



# East Coker Parish Draft Neighbourhood Plan for consultation 2016-2028

## Foreword

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

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

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

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

In due course the Plan will also have to be considered by an independent examiner and be subject to a local referendum.

Both the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the Parish Council very much look forward to receiving your views and believe that the plan represents a broad consensus of local opinion.

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**Section 1**  
**Background**

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

## 1 About The Neighbourhood Plan

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

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

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

1.3 The Plan is intended to cover a 16 year period, but may be subject to review in due course. It covers the whole of East Coker Parish and so includes the villages of East and North Coker, the south western edge of Yeovil, and part of Wraxhill Ward. It also encompasses the attractive countryside that surrounds the villages and adjacent hamlets, which is of landscape value and has some Grade 1, high quality agricultural land. A plan of the Parish and Neighbourhood Plan Area is set out below.

1.4 The Final Plan will comprise these documents:

- The Plan Written Statement (this document)
- The Proposals Map
- Consultation Statement
- Basic Conditions Statement

1.5 In accordance with Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Part 5, 14(a)-(c), this Draft Plan is being published for formal Pre-submission public consultation on the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan, 2016 - 2028, for a period of 8 weeks.

## How the Plan is organised

1.6 The Plan has a number of sections which cover a range of subjects. It includes background information, together with policies and their justification, as well as projects to benefit the community. The future timetable is included in section 12.

1.7 It should be noted that all formal representations received on the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan will be publicly available for others to see as a summary of comments received will be on the NP website [www.eastcokerparish.com](http://www.eastcokerparish.com)

## East Coker Summary

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

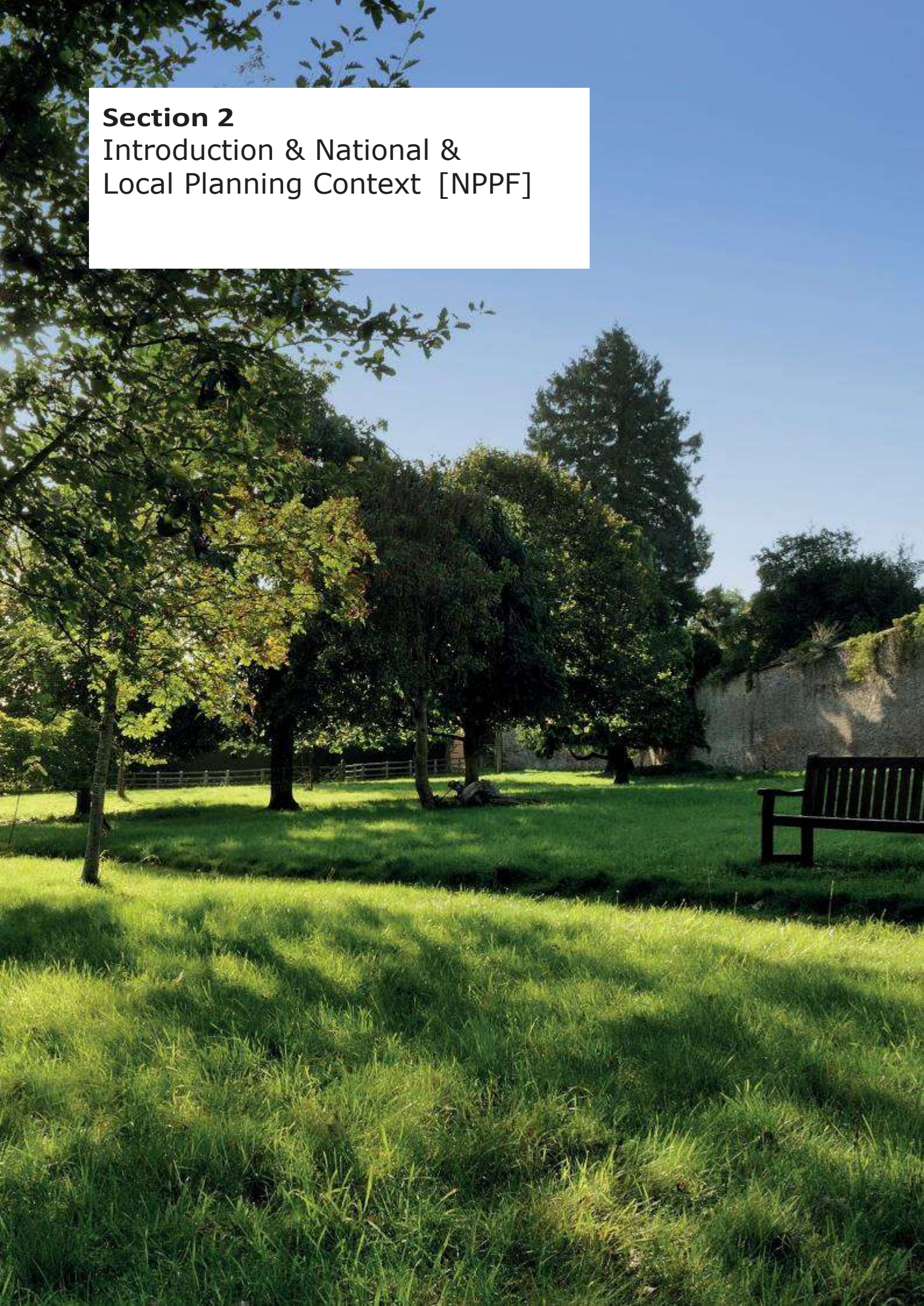
The village of East Coker will forever be associated with the poet T.S Eliot and in addition to being the poet's final place of rest, he gave the name 'For East Coker' to the second of his Four Quartets, the sequence of poems that crowned his career.

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



## **Section 2**

### **Introduction & National & Local Planning Context [NPPF]**



## 2 Introduction & National and local Planning Context for England and South Somerset

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

22 The main National Planning Acts in force at present include: The Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compensation Act 2004; The Planning Act 2008 and the Localism Act of 2011. The right for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans was established by the Localism Act in 2011, and the Housing & Planning Act 2016 which was accompanied by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. Therefore, Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet a number of basic conditions that will be addressed in a detailed Statement later in the plan process. This will need to show that the Neighbourhood Plan:

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

## National Planning Policy Framework 2012

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

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

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

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

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

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

## South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **POLICY SS2: DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL SETTLEMENTS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Local Plan also confirms that a total of 2242 dwellings are to be developed in all South Somerset Rural Settlements; 14% of the District’s total with a balance, taking account of dwellings already been built and with permission, of 911.

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

### **Neighbourhood Plan Policy Context**

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

### **Overview of Consultation**

2.11 The East Coker Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by local people within the Plan Steering Group together with some external support and is the result of extensive consultation over the past 3-4 years, with the broadest possible range of local people and organisations.

