

# Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan

2018-2028



**Post Examination Version**

(Version 4.3)

**Martock Parish Council**  
**February 2021**

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# Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan

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## Foreword

Welcome to the Post Examination Version of The Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan. This Plan has been developed by the community as a response to an increasing number of controversial planning applications in the Parish and a desire to exert more influence over how the parish of Martock develops in future. Four years ago, I asked the Parish Council to consider the merits of a Neighbourhood Plan and it was agreed to set up a Steering Group made up of local people to formulate ideas whilst involving the whole community in the Plan's preparation.

This Plan has been created through the hard work of several local people. Many parishioners have helped by engaging with the regular consultations at the monthly farmers' markets and attending the several formal consultation events. Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is not in any way a bar to future building, it does allow Martock to exercise more control and direction over the future development, not only of housing but commercial sites and other aspects of importance to our community, including the conservation areas, the design of future buildings and access to leisure and recreation opportunities.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the members of the Steering Group for having the stamina and determination to complete the challenge of producing a Neighbourhood Plan; to everybody with an interest in the future of Martock who has contribute their thoughts and ideas to the process; and to South Somerset District Council for its encouragement and generally positive response to our many queries and questions.

Neil Bloomfield

Chairman

Martock Parish Council

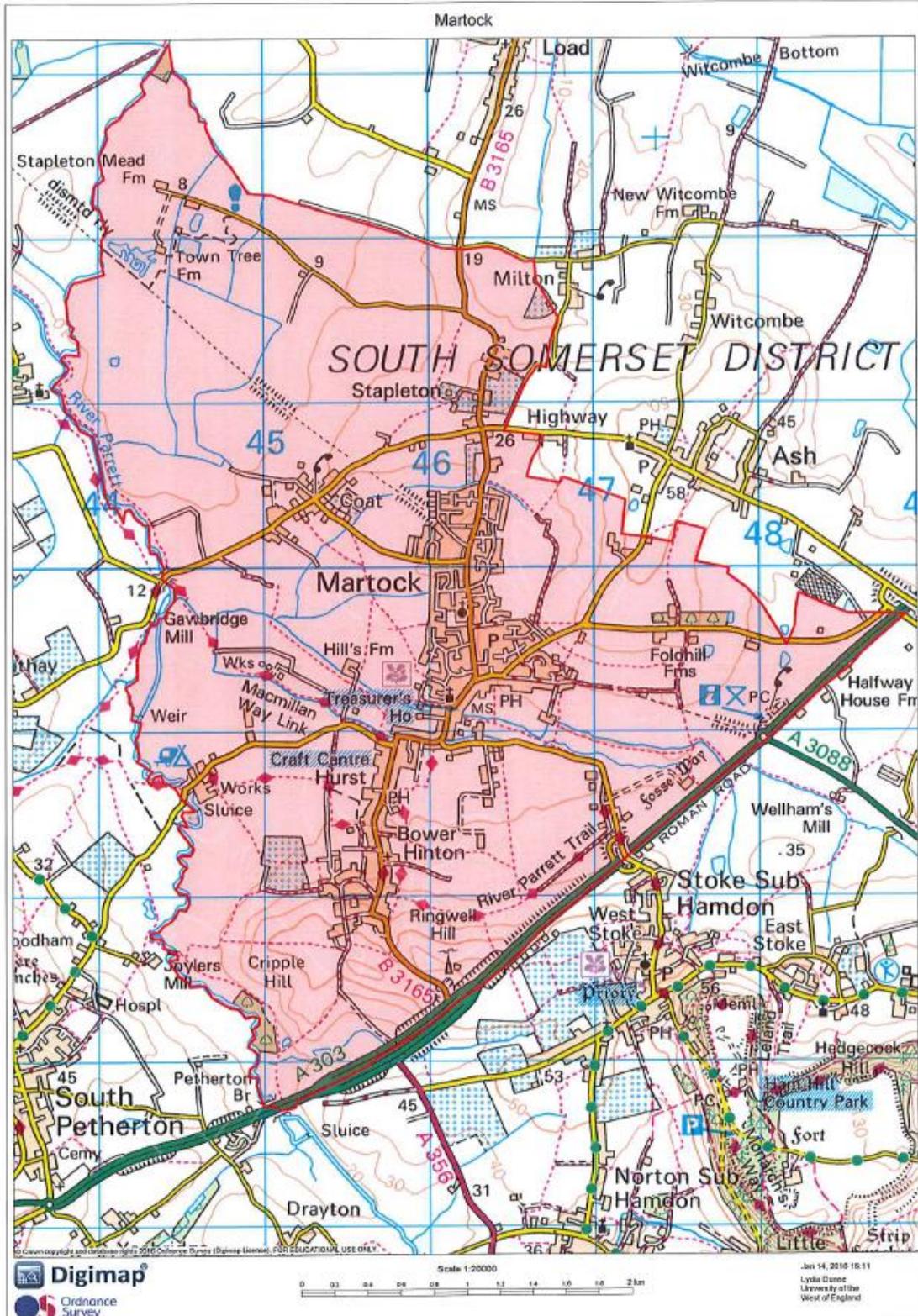
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# 1. Introduction

## The Plan Area

- 1.1 The Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan applies to the parished area that is under the jurisdiction of Martock Parish Council. The plan area, which was designated as a neighbourhood area by South Somerset District Council on 7th April 2016, is shown on Map 1 below.
- 1.2 In the interest of clarity, all references to 'Martock' in this document apply to the whole of the Parish. The Village of Martock, the main settlement area in the Parish, is referred to throughout the document as 'Martock village'. Other settlement areas are referred to by their name.

*Martock NP Map 1 – Neighbourhood Area*



## 2. Martock Parish Today

### Our Parish

- 2.1 Martock is an attractive Parish in central South Somerset, on the southern edge of the Somerset Levels and Moors and alongside the busy A303 trunk road. Madey Mill Stream and Hurst Brook flow between Martock and Bower Hinton to the South, before joining the River Parrett to the west. The main settlement of Martock is surrounded by gradual undulating hills that are regarded as having high landscape value. The local road network links Martock to Yeovil, seven miles to the southeast, although travel times vary considerably according to road conditions.
- 2.2 Martock village and the adjoining settlements of Hurst and Bower Hinton have a joint Conservation Area incorporating various listed buildings along the main road between the two settlements. Listed buildings are concentrated at the historic centres of Martock village, Hurst and Bower Hinton. Areas of significant flood risk run through the centre from east to west between Martock and Bower Hinton. The land either side of the streams has been identified as part of the functional flood plain.
- 2.3 The population of Martock Parish is approximately 4,200<sup>1</sup>. The village has a good variety of services. However, self-containment and sustainability, is an issue. The travel to work data for instance indicates that around 80% of the working population out-commute<sup>2</sup>, mainly to Yeovil, Taunton Deane, Crewkerne, and Ilchester and surrounds, even though the village of Martock is home to scores of small businesses that are clustered principally at Martock Industrial Park and the, out of town, Parrett Works. Redevelopment of sites, such as the former Paull's Sailcloth factory, has resulted in a loss of employment land.
- 2.4 An overwhelming number of respondents to the recent Community Plan Household Survey 2017<sup>3</sup> shared their opinion on what made them most proud of living in Martock. The friendliness, sense of community, willingness of volunteers and village atmosphere were high on the list. A large number also appreciated the beauty, architecture and history of the area, particularly the Church. The good range of shops, the post office, local independent businesses, the farmers' market, and library are all popular, as well as the convenience of having doctors, dentist and a pharmacy in the Parish. Facilities such as the recreation ground, the shopping precinct, school, community rooms, fire station were all cited as things to be proud of.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2011 Census recorded a population of 4,766 in the Parish of Martock. More recent estimates for 2018 give a population of 4,188.

