Town Centre Zones.

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Core Strategy Policies		Strategic Objectives	Indicator	Target
CS2	Location of Development	New List	Percentage of residential and employment development within Development Boundaries	Provide 80% of new residential and 80% of new employment development within Development Boundaries.
CS3	Housing Provision	New List		

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Core Strategy Policies		Strategic Objectives	Indicator	Target
			Level of housing completions	Meet the housing trajectory and deliver at least 8,350 new homes 2001 - 2016.
CS4	Employment Land Provision	New List	Supply of land developed for employment by Use Class	Deliver 62 hectares of employment land on allocated sites during 2001 - 2016 (to be recorded by Use Class) comprising 42 ha within the PUA and 20 ha outside the PUA.

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Core Strategy Policies		Strategic Objectives	Indicator	Target
CS5	Sherford New Community	New List	Sustainable phased development	Deliver 4,000 dwellings by 2016 including 50% affordable housing with associated employment land and community and strategic transport infrastructure. (Detailed indicators and targets are set in the Sherford AAP).
Strategic Policies				
CS6	Previously Developed Land	New List	Percentage of housing development on previously developed land	Outside the Plymouth PUA, 50% of new homes to be developed on previously developed land and through the conversion of existing buildings.

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Core Strategy Policies		Strategic Objectives	Indicator	Target
CS7	Affordable Housing	New List	Supply of affordable housing broken down by the Plymouth PUA, Area Centres, Local Centres and elsewhere in the district	Deliver 50% of all new dwellings as affordable homes.
CS8	Design	New List	Production of Concept Statements/Development Briefs	A Concept Statement/Development Brief to be prepared for each allocated site and approved by the Council's Design Panel.

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Core Strategy Policies		Strategic Objectives	Indicator	Target
CS9	Infrastructure Provision	New List	Supply of new infrastructure in phase with development	All new infrastructure required to be delivered in conjunction with the development of allocated sites, to be secured through Section 106 Agreements.
CS10	Landscape and Historic Environment	New List	Complete Landscape Character Assessment	Summer 2007
			Number of historic features that are protected	Reduction in percentage of Listed Buildings "at risk". No loss of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments or Historic Parks and Gardens.
CS11	Nature Conservation	New List	Number of International, National, Regional and Local sites	No loss of any designated International, National, Regional or Local sites

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Core Strategy Policies		Strategic Objectives	Indicator	Target
			Number of priority habitats and species	No loss of priority habitats or species.
CS12	Climate Change	New List	<p>On allocated sites and sites of 10 dwellings, 1,000 sq m or more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of energy efficient development • At least 10% on-site energy generation • Provision of SUDS <p>Major commercial developments to be accompanied by a Green Travel Plan.</p>	<p>100% of developments and buildings meeting 'excellent' or 'very good' BREEAM and BRE EcoHomes standards.</p> <p>100% of sites</p> <p>100% of sites</p> <p>100% of sites</p>

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Core Strategy Policies		Strategic Objectives	Indicator	Target
			<p>Maintain the district's Flood Storage Capacity</p> <p>Planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on either flood defence grounds or water quality.</p>	<p>No net loss of Flood Storage Capacity</p> <p>No permissions granted contrary to advice</p>
CS13	Tourism	New List	Percentage of new tourism and leisure facilities provided	90% (by Use Class) in Town Centre Zones.

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Core Strategy Policies		Strategic Objectives	Indicator	Target
CS14	Rural Diversification	New List	Increase in number of employment based planning permissions granted outside Area Centres	10% increase per annum.