2.12 The East Coker Neighbourhood Plan has reached the Draft Plan stage after a series of consultation exercises and local questionnaire surveys sent to every household in the Parish. One of the largest consultation event was held in October 2015, when the results of local surveys were reported and the Vision, Objectives and other aspects of the plan were promoted and views sought, through various techniques. A further consultation exercise was undertaken in March 2016 to provide an update on the Plan and the development of the detailed policies. A full Consultation Statement is required as part of the Plan process and this will be prepared and made available at the next stage.

2.13 This current ‘Regulation 14’ round of consultation on the Draft Plan will therefore effectively ‘test’ the Plan to see if it does have support from a broad range of organisations and local people, although it is inevitable that not everyone will necessary support everything that is in the Plan. The aim is to secure as broad a consensus as realistically possible.

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

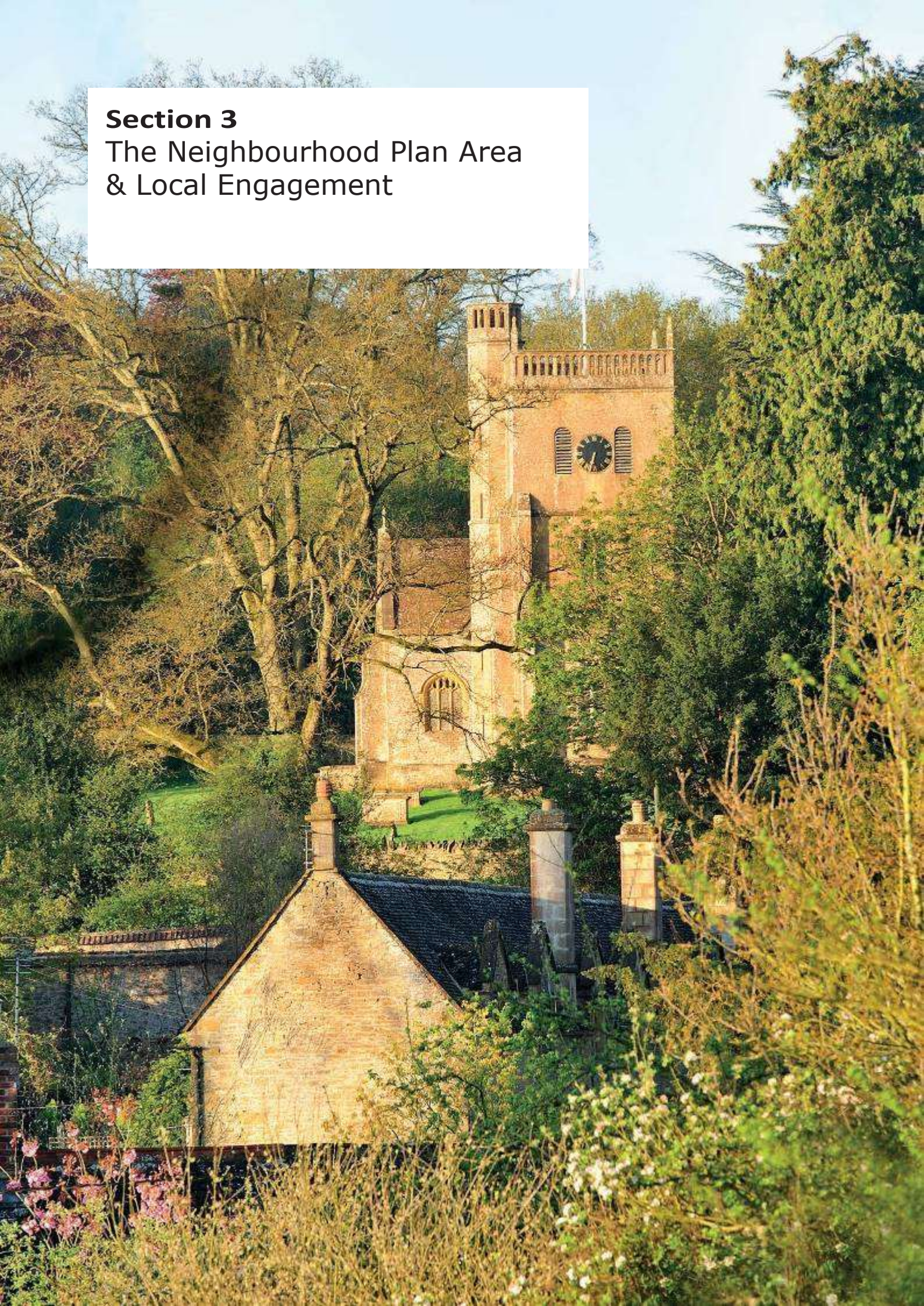
2.14 East Coker Parish Council participated in the South Somerset Local Plan process throughout its production and attended the Examinations, providing detailed planning evidence to assist the Inspector. Initially the Local Plan proposed some 2500 dwellings in one location in East Coker, based around the Keyford site, but this was rejected by the Inspector and the Local Plan as now proposed was supported by the Inspector, still with approximately 800 dwellings at Keyford as part of a mixed use development that includes employment, community and open space uses, as a 'Strategic Direction for Growth' and 'Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension'.

2.15 If the large scale of development now planned at Keyford and other sites with planning consent proceeds, East Coker organisations, including the Parish Council, Preservation Society and Residents Association, now consider that the Parish and East Coker as a 'Rural Settlement' is more than accommodating its share of development to serve the needs of Yeovil and South Somerset as whole. As such, any further development that is proposed within the rest of the Parish is expected to be of a modest scale only, aimed for the most part at meeting local needs and this is the approach being adopted in this Neighbourhood Plan, with criteria-based policies being used rather than land allocations.

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

2.17 In order to help integrate the Keyford development with the rest of the Parish, consideration will be given to improving footpath links to the village and the Keyford area.

**Section 3**  
The Neighbourhood Plan Area  
& Local Engagement



### 3 The Neighbourhood Plan Area

#### Historic Development

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

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



T.S. Eliot

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



Hymerford House, East Coker



Mosaic from the Roman Villa, East Coker

## Community Engagement Key Themes & Issues

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

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

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

### Designation and Awareness Raising

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

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

**26 October 2013** - East Coker Neighbourhood Plan Launch Day.

### Consulting on what really matters to the community - Issue gathering

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

**2013 and 2014** - Fact finding, Research and Evidence Base gathering.

**February 2014** - NP Preliminary Survey Report finalised.

**26 May 2014** - Evidence Base Report finalised.

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

**July 2014** - Village Fete feedback to Parishioners.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**June 2016** - Presentation and plan review with Parish Council.

**December 2016** - Approval by ECPC November 2016 followed by consultation period.

See Section 12 for a detailed future time-line.