<sup>2</sup> From South Somerset Local Plan Review, Preferred Options Consultation Paper, South Somerset DC, Jun 2019

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/1528.pdf>

### 3. The Strategic Context

- 3.1 In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan we are obliged, by law, to:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
  - ensure the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.2 In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan we have been cognisant of the current national planning framework. The 2019 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>4</sup> sets out the Government’s planning policy to which all plans and proposals for development should comply. The NPPF includes, at its heart, a “*presumption in favour of sustainable development*” (NPPF para. 11). It states that “*neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies*” (NPPF para. 13). The NPPF goes on to say that “*strategic policies [in the Local Plan] should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans*” (NPPF para. 21). Outside of strategic policies therefore, we are encouraged to shape and direct sustainable development in our area through our Neighbourhood Plan. “*Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan*” (NPPF para. 29).

#### South Somerset Local Plan

- 3.3 The South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028) sets out the long-term planning framework for the district up to the year 2028. “*It represents the starting point for decisions on where development will be located in the district and will be used to reach conclusions on planning applications across South Somerset. It sets out the Council’s objectives for providing enough homes, jobs and services, in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way to make the district prosperous both now and in the future.*”<sup>5</sup> South Somerset District Council adopted the South Somerset Local Plan on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015. We are obliged to ensure that the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan.
- 3.4 South Somerset District Council committed itself to an early review of the Local Plan (following concerns raised by the Inspector at the examination phase, regarding the housing and employment land allocations at Wincanton). The review (currently in progress at the time of writing) is being used as an opportunity to ensure that the whole Local Plan remains effective and up to date and will result in a new Local Plan covering the period 2014-2034.
- 3.5 During the summer of 2019, the Local Plan Review was at the ‘Preferred Options’ consultation stage. It is expected, by the District Council, that a new draft Local Plan will be ready for examination and subsequent adoption during 2021. The Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in parallel with the Local Plan review process. We have endeavoured to ensure that the two plan-making exercises, particularly the local consultation aspects, have informed each other. We have been mindful of the emerging policies of the Local Plan review and striven to ensure that the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the emerging new Local Plan as well as the adopted Local Plan.

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<sup>4</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Homes Communities and Local Government, February 2019

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council/your-council-plan-and-strategies/planning-policy/local-plan/>

- 3.6 The implication of new development on Martock's sustainability is a matter that is taken very seriously. In 2013 Martock Parish Council adopted a Sustainable Development Plan<sup>6</sup>, which sought to provide a *“strategic approach to the consideration of future planning applications for multiple residential dwellings over the short, medium and long term”*. The Sustainable Development Plan was based on research which indicated that development scale is a significant factor in terms of impact on the current infrastructure.
- 3.7 At the time, it was agreed there was a need for *“a realistic limitation being imposed on the number of units in any residential development and in terms of location of future residential development there are certain locations (areas) within the Parish that would have greater or lesser impact on the infrastructure and the existing residents”*.
- 3.8 The Sustainable Development Plan set out a framework (based on a holistic approach) for the objective consideration of future planning applications. It included being fully cognisant of the local issues and opportunities, which are still pertinent at the time of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan:
- the number of ‘pinch points’ caused by a combination of highway infrastructure evolution and design together with relatively high traffic volume and/or on-street parking – with implications for congestion, and public safety in particular
  - flood control and management concerns
  - The present and forecast capacity levels and constraints of the schools, surgery and other community resources
  - the location of recreational and welfare facilities e.g. surgery, pharmacy, schools, library services
  - The implication of the nature and scale of development on the rurality and vibrancy of the area and its communities.
- 3.9 It has been established through the consultation process undertaken for the, recently refreshed, Martock Community Plan<sup>7</sup> and the Neighbourhood Plan that these matters remain important to the local community. The list of matters that people were *“least proud of”*, which came out of the 2017 Community Plan Household Survey<sup>8</sup>, were traffic and parking in and around the village/Parish; the GP surgery with a critical lack of capacity, because it is unable to recruit enough doctors; the pharmacy, that is in need of improvement; the closure of public facilities, such as the bank and village pub; and the limited selection of shops and condition of the precinct, considered by some to be poorly designed and maintained.
- 3.10 The Community Plan Household Survey also established that a *“large majority of respondents feel over the next 10 years, the Parish most needs more low-cost/starter homes for purchase (74%). This is closely aligned with those who feel that more affordable housing for local people who can't afford open market housing will be needed (68%). While low carbon/eco-friendly housing is perceived as a need by the majority of 6 in 10 respondents (61%)”*.
- 3.11 The neighbourhood planning agenda for Martock is therefore focussed on dealing with future development needs, protecting our special historic, built and natural environment, and addressing those matters of concern to the parishioners that can be affected by a land use plan.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/Pages/152/Sustainable-Development-Plan.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/Pages/70/Local-Community-Plan.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/1528.pdf>

## 4. Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.1 Neighbourhood planning is intended to give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of the local area. The PPG says that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the Parish Council, as a qualifying body is able to “*choose where it wants new homes, shops and offices to be built, have our say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings it wants to see go ahead*”.

### The Neighbourhood Planning Process

- 4.2 We approached the task with an open mind as to what the Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan would cover and what its themes and purposes would be. We understood from the outset that it would have to meet some basic conditions:
- have 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 contained in the development plan for the area – the South Somerset Local Plan
  - does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations
- 4.3 With these conditions in mind, we have consulted widely and engaged with our local community to understand what is needed and determine what it is possible to influence and effect via a set of neighbourhood planning policies. We have considered carefully the policies of the Local Plan and assessed, on the basis of our agreed objectives, whether a more localised or detailed neighbourhood plan policy is necessary. In several instances, we have concluded that the Local Plan policy is sufficient. We have only introduced a neighbourhood plan policy where it will contribute to ensuring the area develops in the way we wish it to.
- 4.4 The Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan sets out how we would like to see the area developed over the next 15 to 20 years and, through its policies, shape and direct sustainable development that will benefit those that live, work or visit in our area.
- 4.5 The development and preparation of the Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken by a Steering Group comprised of local people and parish councillors, under auspices of Martock Parish Council.
- 4.6 It was understood from the outset that for the Plan to be truly representative of the planning issues of relevance in the area and to be *the community’s plan*, we needed to carry out a thorough and on-going consultation process with those who live and work in the area and those that visit here on a regular basis. We also recognised that the Plan could not be properly developed without the input of organisations and agencies with a district, county, sub-regional or national remit and an interest in the area.
- 4.7 The process and the types of consultation exercise and discussion that we have gone through is documented in detail in a **Consultation Statement**. The key methods we have used have included:
- Public exhibitions, meetings and events
  - Regular, monthly, farmer’s market stall and topic-focussed consultation programme
  - Articles in the parish newsletter
  - Website and pages on parish website
  - Noticeboards and established poster sites
  - Focus groups and workshops
  - Surveys and discussions with local businesses and community groups
  - Correspondence with wider-than-local organisations and agencies (strategic stakeholders) which have an interest in our planning issues
  - Two formal consultations during which comments have been invited on draft documents

- 4.8 The development of the Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan was based on a desire to be open and to welcome comments and contributions from all quarters. The intention has been to encourage and foster discussion and debate within the community about the issues and opportunities that face us and strive to achieve a community consensus. This Plan represents the product of this process.

### The Plan's Status

- 4.9 The Neighbourhood Plan, once 'made', will be a statutory development plan. That means that its policies will have significant influence when being used by the local planning authority to help determine proposals for development submitted through planning applications. It will form the local tier of planning policy in our Parish. It sits with the district-wide Local Plan, produced by South Somerset District Council (also a statutory development plan) and underneath the umbrella of national planning policy in the Government's NPPF, as the main planning policy documents relevant to the Martock parish area. Other important planning documents which govern specific issues are the Minerals and Waste Plans produced at the county-wide level.
- 4.10 The Neighbourhood Plan's policies cannot guarantee that a development proposal will be refused nor be granted permission, but the policies will carry significant weight, alongside policies of the NPPF and the South Somerset Local Plan when weighing up the appropriateness of the development proposal in question.

