



Somerset
Council

Plan-it Somerset

Planning policy news



Issue 17 - June 2026

Featured updates

Initial Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Report published



In 2025, we ran a Local Plan Call for Sites for 6 weeks from 13 January to 24 February. Following this, we assessed the sites received, alongside other sources of sites. These are contained in the Interim HELAA Report (2026).

The HELAA is a high-level technical study which considers the potential suitability, availability and achievability of identified sites for future residential, economic or renewable energy development. The HELAA forms the initial stage of the site assessment process and provides evidence to support the preparation of our new Local Plan. [Read the report](#) and find out more about:

- what the HELAA is, why we do it, its role and status, and how it links with other parts of the planning process;
- the methodology used; and
- assessment outcomes.

The HELAA process sits as a first stage in the wider Local Plan site selection process. It does not allocate sites or grant them planning permission or planning status of any kind.

It is a 'policy off' assessment, which means it considers some high-level constraints but does not consider adopted plan policy constraints at this stage.

Given its high-level nature and 'policy off' approach, the report is deliberately badged as an 'Initial HELAA Report'. No sites are labelled as conclusively 'suitable', and the best a site can come out as is:

- 'potentially suitable';
- 'available'; and
- 'achievable'.

[Find out more](#)

Rolling Call for Sites now launched



If you're a landowner, site promoter or developer and missed the chance to submit your site in 2025, we've now reopened the Call for Sites so additional sites can be considered.

The portal for submitting sites will remain open on a rolling basis until further notice. However, it's likely that we'll close it again in the lead-up to the next consultation on the Local Plan in 2027.

Sites submitted during this period will be assessed and reported on as part of the next version of the HELAA Report.

[Find out more](#)

Local Plan updates

Draft Role and Function of Settlements Study published

The draft Role and Function of Settlements study will help ensure we have a good understanding of the nature of settlements across Somerset to inform the production of the Somerset Local Plan.



With help from parish, town and city councils, it gathers information on the services and facilities currently available. It sets out population, employment opportunities and access to the transport network. It indicates the relative sustainability of our settlements in the form of a settlement hierarchy.

The study is part of the Scoping Consultation.

[Find out more](#)

Somerset Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening and Scoping published

The first stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Local Plan has now been published.

The screening process first determines whether the plan is excluded from the HRA, then scopes whether any aspects of the plan may lead to likely significant effects on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Statutory consultees have been consulted on the report.



[Find out more](#)

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Sustainability Appraisals (SAs) are required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and are used to assess Local Plans to ensure they promote sustainable development.

The Somerset Council SA Scoping Report is the first step in this process. It outlines the context of the Somerset Local Plan, establishes the baseline and sets out the SA Framework, which will be used to assess future versions of the Somerset Local Plan.

The SA is supported by appendices that provide the evidence on which the Framework is based. It incorporates other relevant assessments:

- a Strategic Environmental Assessment;
- a Health Impact Assessment; and
- an Equalities Impact Assessment.



[Find out more](#)

Neighbourhood Plan updates

North Curry Neighbourhood Plan

North Curry Parish Council has submitted its Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

The plan sets out a vision for the future and policies that may be used to determine planning applications in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The NDP is currently out for consultation until **14 July 2026**.

Following this, it will be independently examined for compliance with the legislation.



[Find out more](#)

Pitcombe Neighbourhood Area Designated

On 1 June 2026, we designated the whole of Pitcombe parish as the Pitcombe Neighbourhood Area, following an application from Pitcombe Parish Council.

The designation enables the parish council to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan, allowing the local community to help shape future development and planning policies for the area.

The decision was made in accordance with neighbourhood planning legislation and reflects our statutory duty to designate a neighbourhood area where a parish council applies for its parish area to be included.



[Find out more](#)



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