**Comparison of Survey Results 2013 & 2015 and Key Issues**

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

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

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

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

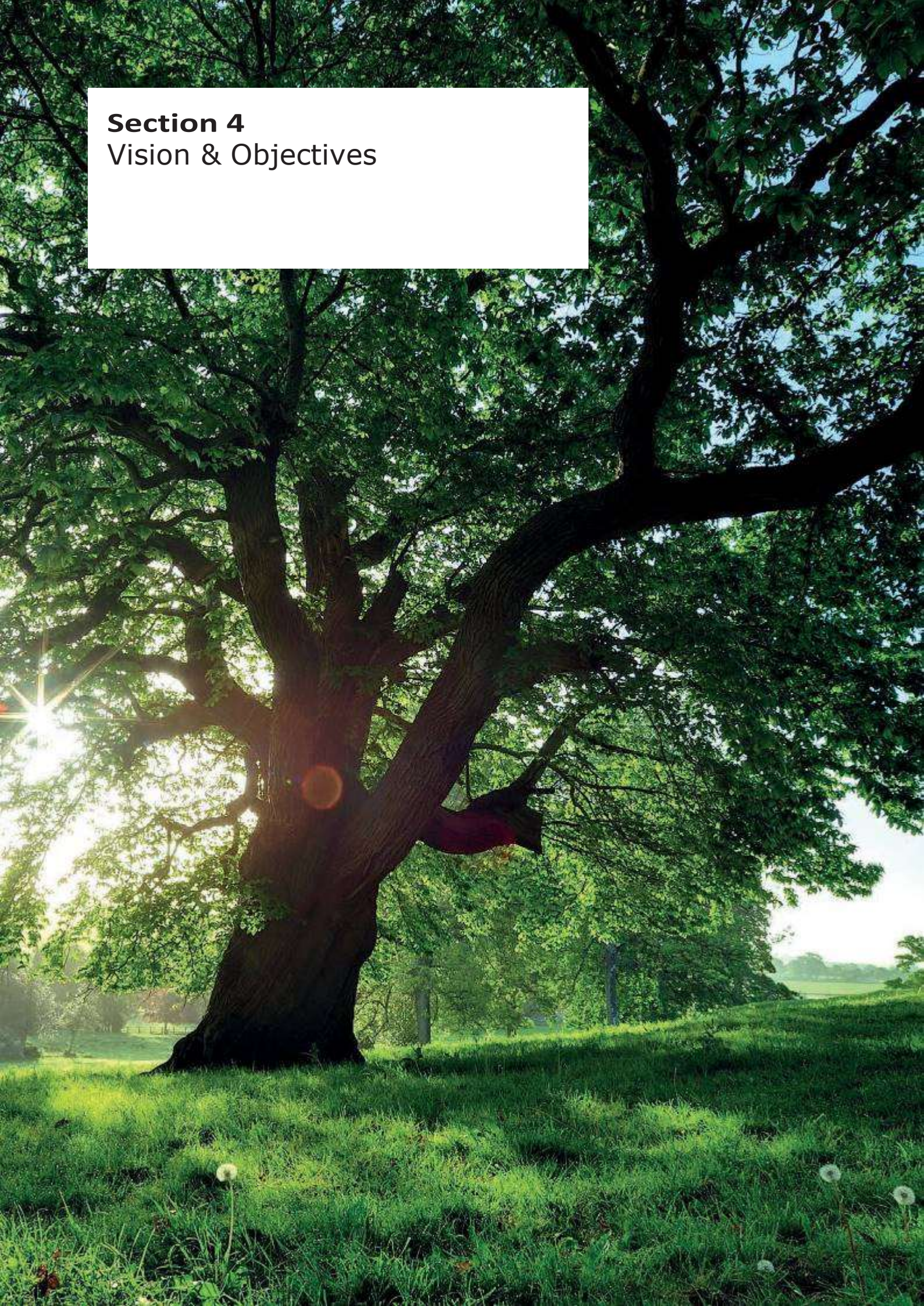


Your  
Parish,  
Your  
Plan

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



NP drop in day

A large, mature tree with a thick trunk and dense green foliage stands in a grassy field. Sunlight filters through the leaves, creating a bright glow and lens flare effects. The background shows a rolling green landscape under a clear sky.

## **Section 4**

### **Vision & Objectives**

## 4 Vision and Objectives

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

### Vision

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

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



### Objectives

#### Section 6

**Housing Objective** - To encourage the delivery of appropriate housing, including affordable housing, to meet the whole life needs of the local community of East Coker.

#### Section 7

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

#### Section 8

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

#### Section 9

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

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

#### Section 10

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

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

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

**Agricultural Objective** - To resist the development of the highest quality agricultural land so as to retain its potential for food production

## Section 5 General Policies



## 5 Plan Policies

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

### Overarching Policies

#### **Policy EC1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

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

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

Developers and applicants should demonstrate how they have proactively engaged and consulted East Coker Parish Council and other community groups and/or residents directly affected by their proposal.

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

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

### Section 106 Agreements & Community Infrastructure Levy - CIL

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

#### **Policy EC2 - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and/or Section 106 Agreements**

Contributions secured through Community Infrastructure Levy and/or Section 106 Agreements or, where appropriate, direct provision, will be used to improve or provide identified community infrastructure requirements or improvements.

#### **Potential Future Projects**

- Footpaths and signage, including linking the village and the new community at Keyford
- Play areas at Tellis Cross & Recreation Ground
- Environmental Information and Interpretation Plan
- Appointment of specialist to help prepare a Parish Design Guide
- Additional dog waste bins
- Grit bins
- School Traffic Management Plan
- 30 MPH speed restriction signs at the entrances to the village
- Improved and coloured surfacing for the pedestrian route from Tellis Cross to the School
- Others from survey of local organisations to follow
- New changing facilities at Long Furlong Lane
- Increase number of football pitches
- Refurbish the Cemetery Chapel
- T. S. Elliot Exhibition Centre
- Sound improvement project at Village Hall
- Youth Recreational Plan
- Improving mobile reception in the Parish

See Appendix 1 for further details.

## Section 6 Housing in East Coker Parish



## 6 Housing in East Coker Parish

**Housing Objective** - To encourage the delivery of appropriate housing, including affordable housing, to meet the whole life needs of the local community of East Coker.

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

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

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

### Context of future housing provision

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

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

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

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

6.6 The Local Plan seeks to deliver an increase of 15,950 dwellings across the whole District, over the 22 years of the plan. The Local Plan limits Rural Settlement housing growth in favour of urban development and therefore this inevitably limits the scale of population growth in Rural Settlements, including the Parish of East Coker. Excluding the Urban Extension, the percentage growth in Parish population is therefore planned to be lower than the percentage growth of the District.

6.7 The 2011 Census is the baseline for the Local Plan population and housing requirement. This shows a 2011 population for the District of 161,243 and a figure of 73,375 for the numbers of dwellings. Projecting these figures forward to 2028, the population would grow to 176,295 with 83,950 dwellings. The change equates to 9.33% growth (0.55% per annum) between 2011 and 2028.

6.8 The East Coker Parish 2011 Census baseline shows a population of 1,667 and 796 dwellings. Projecting forward to 2028 (based on the fact that growth in East Coker should be at a lower percentage than the District average because it is a 'Rural Settlement' and if this were to be 8.5% (0.49% per annum)) the change would equate to a new population of 1807 with 863 dwellings by 2028. Both SSDC's and these East Coker projections are based on SSDC's average persons per household of 2.1. This approach provides a notional "fair share" which takes into account the wider local plan context and also broadly accords with the Planning Advisory Service guidance on Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs<sup>1</sup>.