## 5. The Structure of Our Plan

- 5.1 The Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan sets out the neighbourhood planning aims and objectives for the neighbourhood area shown on Map 1. These have been developed following a dialogue with the community and shaped by existing planning policies, plans and contributions of key organisations and agencies.
- 5.2 Having explained our rationale for these, the Plan sets out planning policies for Martock Parish on a topic-by-topic basis. Under each topic heading we summarise the characteristics of that topic and the key issues which have been identified. The introduction to each topic is based on the findings of the research, surveys and consultations that have taken place as part of the neighbourhood planning process. More detail can be found in the Local Evidence Report 2016<sup>9</sup>.
- 5.3 For each neighbourhood plan policy that follows we set out the policy statement; and our explanation of and justification for the policy, including reference to the other planning policies in national and district planning documents which relate to that policy.
- 5.4 We have given due consideration to the policies of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan. We are wholly in accord with the Local Plan's (Policy SS1) recognition of Martock/Bower Hinton, together, as a rural centre "*with a local service role where provision for development will be made that meets local housing need, extends local services and supports economic activity appropriate to the scale of the settlement*"<sup>10</sup>. We have introduced a neighbourhood plan policy only where we feel it strengthens or brings local specificity to the strategic approach and the policies in the Local Plan.
- 5.5 It is important to note that, while we have set out policies under topic headings, when development proposals are being assessed, the whole plan (i.e. all policies) should be considered, as policies in one topic may apply to proposals which naturally fit under another.
- 5.6 The Plan finishes with an explanation of how we will monitor and review the Neighbourhood Plan, and a glossary which seeks to demystify some of the planning terminology used in the Plan.

### Companion Documents

- 5.7 Several documents accompany the submitted version of the Neighbourhood Plan. We are obliged to produce a **Consultation Statement** and a **Basic Conditions Statement**.
- 5.8 The Parish Council has also had prepared a **Flood Guide**, a **Village Design Statement** and **Environment Manual** that are all available online<sup>11</sup> to aid developers and help ensure that development proposals will satisfy the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan. These documents represent guidance only but are specific to Martock Parish and are based on local evidence and knowledge.
- 5.9 The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to testing as it developed to help determine its positive or negative impact on the social, environmental and economic character of the neighbourhood area. A 'screening opinion' on the environmental effects of the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies was sought from, the local planning authority, South Somerset District Council. The initial 'screening opinion' from South Somerset District Council<sup>12</sup> concluded "*in the light of the District Council's findings and the responses from the statutory consultees it is concluded that there is no requirement for a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) to be undertaken*". Historic England and Natural England concurred with the local planning authority's conclusions. This opinion has been re-affirmed by the local planning authority based on the Submission Version of the Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

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<sup>9</sup> See full report at: <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Planpages/Documents/LocalContextReport.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council/your-council-plan-and-strategies/planning-policy/local-plan/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Drafts/Downloads/Martock%20SEA%20Screening%20Report%20Final%202019%20-%20ISSUE.pdf>

## 6. Vision, Aims and Objectives

### Establishing a Neighbourhood Plan Framework

- 6.1 The framework for the Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan comprises:
- a **vision** - for the long-term future of Martock;
  - the **aims** - that it is hoped that the Plan can help achieve; and
  - the **objectives** - that we expect the Plan to attain by the application of appropriate neighbourhood planning policies

### Our Vision

- 6.2 A neighbourhood plan should set out a vision for the future of its neighbourhood. The vision should reflect a desired end state that is consistent with the values and overall priorities of the community. This is encapsulated in our vision statement below:

*Living in harmony with our surroundings*

### The Aims and Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan



- 6.3 The process of arriving at an agreed set of aims and objectives started with discussions at the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which considered the evidence and the response received to surveys and other consultation activities. Much of the community-based evidence came from the results of a community consultation undertaken during the Spring of 2017<sup>13</sup>.
- 6.4 A draft set of aims and objectives was the focus of community consultation activity in the Parish during November 2017. The response we received was positive and encouraging. As a result of the community's reaction and comments, several revisions were made to the draft aims and objectives. The final set (see overleaf) was agreed in December 2017. We believe it reflects the community's neighbourhood planning and development agenda. It is this agenda that underpins the Neighbourhood Plan's policies.

<sup>13</sup> Martock Community Plan Household Survey 2017, Conducted by the Community Council for Somerset, Report date 5 May 2017 <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/1528.pdf>

## Agreed Aims and Objectives

6.5 The following set of aims and objectives was adopted by the Steering Group following community consultation at the Martock Farmers Market on the Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017. As a result of the community consultation, a few minor changes and additions were made to the consultation set agreed at the Martock Steering Group meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017<sup>14</sup>.

Natural Environment	
<i>Aims</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
<i>Protect and enhance our natural environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance sensitive areas and habitats</li> <li>• Further the creation of a network of wildlife corridors</li> <li>• Prevent harm from development</li> </ul>
<i>Improve flood resilience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support flood prevention measures</li> <li>• Prevent development on land liable to flooding or development that might increase flood risk elsewhere</li> </ul>
<i>Support responsible change in the countryside</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend and enhance public access to the countryside</li> <li>• Enable necessary farm diversification</li> <li>• Responsible stewardship of the countryside</li> <li>• Protect valued landscapes and views</li> </ul>

Built Environment and Heritage	
<i>Aims</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
<i>Respect the heritage and character of the area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance historic buildings and their settings</li> <li>• Protect historical and archaeological sites</li> <li>• Safeguard valuable green spaces within the settlements</li> <li>• Retain the sense of villages and rurality</li> </ul>
<i>Ensure new development has a positive impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the limits of development</li> <li>• Influence the design of new development</li> <li>• Support sustainable development practices</li> <li>• Ensure adequate infrastructure is in place</li> </ul>
<i>Support wider use of renewable energy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support small-scale renewable energy generation</li> <li>• Encourage low carbon development</li> </ul>

Housing	
<i>Aims</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
<i>Ensure housing meets local needs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a sustainable level of housing development</li> <li>• Ensure new housing development is suitably mixed and reflects local needs</li> <li>• Ensure housing offers realistic affordable options for local people</li> </ul>
<i>Encourage innovative housing solutions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support locally-based housing initiatives</li> <li>• Support self-build projects</li> <li>• Support energy-efficient housing design</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> <http://martockplan.org.uk/Planpages/Documents/ConsultationReport.pdf>

Local Economy	
<i>Aims</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
<i>Facilitate the growth of local employment opportunities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance existing business and commercial areas</li> <li>• Support a wide variety of new business development</li> <li>• Facilitate high-speed electronic communication</li> </ul>

Transport and Travel	
<i>Aims</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
<i>Reduce the impact of the motor vehicle</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase safe cycling and walking routes</li> <li>• Support public transport initiatives</li> <li>• Increase off-road parking opportunities</li> </ul>
<i>Improve safety and accessibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve pedestrian routes</li> <li>• Support traffic management initiatives</li> <li>• Improve accessibility to services and facilities</li> </ul>

Community Wellbeing	
<i>Aims</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
<i>Ensure community infrastructure meets local needs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect existing community facilities</li> <li>• Ensure community infrastructure is commensurate with changing needs and demands</li> <li>• Facilitate the local delivery of services</li> </ul>
<i>Encourage healthy leisure and recreation activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance existing sport recreational and cultural facilities</li> <li>• Support the provision of new facilities that meet local demands</li> <li>• Ensure the needs and demands of all age groups are considered</li> </ul>