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

<sup>1</sup> PAS - Advice Note - Housing Needs Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans

6.9 Table 2 provides the future district-wide population projection and housing requirement that underpins the Local Plan. Table 3 follows the same rationale to project future population projection (thus housing requirement) for the Parish of East Coker. It should be understood that the percentage population growth for East Coker is expected to be lower than the district due to Local Plan strategic policies. It is assumed East Coker population will grow by 1807 between 2011 and 2028.

**Table 2 - SSDC Local Plan**

Year	Population (usually resident)	Dwellings	Population Growth
2006		68,000	
2011 Census	161,243	73,375	Based Line data
2028 Projected	176,295	83,950	9.33% or 0.55% per annum

**Table 3 - East Coker Neighbourhood Plan**

Year	Population (usually resident)	Dwellings	Population Growth
2011 Census	1,667	796	Based Line data
2028 Projected	1807	863	8.5% or 0.49% per annum

6.10 The percentage population growth expressed for East Coker Parish is higher than would be expected in many Rural Settlements as East Coker wishes to maintain a vibrant and balanced community.

6.11 Applying the SSDC rationale for calculating future housing requirement and based on the above assessment, there would be potential for 67 new dwellings between 2011 and 2028. This is considered to be the most realistic scenario for East Coker and accords with the principles of the district-wide housing provision, detailed in Local Plan Policy SS1.

6.12 Table 4 identifies planning applications (approved or under consideration) between April 2011 and March 2016 that will affect the housing stock level in the Parish.

**Table 4 - Planning Applications April 2011 to March 2016**  
**The location of these sites is illustrated on the Proposals Map**

Planning Application	Site Location	Increase	Status	Date
12/01397/FUL	39 Wraxhill Rd	1	Approved	06/07/12
12/03727/FUL	Forge, Main St	2	Approved	01/11/12
13/02051/FUL	Firsvieview 1 - 2	1	Approved	18/07/13
13/03162/FUL	Witches Way	1	Approved	28/07/14
13/04356/LBC	Key Farm	2	Approved	23/12/13
14/00257/FUL	133 West Coker Rd	1	Approved	20/03/14
14/00603/FUL	Primrose Hill Fm	1	Approved	21/05/14
14/00905/FUL	Old Coach House	2	Approved	30/04/14
14/03277/OUT	Longfurlong Lane	2	Approved	08/09/14
15/01536/FUL	Huntsfield, Burton	1	Approved	28/05/15
15/02974/FUL	Townsend Farm	8	Approved	29/7/16
15/04212/FUL	Mill Lane (1 to 2)	1	Approved	24/11/15
15/05325/OUT	Broadacres	14	Subject to S106	
Approved		29		
Under Consideration		17		
<b>Total</b>		<b>46</b>		
15/01000/OUT	Keyford (Strategic Housing Allocation)	800	Under Consideration	
Including Yeovil Southern Urban Extension - Keyford		846		

6.13 Between April 2011 and March 2016 a total of 29 dwellings have been approved and a further 17 are under consideration giving a total of 46. There are further proposals also at pre-application stage, which if approved would add to this figure. Over the remaining 12 years of both the Local and Neighbourhood Plans, future housing development would need to provide robust evidence that it would meet local need, otherwise the Local Plan Strategic Housing Policies would be undermined. Policy ECH1 proposes the minimum level of housing needed in the Parish to meet estimated future population growth.

#### **Policy ECH 1 - Housing Provision**

Excluding development coming forward under Local Plan Policy YV2 (Keyford), it is proposed that 65 additional new dwellings will be provided within East Coker Parish, over the period April 2011 – March 2028 inclusive, subject to any change in higher level policies. Applications will only be approved if they can demonstrate that they meet local need, conform to Local Plan policies SS2 and HG5 and other Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

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

### **Policy ECH2 - General Housing Considerations**

Applications for new housing development will be supported if:

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

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

### **Policy ECH3 Provision of Amenity Space**

New housing development should be designed to deliver suitably sized internal space to accommodate a range of occupiers, adaptable to meet their changing needs over time, with private amenity space that reflects the size of the property.

## **Affordable and Social Housing Provision**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Policy ECH 4: Affordable & Social Housing**

All sites of more than 10 dwellings or over 1000 square metres will be required to provide 35% affordable housing on site, 67% of which should be for rent or shared ownership with the balance as 80% market value 'starter homes'. In exceptional circumstances, proposals for 100% affordable housing on small scale sites will be considered provided there is no conflict with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Proposals for affordable housing will be supported where there is clear evidence of need for people with local connection. Affordable housing (apart from at Keyford which is the Southern Urban Extension for Yeovil), either for tenancy, shared ownership or starter homes will firstly be offered to people with a local connection whose needs cannot be met by open market housing. The Parish Council will require that new affordable houses are subject to local connection agreed through Section 106 agreements. The definitions and criteria of local need, connection and cascade arrangements are detailed in Appendix 1.

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

#### **Conversion of Rural Buildings for Housing**

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

6.24 Against this background the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan proposes that the conversion of rural buildings, other than those in isolated locations with poor access and no nearby built development at all, be considered for residential use, subject to planning criteria being met. East Coker Parish is committed to address the issue of

redundant rural buildings and to help enable East Coker to grow and meet housing need in a diverse and flexible manner.

#### **Policy ECH5: Conversion of Rural Buildings**

Planning applications for conversions of suitable farm and other buildings within the rural areas of the Parish will be favourably considered for residential use providing that:

- The proposals are consistent with protecting the character and landscape quality of the East Coker area.
- The design approach is appropriate and sympathetic to the building, the locality and immediate surroundings.
- The building is capable of conversion, rather than complete or substantial rebuild.

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

**Section 7**  
Employment & Business



## 7 Employment & Business

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

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



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

### 2015 Business Survey

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

Top image: Dairy farm

Bottom image: Busines in Sawmills

7.4 Out of the businesses that replied:

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

7.5 Places of residence of employees were;

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

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

### Policy ECEM 1 Retention of local employment at Halves Lane

Land and building at Halves Lane East Coker used for business and providing local employment should be retained for employment use, except in circumstances where it is demonstrated that the use is no longer appropriate for the location.



### Policy ECEM 2: Business development

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

- the scale and nature of the proposals would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of adjoining activities
- the scale and nature of the proposals would not have unacceptable conflicts with other land-use activities
- the proposal would not have unacceptable impacts on the local road network
- they provide sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy
- provision is made for parking appropriate to the needs of the development

### Policy ECEM 3: Promotion of Diverse Businesses

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

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

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

### Conversion of Rural buildings for business

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

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

### Policy ECEM 4: Conversion of Rural buildings for business

Planning applications that may be required for conversions of suitable redundant farm and other buildings, in the Parish will be favourably considered for business use, providing that:

- The proposals are consistent with protecting the character and landscape quality of the East Coker area
- The design approach is appropriate and sympathetic to the building, the locality and immediate surroundings
- Traffic and access are acceptable to the highway authority
- The amenities of any nearby residents are not adversely affected due to noise and disturbance
- The conversion of rural buildings to farm shops, which contribute to the rural economy, and the development of a community operated shop within the Parish will also be supported.

### Working from Home

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

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

## Section 8 Traffic, Transport & Infrastructure



## 8 Traffic, Transport & Infrastructure

### Alternative Public Transport Provision

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

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

#### Public Transport

82 The evidence base clearly shows that the vast majority of journeys in and out of the parish are made by car. The use of the 'Nippy Bus' service is predominantly by those who qualify for a Bus Pass. The details of the services available are as follows: Public transport provision within the Parish is limited to a day time hourly Nippy Bus service (N8) from West Coker Lakefields to the Yeovil Bus Station. The bus travels through North Coker and Wraxhill, but not the East Coker village part of the Parish. Nippy Bus N8 is a Demand Responsive Service (DRT) on Monday to Friday and so potentially may be able to pick up in the East Coker area if requested in advance.

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

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

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

#### Footpaths

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

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

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

Proposals that enhance existing walking and cycle routes and bridleways and/or will deliver new provision as part of new development will be supported and required where practical, notably those that help link the proposed development at Keyford with East Cokervillage.

New routes must connect with existing networks within the Parish.

Enhancement of the existing network, and provision of new routes, must demonstrate the following:

- Well designed, safe, secure and appropriately surfaced routes;
- Remain as car free routes (excepting emergency access where relevant);
- Satisfactory access for disabled people where possible;
- Appropriately lit routes; and
- Suitable street furniture, including benches and litterbins.

### **Key Transport & Traffic Issues**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.13 Speed of traffic is an issue, although parked cars do in fact act as a traffic constraint in places. However there are no 30 MPH signs in East or North Coker and it is proposed that such signs be introduced, but only at the key entrance points to the village. This should assist in reducing the speed of traffic in the various pinch points referred to above.

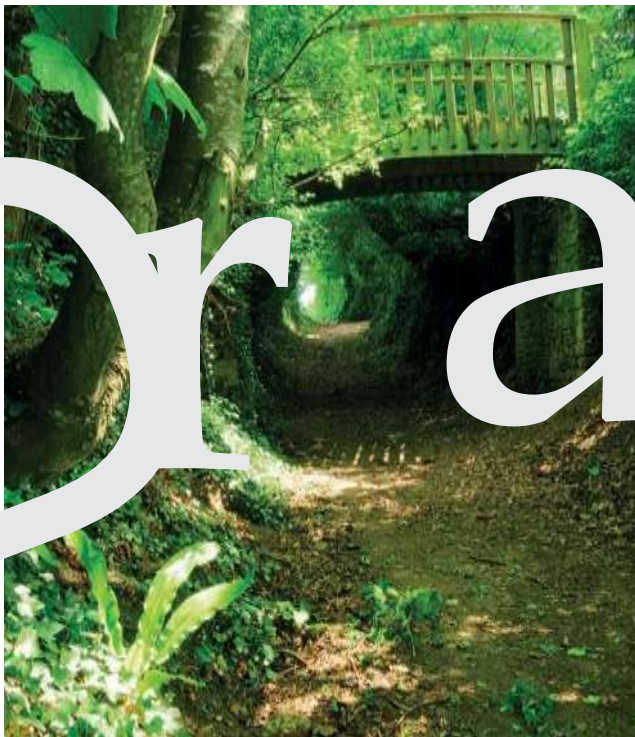
8.14 The resurfacing of the virtual pavement from Tellis Cross in a coloured surface as found elsewhere in Somerset villages, is to be pursued with a view to its provision by SCC as Highway Authority with responsibilities for pedestrian safety.

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

### Policy ECT 2: Highway safety

- Proposals for the following development that improve highway safety, will be supported and actively progressed with the Highway Authority:
- Provision of 30 MPH signs at the entrances to the village
- Resurfacing in a coloured material of the virtual pavement from Tellis Cross to the School
- Improved access and car parking as part of any redevelopment of the existing Primary School and Village Hallsite

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



Footpath

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



Traffic outside the school

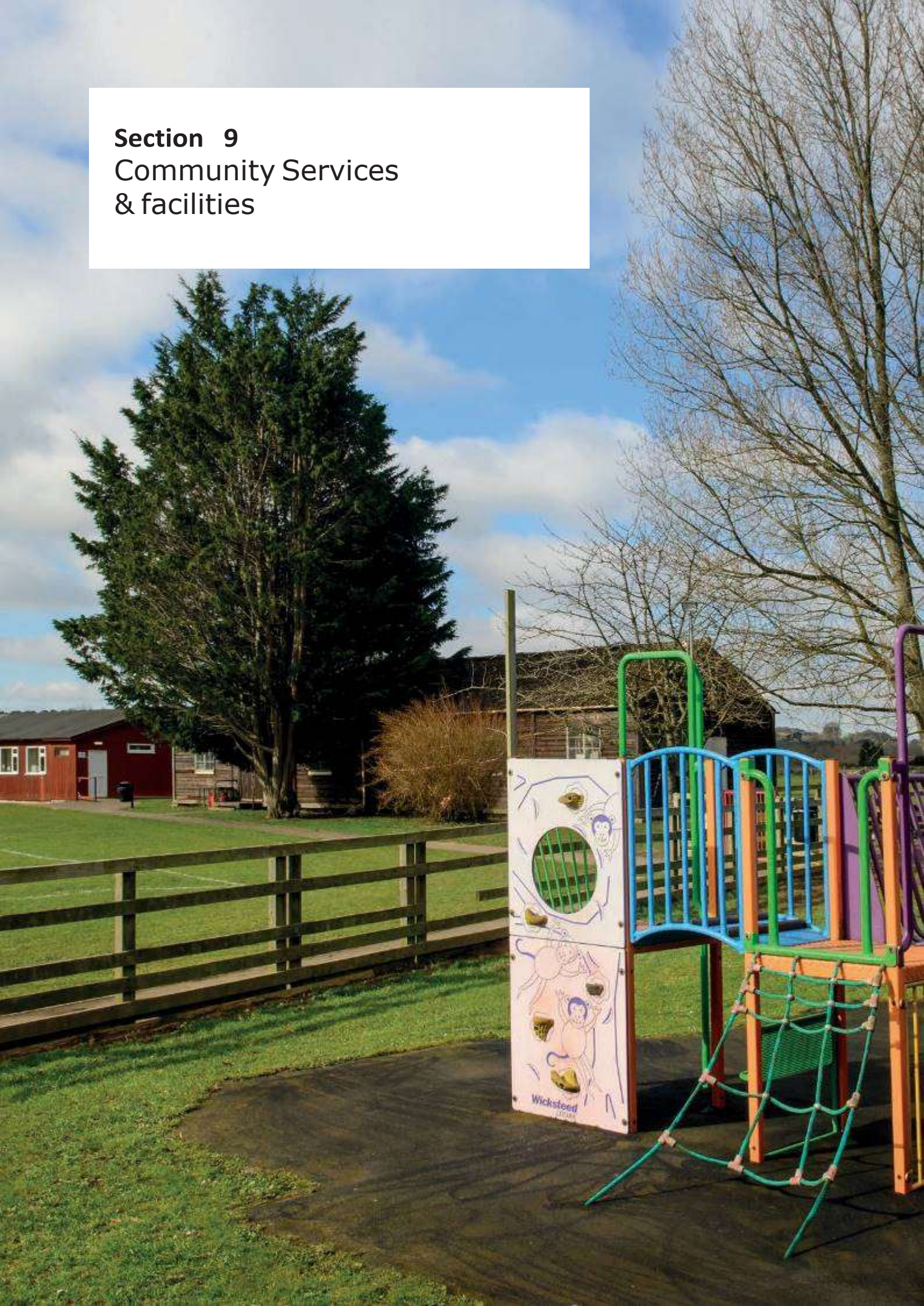
### Policy ECT 3: Car Parking in New Development