## 7. Natural Environment

### Overview

- 7.1 Despite having a dense residential core, Martock Parish is predominantly rural in character with extensive areas of countryside. In terms of ‘landscape character’, the South Somerset Landscape Character Assessment, of 1993, determined the Parish comprises four distinct landscape character areas:
- A. Shallow hillsides North and North East of Martock
  - B. The Hurst Brook Vale
  - C. Bower Hinton Low Hills
  - D. Parrett Vale
- 7.2 Agricultural land in the Parish is mostly classified as grade 3b, with some 3a; several valley bottoms are grade 2. A feature of the Parish is the number of small farms, with many small land ownerships.
- 7.3 The four landscape character areas are delineated on Map 2 below, which also shows the key findings of a landscape sensitivity assessment published by South Somerset District Council in 2008. Its purpose was to assess the capacity of the fringe areas of Martock/Bower Hinton to accommodate new development in a landscape-sympathetic manner. The extent of land in the vicinity of the built-up area that was categorised as an area of high or moderate landscape sensitivity is notable. This assessment provides a valuable contribution in evaluating and minimising the environmental impact of development proposals.
- 7.4 Whilst the Parish has not internationally or nationally designated sites, it is an area of diverse wildlife habitats straddling, as it does, the edge of the wetlands associated with the Parrett vale to the west and the higher land to the east beset with a variety of habitats that have evolved from the traditional land use patterns such as ridge and furrow fields, old orchards, old droves with their ditches and hedgerows and remnants of ancient woodland. There are two designated ‘local wildlife sites’ in the Parish. There are other areas of the Parish that have been identified by local interest groups as being important wildlife areas, such as Coathay Common, Parrett riverside and Cartgate Nature Area – their ecological significance and value is still to be fully established.
- 7.5 The Parish is a very biodiverse area. The Somerset Environmental Records list many EU-protected species and many of conservation concern, both plants and animals. Examples of protected species are the nightingale, long-eared bat, yellowhammer, brown hairstreak butterfly and, in our streams, otter and water vole, all indicating a rich diversity of important habitats that the Parish is actively engaged in identifying, conserving, and developing.
- 7.6 The community generally enjoys good access to the countryside via an extensive footpath network, which is well mapped (see Map 4) and regularly maintained (stiles, signposting, etc). The village is surrounded by a network of 38 public footpaths, and recent consultation showed that these are well used. Unfortunately, we do not have many bridleways. Many of the popular paths are not public but are farm tracks. Some are permissive paths. Accessibility for the elderly and those requiring assisted mobility is not good and there is a shortage of seats along popular routes. Paths generally are inadequate for those with mobility problems. Cycleways do not exist and cycling in the village and along many of the lanes can be hazardous.
- 7.7 Flooding and the risk of flooding is a matter of major concern in the Parish. The flood risk situation around Martock village is complex. Within Martock village, there are pinch points that cannot cope at times of high rainfall.

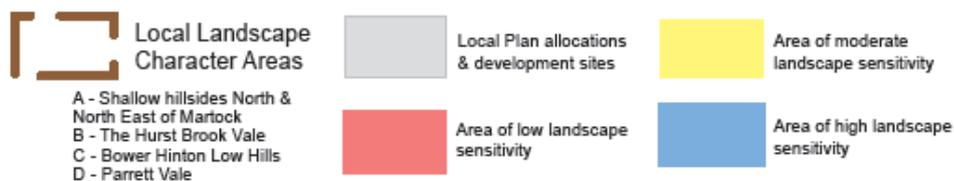
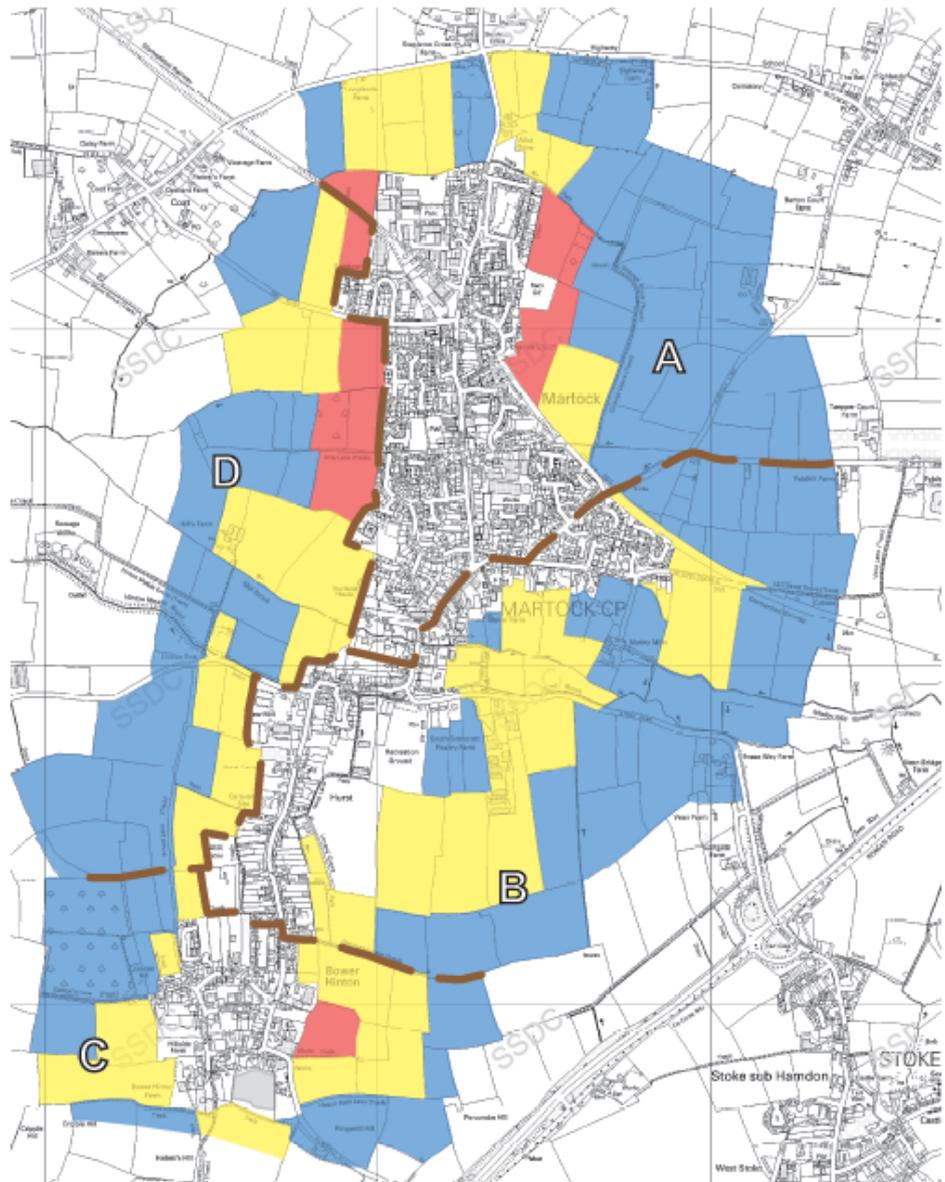
7.8 The Martock Emergency Plan<sup>15</sup> confirms that the following locations have been designated flooding hotspots in the Parish:

- Parrett Works (Carey's Mill Bridge area - River Parrett)
- Stoke Road from Frickers Bridge eastwards along road by Hurst Brook)
- Hurst Bow Bridge (B 3165 - Hurst Brook)
- Gawbridge Bow

Flash flooding caused by drainage from agricultural land is common and not easy to predict.

*Martock NP Map 2 – Landscape Sensitivity Assessment*

Taken from the Martock Peripheral Landscape Study<sup>16</sup>



<sup>15</sup> <https://martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/2341.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1814/peripheral-landscape-study\\_martock.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1814/peripheral-landscape-study_martock.pdf)

**Policy No. Mart1 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity**

**Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how the design has taken into account its potential impact on local wildlife habitats and species and realises opportunities for biodiversity net gain and enhancing important habitats.**

**Development proposals that would result in either the loss of or unacceptable harm to an existing area of natural habitat will not be supported unless proposed mitigation measures would result in an effective solution to ensure that the integrity of the habitat continues after the implementation of the development.**

**Due to the high levels of phosphates in the Somerset Levels and Moors, which represent a risk to the designated Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, Natural England advises that, within certain types of development area, proposals will need to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), proceeding to an Appropriate Assessment, before they are submitted as planning applications. Developments which will result in a net increase in population served by a wastewater system or increased nutrient loading from agriculture will be required to undertake an HRA at an early stage, and to put forward mitigation measures to offset any anticipated phosphate pollution.**

7.9 The NPPF (para.174) requires us to “*promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity*”. The South Somerset Local Plan places protection on the sites of regional and local biodiversity, nationally and internationally protected sites and sites of geological interest within the district.

7.10 Whilst there are not any internationally or nationally designated sites, the Parish is not without areas of ecological or historical interest, such as ridge and furrow fields, old orchards, ancient woodland and important hedgerows. The neighbourhood area also includes two designated ‘Local Wildlife Sites’ at **Bulsom Bridge Fields** and **Town Tree Farm**. Our own recent surveys<sup>17</sup> have identified a variety of natural habitats in the neighbourhood area of varying characteristics. These include:

- **Land alongside the river Parrett and its tributaries.** This land is regularly flooded and includes ponds, wetlands, riverine woodland, and semi-improved grassland. It has a significant population of the larger mammals such as deer and badger, and also breeding populations of otter, water vole and water shrew which are of conservation importance, as are some of the molluscs in the streams. Birds include nesting swans, mallard, Canada geese, moorhen and kingfisher.
- **The track of the old Somerset Railway.** This mixture of cuttings and embankments with its impoverished and well-drained soil has yielded a wide variety of flowering plants and scrub with associated bird and invertebrate species, some quite rare such as the nightingale.
- **The old footpaths and droves around the village.** Many of which were once used mainly for moving cattle. They are wide with drainage ditches on both sides and edged with hedges, which in many cases are now woodland avenues. These are important wildlife corridors.
- **Bat habitats.** Old buildings, trees and old hedgerows around the village have long been important bat habitats. Recent surveys noted 11 of the 18-native species in and around Martock, including all seven on the UK priority list.
- **Cartgate Nature Area.** A small area containing a pond, wetland, woodland and scrub including a section of the old railway. It is managed as a nature area jointly by the village and Highways England in a manner to attract rare species, particularly invertebrates.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Supportingdocs/EnvManual.pdf>

- 7.11 A detailed appraisal of the neighbourhood area's natural environment and its ecological networks, together with guidance for developers is set out in the Martock Environment Manual. Policy Mart1 requires developers to avoid causing damage or loss to local wildlife habitats whenever possible. It also encourages developers to consider how they can help increase local biodiversity through the use of appropriate streetlighting that will not adversely affect wildlife and the installation of robust swift bricks, bat and owl boxes, and incorporating native local species in landscaping schemes.
- 7.12 As Martock lies within the catchment area of the Somerset Levels and Moors, a designated SPA and Ramsar site, development proposals should respond to current guidelines from SSDC, Natural England and the Environment Agency on preventing pollution from phosphates. Developers should investigate the need for, and carry out a HRA/Appropriate Assessment, before submitting a planning application. Developments which will result in a net increase in population served by a wastewater system or increased nutrient loading from agriculture will be affected. SSDC is currently working with other Councils across the County to develop a Nutrient/Water Quality Strategy, so that water quality issues are fully understood, mitigation measures to offset phosphate pollution are devised, and mechanisms to deliver future housing growth and other development in a sustainable way, are set out. Natural England has provided updated advice to guide the approach to future development in the Ramsar site catchment area. The catchment area covers most of South Somerset District, including all of Martock Parish.

**Policy No. Mart2 Landscape and Wildlife Corridors**

**Important established Landscape and Wildlife Corridors will be protected from development, other than that required to maintain, enhance or interpret their landscape or wildlife purposes. Where appropriate, development proposals should demonstrate they take the opportunity to enhance and extend the network of Landscape and Wildlife Corridors as a means of mitigating development impact with a focus on increasing biodiversity, wildlife value and general amenity value of these corridors.**

**Where Landscape or Wildlife Corridors are disrupted as an unavoidable consequence of adjacent or nearby development, developers will be required to minimise the impact and to carry out remedial action in accordance with a scheme that shall be secured by way of planning condition or planning obligation as appropriate.**

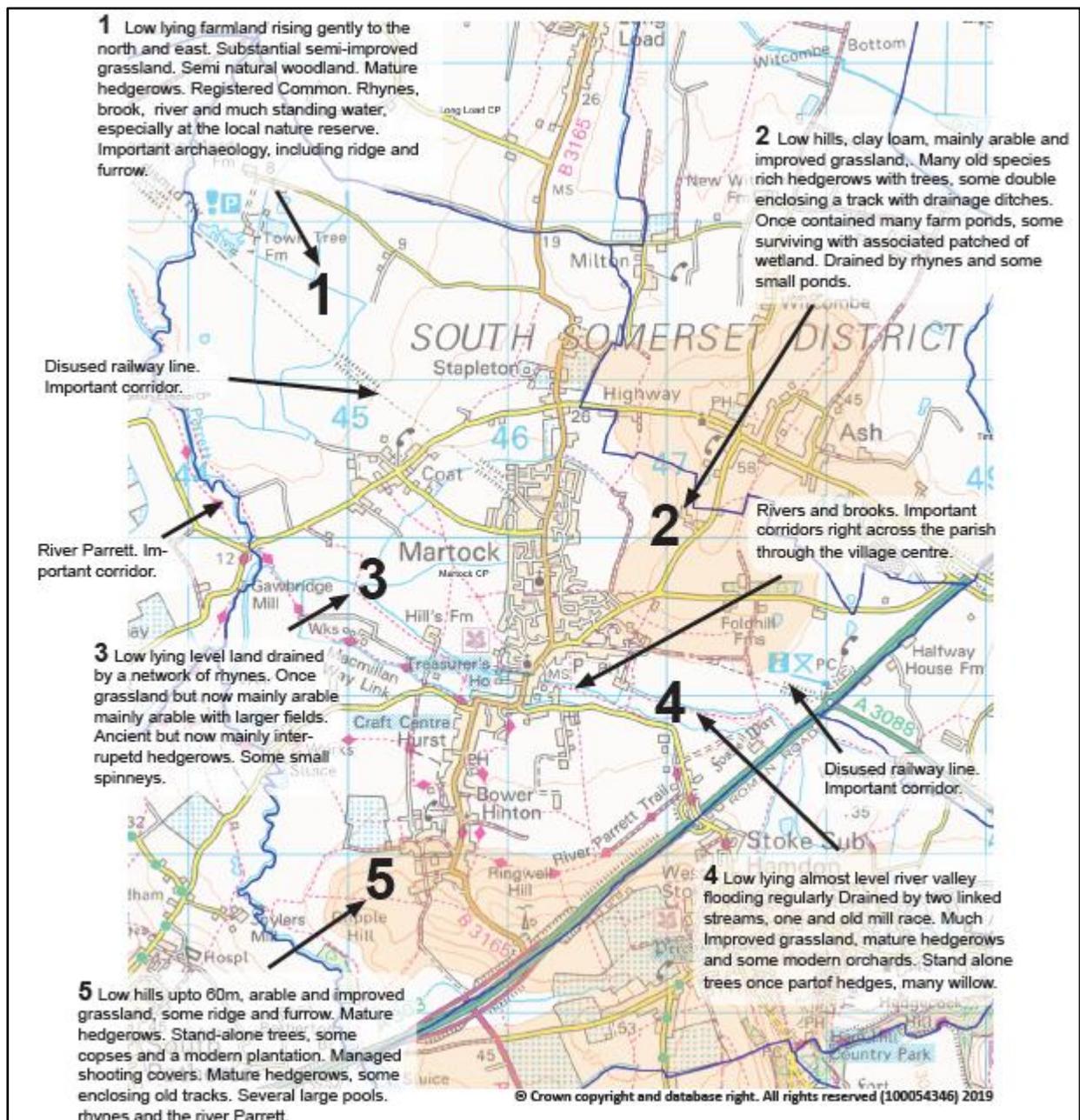
- 7.13 Wildlife corridors are habitats that also connect wildlife populations and facilitate their movement. There are many different kinds within the Parish, the more significant ones are the rivers and rhynes, the old droves, important hedgerows and the disused railway line. Those considered important are identified and analysed in the Martock Environment Manual<sup>18</sup>. The Map labelled 'Martock Biodiversity' from that document provides an overview of landscape and biodiversity and locates the important corridors.
- 7.14 The NPPF (para. 174) requires us to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible and contribute to stemming the overall decline in biodiversity by safeguarding *"components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including... wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them"*. The wildlife corridors of the Parish are part of an interlinked network of natural green spaces that stretches across the entire county and beyond; and described as *"the biodiversity equivalent of the national grid"* by the Somerset Biodiversity Strategy<sup>19</sup>. It states that *"the bedrock of the network should be the conservation and management of the remaining wildlife sites, with extensive habitat restoration and creation increasing the connections between them."*