In proposals for new residential development, design solutions should be planned and implemented to minimise car parking other than in designated parking areas. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that access routes are designed to prevent or discourage on-street parking.

#### Infrastructure

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

## Section 9 Community Services & facilities



## 9 Community Services and facilities

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

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

### East Coker in the context of Yeovil

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

### East Coker Parish/Village Facilities

#### Village Hall

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



Village Hall

#### Pavilion Building

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

#### Parish Church & Cemetery

9.5 The church of St Michael and All Angels in East Coker sits at the heart of the community serving the parish of East Coker and the neighbouring communities of Sutton Bingham and Closworth.

#### Village Shop Facilities

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

9.7 Alternative retail provision is available by way of a convenience store at the White Post garage on the West Coker Road which is about 2 miles away. There is another convenience store on the crossroads of Sandhurst Road and West Coker Road which is approximately 1.5 miles from the village. Goose Slade Farm, located within the parish, is a farm shop selling local produce. Despite these alternatives, the feedback from the October 2015 Open Day suggests there remains an appetite to take another look at the provision of a village shop, maybe even on a community run basis.

#### Café Tea Room

9.8 The Courtyard Café opened for business in November 2013 offering a range of services, and following the closure of the village shop, the café has supplied milk for sale and bread to order. It is also the meeting venue for a number of local groups, and a local IT consultant runs a weekly IT clinic from the café. Next door is the Crystal Courtyard, a hair and beauty salon serving not only local people but attracting a large clientele from outside the parish.

## Public Houses/Hotel

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

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



Public House, The Helyar Arms

## Mobile Library

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



East Coker Primary school

## Education

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

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

9.13 Children from the parish attend a wide range of secondary schools including Westfield Academy, The Park School, Bucklers Mead Academy, Sherborne Boys, Gryphon at Sherborne and Sherborne Girls, all of which are outside the parish. The 2013 survey identified that all secondary school children in the village travelled to school either by bus or car. None walked or cycled.



Recreational Ground/Play park

## Recreational Ground

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

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

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

**Policy ECCF 1: Local Sporting, Leisure & Recreational facilities**

The following East Coker local sports and recreation facilities will be protected as identified on the Proposals Map (Appendix 3):

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

- a) Do not have an adverse impact on residential amenity; and
- b) They provide suitable access and car parking. Any proposals for built development that are on sites used for these amenities but not associated with these uses and/or will result in the loss of these facilities, will be resisted

**Policy ECCF 2: Protection of Community Assets**

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

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

These assets include the following:

- East Coker Community Primary School
- Village Café
- Helyar Arms
- Foresters Arms
- The Village Hall and All Angels Church
- The Pavilion
- The Cricket Field

**Social & Health**

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



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



**Section 10**  
The Built & Natural Environment

## 10 The Built & Natural Environment

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

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

### Built & Historic Environment

#### Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings

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

#### Policy ECCN 1: Listed Buildings

Proposals involving new development or change to listed buildings will be assessed having regard to the impact on the heritage asset and its conservation value, but will be supported where they would improve, restore or maintain the fabric of a listed building. Development that would have a negative or harmful impact on a listed building, its curtilage or its setting will not be supported unless a clear justification is presented that there would be substantial public benefits which would outweigh the loss of or harm to the building.

#### East Coker & Conservation Area - Location and context

10.2 East Coker forms one of a cluster of communities within the Civil Parish of East Coker. It lies a few miles to the west of the A37 Roman Yeovil to Dorchester Road and is also in close proximity to the Somerset/Dorset County boundary. East Coker is bounded to the south by the Coker Ridge line and historic Coker Court parkland. To the north of the village is open farm land at Coker Moor, the flood plain of the River Odd and beyond the land rises towards the crest of the Coker dip-slope at Keyford.

To the northwest, and almost contiguous, is the settlement of North Coker, with which a strong relationship exists and villagers consider it as one community. The East Coker Conservation Area was designated on 28th August 1975 and extended on 1st July 1998.

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

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

10.3 The main part of the East Coker Conservation Area stretches for about half a mile. The buildings front onto Main Street, whilst larger properties in generous plots are set back behind low walls and some later 'modern' detached dwellings feature in the street scene. While the majority of the buildings front onto the street, one or two older buildings are angled at 90 degrees to the street, breaking the linear form. The western end of the area by the Helyar Arms Public House forms a tighter urban form. In contrast the eastern end of the area is more open and gives a strong relationship to the villages farming heritage. The listed historic buildings are scattered along the full extent of the conservation area. A mix of thatched, slate and clay roof styles dominate the street scene in terraced, semi and detached buildings.

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KEYFORD YEOVIL  
URBAN EXTENSION  
LOCAL PLAN  
ALLOCATION

	Parish Boundary		Proposed Greenspace		Existing Footpaths
	Existing Conservation Area		Proposed Views & Vistas		39 Approved Planning Apps.

ECP NP 2016 - 2028



## North Coker & Conservation Area - Location and Context

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

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

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

106 Public consultation has demonstrated that a large proportion of respondents supports the protection of heritage assets. There has been discussion about extending the 2 conservation areas, both locally and with South Somerset District Council. As this is a matter that falls entirely within the statutory responsibilities of the District Council as Planning Authority, it is being left for the District Council to progress and so is not being proposed or progressed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. However it is important that any new development has full regard to the existing conservation areas. Furthermore it is proposed that a Village Design Guide be prepared in due course.

### Policy ECCN 2: Design in the Conservation Areas

All new development should be of a high quality design and reflect the context and relate to the Conservation Areas and the part of the settlement within which it lies.

The following design features should be taken into account by all new developments in the East and North Coker Conservation Areas:

- New residential developments should be appropriate in scale and mass for the local area; respect the historic building line where this is an important characteristic of the street scene, and/or to reflect the positions of nearby properties and
- New development should seek to deliver some of the locally distinctive details which are responsible for the area's character such as thatch, clay and slate roofing material, front boundary walls and Hamstone.