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Supportingdocs/EnvManual.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> The Somerset Biodiversity Strategy 2008-2018  
<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/Data/District%20Executive/20081106/Agenda/8B.pdf%2006-11-2008.pdf>

- 7.15 The South Somerset Local Plan Policy EQ5 is aimed at ensuring the county’s green infrastructure network is protected and enhanced by new development. It does recognise “green corridor links and river corridor” as part of the wider network.
- 7.16 A coherent and resilient ecological network comprises “high quality sites, protected by buffer zones, and connected by wildlife corridors and smaller, but still wildlife-rich, stepping-stone sites”<sup>20</sup>. Policy Mart2 places emphasis on the established wildlife corridors of the Parish as identified in the Martock Environment Manual and shown on Map 3 of this Plan, which should be protected to allow species to move and ensure our ecosystem functions properly. Development proposals should avoid causing damage to these vital corridors and every opportunity should be taken within a new development to enhance the network and include ‘stepping stone’ sites.

Martock NP Map 3 – Landscape and Biodiversity (illustrative only)<sup>21</sup>



Nb. A larger-scale version of this map can be viewed in the Martock Environment Manual

<sup>20</sup> Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England’s Wildlife and Ecosystem Services, DEFRA, 2011 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Martock Biodiversity Map showing five different areas around the village and the two important corridors that bisect the parish, the disused railway line and the Hurst Brook valley.

**Proposals to improve the management of water courses and construct new defences to minimise flooding will generally be supported.**

**In improving flood defences, opportunities shall be taken to enhance biodiversity.**

- 7.17 There is only one river in the Parish which flows south to north, whereas ‘main river’, (Hurst Brook and Hinton Meads Brook), flows east to west and then into the River Parrett. There are numerous streams, brooks, rhynes and other water courses which impact on flooding in the Parish. Several areas of the Parish are very prone to flooding and flooding is becoming a more regular occurrence. Following major flood incidents in 2012 and over the winter of 2013/14, Martock has maintained an Emergency Plan<sup>22</sup> and a Flood Warden Management Scheme, which has authority to close roads when, in the opinion of the flood wardens, safety is a concern. The flood risk situation around the main settlement area is complex and worsened by an old, undocumented and unexamined drainage system. The Martock Flood Alleviation Scheme, which is maintained by the Environment Agency, was constructed in the 1970's to a 1 in 10 standard with the intention of protecting properties from flooding. The Scheme was designed to direct flood water on to the main route to/from the village and the A303 dual carriageway, with the potential danger and disruption to road users. The authorities have not notified of any critical drainage areas<sup>23</sup> in the Parish.
- 7.18 Martock has always suffered from periodic flooding and steps are continually being taken to reduce this risk. Climate change has, however, increased both the amount of rainfall and the frequency of heavy storms. In consequence the Parish has developed robust strategies for addressing the issue and minimising flood damage. Prevention and the reduction of flood risk is a critical aim, that has been recognised by the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy Mart3 is supportive in principle of all types of measures that will reduce flood risk, including the construction of new permanent flood defences. It is part of a comprehensive local strategy to reduce floods and the risk of flooding. Martock Parish Council will seek to ensure that existing flood prevention measures are adequately maintained by the respective authorities and landowners, including, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), penstocks, weirs, dams, trash screens etc., together with the required annual maintenance of all those water courses in areas which are susceptible to flooding. The Parish Council will maintain liaison with parishes in the upper reaches of the Martock rainfall catchment area, with a view to reducing the impact of flooding downstream, by introducing structures compatible with the Hills to Levels aims. Agricultural practices which increase the run-off from land and overload the local drainage network will be discouraged and landowners requested to follow accepted farming principles of land management which minimise the flood risk to the community.
- 7.19 All water courses provide shelter and feeding opportunities for a wide range of plants and animals. The Government advises that “*physical modification is one of the main reasons why many rivers do not support thriving wildlife. Engineering and other changes to natural river forms have damaged habitats, reducing populations of plants and animals and reducing their ability to cope with extreme low and high river flows*”<sup>24</sup>. Advice should be taken by those carrying out flood defence works, from bodies such as the Farmers Wildlife Action Group, (FWAG), Natural England, (NE), together with Somerset Wildlife Trust, on how they can avoid damaging habitats and include measures to improve and enhance local biodiversity, by working with nature not against it.
- 7.20 In the light of the new guidance from Natural England, regarding the concern of phosphate effluent new developments affecting the Somerset Levels and Moors, which is a Ramsar site, each development should now include a Habitats Regulations Assessment, carried out by a competent authority (e.g. the local planning authority), proceeding to an Appropriate Assessment. This has to be addressed prior to submission of a planning application; it will not be acceptable simply to impose a condition on a planning permission to address the issue.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/1623.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> as defined by the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2006

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-river-habitats-to-support-wildlife-during-low-flows>

**Where appropriate, development proposals shall demonstrate that they do not increase local flood risk, with particular regard to locations of known surface, fluvial and reservoir flooding, identified on up-to-date flood risk maps; or heighten flood risk further downstream.**

**Wherever practicable and appropriate, development proposals should incorporate a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) to minimise flood risk. Where sustainable drainage systems are introduced, a satisfactory management plan must be put in place for future maintenance of the system.**

- 7.21 Flooding and the risk of flooding is a matter of great concern to the parishioners of Martock, as it is for much of South Somerset. In facilitating good sustainable development, we have been keen to ensure that local planning policies:
- steer development to areas of lower flood risk as far as possible
  - promote the use SuDS
  - maximise the use of ‘natural’ SuDS features
  - promote water efficiency in new development
  - encourage measures such as tree planting, street trees, rain gardens and green roofs through new development (see Martock Design Statement)
- 7.22 The Parish has been building its data-base and understanding of the local ‘flood issues’ and the complex causes of floods in the area; and potential solutions. There is no panacea. The PPG advises that *“new development should only be considered appropriate in areas at risk of flooding if priority has been given to the use of sustainable drainage systems”*<sup>25</sup>.
- 7.23 Flooding has always been commonplace in the village and is likely to worsen in the future. All development on greenfield land and on brownfield land where the development will alter the existing drainage patterns should incorporate proposals such as a SuDS that will ensure that surface run-off is not increased by the proposal and where possible, decreased.
- 7.24 SuDS should be considered for all new developments and may be the answer in many locations. But their success is very dependent on soil type and permeability, which can vary seasonally and varies considerably throughout the area. For this reason, flood risk assessors should carry out on-site assessments of permeability rather than using online data which, for this area, is insufficiently well-defined. Any SuDS system needs to be designed with its specific location in mind and include an adequate management plan to ensure it remains functional and fit for purpose and takes account of seasonal and long-term climate change. The use of automatic mechanisms for releasing flood water from sustainable drainage retention ponds will not be supported as they tend to release water downstream at the moment when downstream flood risk is greatest. Policy Mart4 supports the use of a relevant and effective SuDS system wherever it is practicable to do so.
- 7.25 Most importantly, given that much of the area is at risk, all relevant development proposals need to demonstrate that they have considered drainage in the context of the identified local flood risk and included the necessary measures to avoid contributing to the flood risk. Development at or within close proximity of Flood Zones 3 or 2, or at areas at risk of flooding, should be avoided whenever possible, together with sites of 1 hectare or more, as advised by the PPG<sup>26</sup>, developers must undertake a site-specific flood risk assessment to accompany applications for planning permission (or prior approval for certain types of permitted development).
- 7.26 Martock Parish Council has produced the Martock Parish Flood Guide for Developers<sup>27</sup>, based on local knowledge and experience. We hope it will inform the development of efficient and effective sustainable drainage systems wherever possible. The Guide emphasises the need to ensure that a site-specific maintenance plan is considered from the outset and its preparation is part of the SuDS planning and design process. The Maintenance Plan should be in place by the time the development takes place.

<sup>25</sup> PPG Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 7-079-20150415

<sup>26</sup> PPG Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 7-001-20140306

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Supportingdocs/FloodGuide.pdf>

**Development proposals to improve accessibility and extend local footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths and help connect them to the wider networks will be supported.**

**The construction and appearance of new paths, tracks or links must be appropriate and sensitive to the character of the locality and enhance the green infrastructure network wherever possible.**

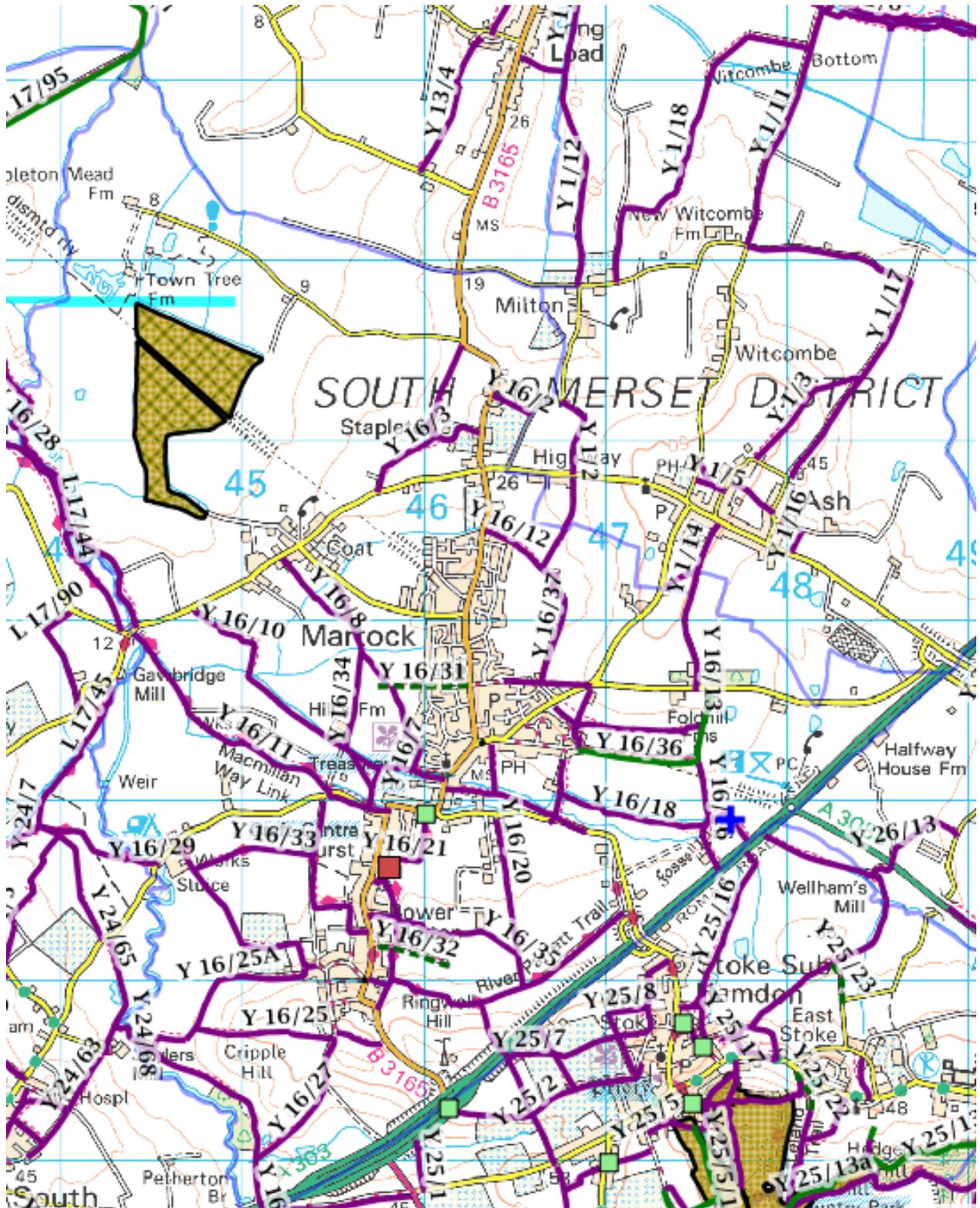
- 7.27 The community generally enjoys good access to the countryside via a ubiquitous and excellent footpath network, which is well mapped and regularly maintained (stiles, signposting, etc). It includes the long-distance footpath, the Parrett Trail. The recent M3CP<sup>28</sup> survey has identified the paths around the recreation ground as the most popular. Many popular paths are not public but are farm tracks; some are permissive paths. Unfortunately, we only have two bridleways. The NPPF (para. 98) makes plain that policies and decisions should “*protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users*”.
- 7.28 The current network of paths and bridleways in the countryside is shown on Map 4. They are all mapped and described in detail on the Martock Online website<sup>29</sup>. Many rights of way also serve as vital wildlife corridors through the agricultural landscape and give people contact with the natural world which contributes to their own wellbeing.
- 7.29 There are no off-road cycle routes in the Parish. A third of respondents to the Martock Community Plan Household Survey 2017<sup>30</sup> wanted to see some footpaths made into cycleways.
- 7.30 Access to the countryside for the elderly and those requiring assisted mobility is not good and there is a shortage of seats along popular routes. Paths generally are inadequate for those with mobility problems. Policy Mart5 supports measures to improve accessibility and extend the rights of way network in the countryside as long as it can be done without causing long-term harm to local biodiversity in contravention of Local Plan Policy EQ4 and policy Mart2 in the Neighbourhood Plan. If done sensitively improvements could also help extend the wildlife corridors and network of green infrastructure.
- 7.31 Public rights of way are an important part of our cultural heritage and enable young and old alike to explore the local countryside and experience its rich and diverse history, wildlife and landscape. They also an important means of helping people to escape the hustle and bustle of modern life, to get back to nature and keep physically and mentally fit. The Parish Council encourages local volunteers and groups who give up their time to help Somerset County Council look after the footpath network. The Parish Council would be a willing participant in a district-wide improvement strategy to ensure the public rights of way network continues to function properly.

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<sup>28</sup> M3CP = Martock Community Partnership

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/Pages/159/Parish-footpath-list-and-map.html>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/1528.pdf>



**Development in the countryside will be supported if:**

- i. it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture, farm diversification or outdoor recreation;**
- ii. it demonstrates a positive contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the countryside, its landscape and its biodiversity;**
- iii. it facilitates responsible use and enjoyment of the countryside by the public;**
- iv. it does not cause harm to publicly accessible open space, footpaths or bridleways;**
- v. it does not impact negatively on important views and vistas to/from settlements;**
- vi. it does not cause harm to scheduled ancient monuments and other sites of archaeological interest, including ridge and furrow; and**
- vii. it does not impact negatively on the best and most versatile agricultural land, or the integral character, beauty and tranquillity of the countryside.**

- 7.32 Development in the countryside, i.e. outside of the confines of the settlement areas, is restricted but will be supported if it is necessary for those purposes for which the countryside is normally used such as equestrian and farming-related activity and outdoor recreation. The NPPF (para. 170) says *“planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services”*.
- 7.33 Policy Mart6 recognises that development may be necessary to ensure that an existing farming business can continue to function, and the countryside is an appropriate location for some types of outdoor recreation activities. Community surveys have shown support for responsible use of the countryside for recreation purposes.
- 7.34 Policy Mart6 is supportive of development and uses that will not cause harm to the rural character of the area or result in the loss of countryside assets such as public rights of way, higher grade (2 and 3A) agricultural land, key biodiversity features such as wildlife corridors, rhynes and ponds, important hedges, unimproved grassland, and heritage features and buildings such as milestones, boundary stones, fingerposts and old railway features. Its purpose is to ensure that development that does take place is relevant and necessary and does as little harm to our countryside assets as possible.