Naish Priory

## General Design

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

### Policy ECCN 3: General Design

All new development proposals will have to be of high quality design. Proposals will be expected to demonstrate compliance with the following criteria:

- Preservation and enhancement of the locally distinctive built, historic and natural environment.
- Designed to take account of site characteristics, respecting and utilizing the best qualities of local distinctiveness in the village and locality including: layout, siting, scale, height, proportion and massing, orientation, architectural detailing, landscaping and locally sympathetic materials.
- No significant adverse impact on residential amenity for existing sustainably sourced materials.
- Creates safe and accessible environments by incorporating "Secured by Design" principles and
- Designs that can easily be adapted to accommodate changing lifestyles and technologies and future residents.
- The development does not contribute to or suffer from adverse impacts arising from noise, light or air pollution, land instability or cause ground water pollution:
- The development utilises sustainable construction methods, minimises the use of non-renewable resources and maximises the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials.

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

10.8 The original landscape character assessment which dates from 1993 includes the East Coker area as being part of the 'Ridges & Vales South and West of Yeovil'. Reference is made to the series of east-west Jurassic ridge formations which are rich in wildlife, with strong hedgerows and banks, together with blocks of woodland. Reference was made to the traditional and aesthetically pleasing balance between the basic elements of lowland English landscape, thick winding hedges, many hedgerow oaks, tree lined brooks, copses and larger blocks of broadleaved woodland. Reference was also

made to attractive villages and dwellings many of which were thatched cottages. At that time, the area was described as amongst the least changing and unspoilt with a more dispersed settlement pattern and it is this character of the landscape and countryside setting that residents value.

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

"The second sub-division of the 'Yeovil Sands dipslopes and escarpments' local character area, is the Coker dipslope. This is land that falls gently south from the head of Yeovil's southern escarpment, and it is predominantly rural in character, other than where residential form has spread south from the escarpment head, notably in the area off Nash Lane, and primarily to the south of West Coker Road.

Much of this area is open, with a varied, irregular field pattern that is lined by mixed hedges, and encloses farmland that is primarily in arable production, or improved grassland. Pasture is apparent adjacent stream corridors, or within the smaller fields at village edges.

The field-scale is intricate by the village edges of West and North Coker, and by Nash hamlet, whilst areas of relic parkland remain intact by North Coker and West Coker Hall. Specimen trees abound within these parks, and by the mature edge of the villages, and are also a feature of the stream corridors, and old hedge boundaries. A number of locally distinctive holloways criss-cross the area, cut deep into the Yeovil Sands and lined by mixed hedgerows, inclusive of mature oaks". Overall the area is graded as being of 'high sensitivity' in landscape terms.

#### **Policy ECCN 4: General Landscape Character**

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

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

In particular, new development should, wherever possible:

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

#### **Policy ECCN 5: Heritage Assets**

Development proposals will be assessed with regard to their potential impact on recognised assets or features of historic value and the contribution they make to the character and culture of East Coker Parish, including:

- The sunken lanes of the Parish, which could be adversely affected by highway works
- Roman Villas at Dunnock Lane and Chisells, where their setting could be adversely affected by the proximity of new development

Schemes that will seriously adversely affect such assets will not be supported.

#### **Local Greenspace**






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



School playing fields



Play Park at Tellis Cross

Proposed Greenspace Sites & Locations	Characteristics	Community benefits
Playing Fields at Longfurlong Lane 	Important open space within village for range of sporting activities	Health, well-being, physical activity benefits for both local community and those from wider area. Visually attractive large open area that opens into wider countryside
Junction Mill Close and Long Furlong Lane 	Small but attractive area of open land with mature trees	Important focal point within this part of the village. Seen and passed by the whole community on regular basis
Land at Tellis Cross 	Open space area providing visual setting for development and important informally supervised play area for local residents' children	Health, well-being, physical activity benefits for local community, especially children. Provides attractive setting for Tellis Cross houses
School Playing Field 	Site contained by school and adjacent development	Essential area of open space for use by children in association with the school and valuable green space within this part of the built up area of the village
The Paddock 	Wooded and planted open space area in historic part of village close to church, alms-houses and parkland	Extremely attractive and beautiful, open area well used by public and visually well related to Church providing valuable setting for the Church as well as the entrance to Coker Court

### Policy ECCN 6 Local GreenSpace

The Local GreenSpace areas defined on the Proposals Map provide a series of important green spaces and links within the otherwise built up areas of East and North Coker, which provide important physical and visual links and/or are important and valued landscape or open areas. Proposals for permanent built development within these areas will be resisted and the areas protected for their landscape, recreational and/or amenity value, as well as for benefits to wildlife.



Greenspace at Mill Close

### Views and Vistas within the Villages and Local Landscape




The Settlements of East and North Coker are linear in nature, with built development interspersed by gaps showing areas of countryside. This also applies to those closer to Yeovil such as Wraxall.







One of the key characteristics of the area is therefore the public views and vistas out of and into the villages. The landscape and countryside context of East Coker is highly valued by local residents, as evidenced by consultation.

It is important therefore that, having regard to the fact that East Coker is categorised as a 'Rural Settlement' in the Local Plan and so very much part of the open countryside, these gaps, views and vistas linking to the surrounding countryside are protected from development.

### Policy ECCN 7 Views & Vistas within the Villages and Local Landscape

The important public views and vistas (as illustrated on the Proposals Map) that physically and visually link the settlements in East Coker Parish with the surrounding open countryside are valuable local assets and important aspects of the local landscape. They should be protected from development that would significantly detract from these views and vistas, by failing to respect their distinctive characteristics.

Ref:	Location of View/Vista	Description and Public Amenity Value	Photograph
V&V 1	Looking south from East Coker main Village Street	Good views over characteristic stone walling, fertile fields, with rising land to wooded ridge in the distance.	
V&V 2	From East Coker village street looking south towards the East Coker Park land.	The Farm and Park lands provide a visual amenity and support a wide variety of fauna and flora.	
V&V 3	Entering East Coker from the east and looking west	The East Coker sign which marks the entry into the village from the east with the rolling landscape in the background, with the Church in the distance and the renowned East Coker Narrow Leaved Elm in the middle distance.	

Ref:	Location of View/Vista	Description and Public Amenity Value	Photograph
V&V 4	Looking east from Church access road	The 13th Century Church of St Michael and All Angels is famous for being the last resting place of the poet TS Eliot and set within an unchanged and treed landscape, illustrated by this vista.	
V&V 5	Looking north east from the doorway of the Church.	From the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, the nearby walled garden wall plus varied roofscape of the Village of East Coker is seen in the foreground, with open countryside separating East Coker from the Town of Yeovil beyond.	
V&V 6	Looking south west from Nash Lane.	Open view across fields from the well used highway towards the 14th Century Grade 1 listed Naish Priory.	
V&V 7	Looking south from playing fields car park	Views of open fields and Old Mill, with rising treed landscape beyond.	
V&V 8	Land opposite entrance to North Coker House	Attractive paddocks bounded by old iron railings on roadside and with very large trees in paddocks.	
V&V 9	North Coker Village Street looking to Halves Lane Junction	Old Village road sign; glimpse of Millennium Stone beyond with open field rising to treed ridge line, providing attractive setting within this part of the village, close to the Hall and linking agriculture with nearby business premises.	

**Agricultural Objective** - To resist the development of the highest quality agricultural land so as to retain its potential for food production

### Agricultural Land

10.11 East Coker has a high proportion of Grade 1 agricultural land which is land of the highest quality representing only 4% of farmland. This is shown on the Proposals Map. The Southern Urban Extension is largely Grade 1 and so is being lost to food production, which means that there is even more reason for the remaining Grade 1 land in the Parish to be protected, wherever possible.

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

### Policy ECCN 8: - High Quality Agricultural Land

Development that would result in the irreversible loss of Grade 1 agricultural land (in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs classification) will not be supported, unless there is no practical alternative and the importance of the development outweighs the need to protect the best and most versatile land.

### The Natural Environment

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

10.14 The rich natural and cultural environment is a highly valued asset to East Coker and should be protected.

### Policy ECCN 9: Wildlife Habitats

Subject to other policies in the Plan being met, development will be supported provided it would not cause direct or indirect harm to any site designated for its wildlife value and where it includes proposals to protect or restore any existing features, or create new features of wildlife habitat, particularly where these form linkages between habitats within or beyond the site.

### Environmental Information & Interpretation

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

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

**Section 11**  
Implementation, Monitoring  
& review



## 11 Implementation, Monitoring and Review

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

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

### SSDC

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

### ECPC

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

### SSDC and ECPC

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

### To cooperate regarding developer contributions to community infrastructure SCC

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

### SCC, SSDC & ECPC

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

11.2 A number of projects are identified in the Policy ECNP2 and in the schedule below in more detail. Whilst some of these can be delivered without a Neighbourhood Development Plan, the opportunity to secure Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from some new developments could assist in funding these schemes, as well as the Parish Precept and potential grant funding.

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

**Section 12**  
Timeline, Next Steps & Stages



## 12 Timeline, Next Steps & Stages

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

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

#### **The Next Steps & Estimated Timetable**

##### **December**

- Final approval of Draft NP for Regulation 14 consultation

##### **January/February 2017**

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

##### **March 2017**

- Analysis of formal consultation responses
- Amendments to Plan if required

##### **March**

- Completion of Basic Conditions & Consultation Statement

##### **April**

- Submission of Neighbourhood Plan to South Somerset DC with view to formal Examination by Independent Inspector

##### **Date to be determined**

- Modification to Plan if required by Inspector
- Date to be determined
- Local Parish Referendum, aiming for more than 50% support for the Plan from those who vote

##### **Date to be determined**

- Completion and making of Plan
- Implementation of Plan which is then used as a Material Planning Consideration to help in determining Planning Applications along with NPPF and South Somerset Local Plan

## Appendix 1 - Community Issues, Projects and Actions

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

Issues	Projects/Actions	Responsible Body/Partners
Examine speed issues in Halves Lane, Main Road, Cemetery Hill, 10 Cottages, Holywell, Gulliver's Grave, Burton	Discussed with SCC Highways at site meeting. Agreed that 30 MPH signs needed at village entry points. Included within the Plan transport section	Somerset CC (SCC) in liaison with East Coker Parish Council (ECPC)
Address parking and speed issues at the School	Meeting with SCC Highways to discuss issues and with Headteacher of School. Community/School focused solutions being sought, car sharing etc. Referred to in the transport section of the Plan	East Coker School/ Parish Council in liaison with Somerset CC
Address parking issues/blind spot in Burton	Discussed with SCC Highways at site meeting. Agreed 30 MPH sign would assist traffic entering this part of the village at speed. Included within the Plan transport section	Somerset CC in liaison with East Coker Parish Council.
Poor quality of surfacing of the pedestrian route for Tellis Cross to the School/village centre with resultant highway/pedestrian safety concerns between	Improve and provide clearly marked coloured surfacing for the pedestrian route from Tellis Cross to the School & village centre	SCC/SSDC/ECPC
Dog waste and the need for additional bins	Look into dog bins situation	Parish Council to progress with South Somerset DC (SSDC)
Consider need for grit bins for winter weather	Identify need and opportunities for locating grit bins and engage with SCC as highway authority	ECPC/SCC
Examine flooding and drain clearing	Parish Council to investigate and resolve	Work undertaken satisfactorily and to be monitored
Need for improvements at play areas at Tellis Cross and the Recreation Ground	ECPC to discuss with Yarlinton Housing and residents with view to agreeing actions	Yarlinton/ECPC/Residents
Improve signage - both Finger Posts and 'Children at Play'	Identify need and key locations	ECPC/SCC/SSDC
The need to improve footpath links generally and with the proposed new community at Keyford.	Identify opportunities for enhanced signing and footpaths links within the parish and notably linking to Keyford	ECPC/SSDC/SCC/Keyford Developer

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Projects/Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Body/Partners</b>
The need to improve footpath links generally and with the proposed new community at Keyford.	Identify opportunities for enhanced signage and footpath links within the parish and notably linking to Keyford	ECPC/SSDC/SCC/Keyford Developer
The need and opportunity to promote the historical and cultural assets in the parish to both local people and visitors	Development and implementation of an environmental and historical information interpretation strategy and action plan to highlight and promote the environmental and historical assets of the Parish	ECPC/SSDC/Appointed Specialists
Improve facilities at Longfurlong Lane	Work with Football & Cricket teams to identify their needs and to assess the viability of increasing the number of football pitches. Improve changing rooms	ECPC/SSDC/East Coker Coker Cockerels, East Coker Cricket Club
Raise the awareness of the contribution and significance of T S Eliot to East Coker	Assess the viability of and identify sites to house 'The TS Eliot Centre' which would be a multi-purpose space for meetings, study centres, library and exhibitions	ECPC
Consider converting the Chapel in the cemetery	Undertake a viability assessment of the Chapel to identify the opportunities for future use	ECPC/Appointed Consider Refurbishment
Improve youth activity	Work with local youth groups and East Coker school to identify opportunities for enhancing the youth facilities and activities in the Parish	ECPC/East Coker Primary School/ Local youth groups
Improve communications across the Parish	Assess ways of enhancing the mobile reception in the Parish and identify other communication improvements	ECPC/Associated specialists
Improve sound system in the village hall	Assess the need for a sound system to accommodate the large number of groups who use this facility	ECPC

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

Draft

## **Appendix 2 - Affordable Housing Policy**

### **Definition and Criteria of Local Connection and Local Need**

#### **Local Connection**

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

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

#### **Local Need**

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

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

#### **Eligibility and Occupancy Cascade Arrangements**

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

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