**The conversion of existing agricultural buildings for business or business-related purposes will be supported where it is justified in the interests of ensuring the continued viability of the farming business and where the proposal can demonstrate that there would be:**

- i. no harmful impact upon the surrounding rural landscape;**
- ii. no unacceptable conflicts with agriculture and other land-based activities;**
- iii. no harmful impact on the local road network;**
- iv. no harmful impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents or businesses; and**
- v. no requirement for rebuilding or a disproportionate extension.**

**Converted business space permitted by this policy must remain as its approved use unless it has been actively marketed for two years and it can be demonstrated that no demand exists for its continuation for employment purposes. In such cases, the redundant space should revert to its former use.**

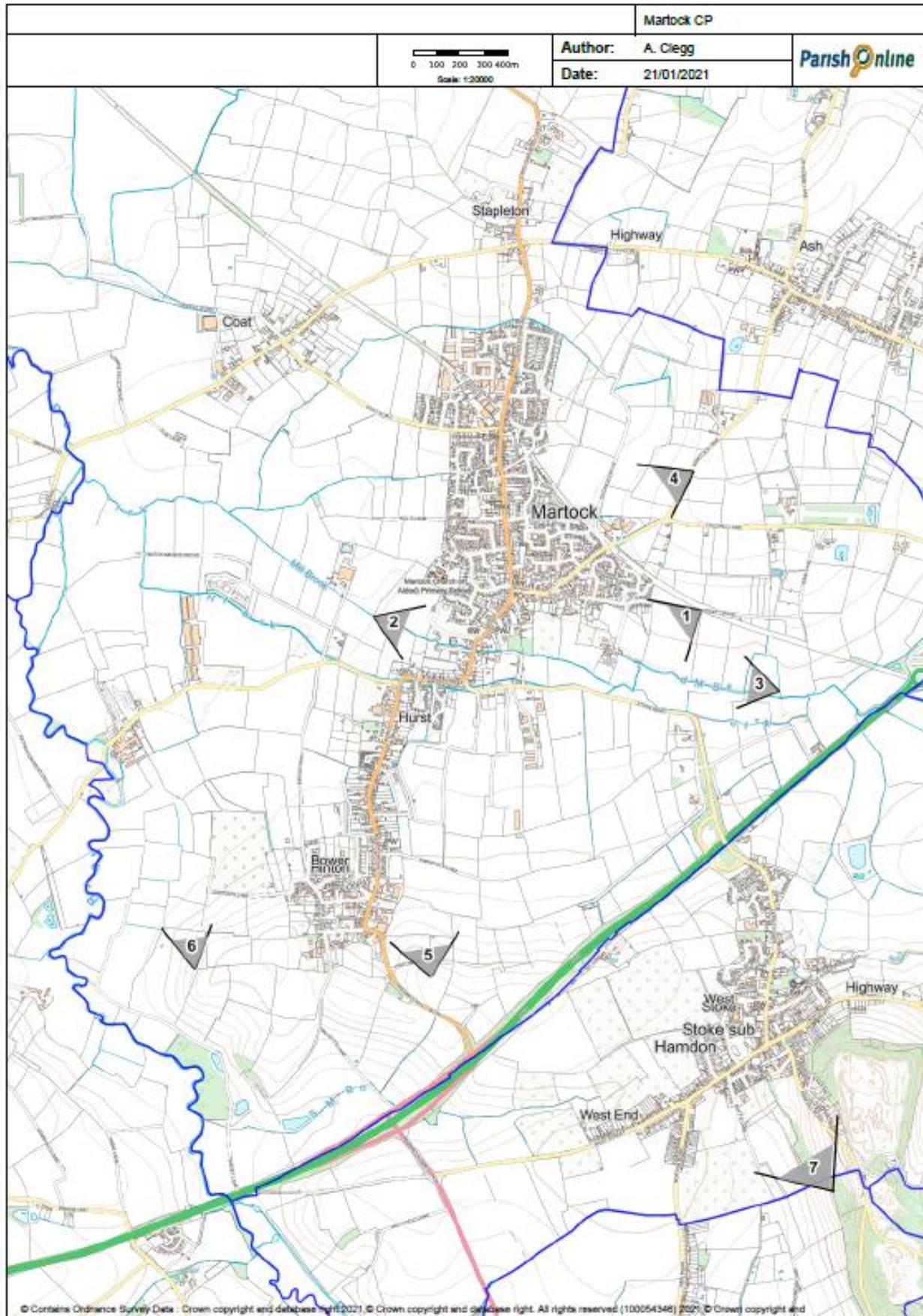
- 7.35 Farming is still important to the Parish. A feature of Martock is the number of small farms, made up of even smaller land ownerships, which has helped to describe the character of the local landscape. We wish to ensure that farming continues to prosper not least because it will help to maintain the landscape we so enjoy. The NPPF (para. 83) says *“planning policies and decisions should enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses”*.

- 7.36 Whilst we will continue to resist major development in the countryside, we are prepared to facilitate small-scale change in the interests of ensuring that farming in Martock Parish remains viable and the use of farmland and buildings is compatible with the local landscape.
- 7.37 Policy Mart7 facilitates the conversion of existing agricultural buildings for business or business-related purposes where diversification is in the interest of ensuring the continued viability of a farming business. Such conversions should not lead to the permanent change of use of agricultural buildings to dwellings or uses that are not compatible with their farm setting.

**Policy No. Mart8 Views and Vistas**

**Key panoramas, views and vistas should not be compromised. Development proposals that would detract from the visual qualities of the rural landscape and setting of the Parish will be resisted.**

- 7.38 The NPPF (para. 170) says “*planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by.... recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside*”. We regard the open views across the Parish as an important part of the area’s essential character and worthy of protection.
- 7.39 The settlement areas of the Parish are largely hidden on all sides even from most raised positions, because they are in a valley bottom and because views of all but the tallest (and often newest) buildings are often further obscured by the tops of mature trees. Conversely, looking out from the village towards the nearby higher land, the skyline is a natural one. To date, no buildings, other than the odd farm building, have significantly intruded on this space characterised by the gentler slope of the rising land that forms a natural rim around the village. On three sides, a second skyline is often formed by views of more distant and higher hills– Ham Hill, the Mendips and the Blackdowns. Views looking west, by contrast, emphasise the place of Martock on the edge of a different rural Somerset, the flat land of the Moors and Levels punctuated by the occasional characteristic mound such as Burrow Hill and its tree and the church towers of neighbouring and distant parishes. Map 5 overleaf indicates some of the most important views.
- 7.40 Development that takes place should not harm the rural character and appearance of the area. We may object to development proposals on the basis that they threaten to ruin a significant view or vista.
- 7.41 A detailed assessment of the quality and value of these, and other, views and vistas can be found in the Martock Environment Manual. We believe that the views should not be compromised by development and could, where appropriate, be used to improve the overall quality of new development that takes place. The Parish Council will use criteria based on this to evaluate the visual impact of a development proposal.
- 7.42 We expect designers and developers to be sensitive to the visual setting of Martock by referring to the Martock Environment Manual and, where development is likely to impinge on the rural character inherent in views of the uplands around the village, to take whatever mitigation measures are necessary and acceptable to the local planning authority to minimise their visual impact and intrusion.



For the Map Key see overleaf

Key Views (shown on Map 5):

1. South west from East Street Drove towards Hurst and Bower Hinton  
*Views towards Hallett's Hill of open countryside and higher ground around the village of Martock. The church tower; row of mature trees in front of the Blackdown Hills.*
2. East from Moated Manor Field towards Old Village centre  
*View of Grade 1 listed church with mature trees in foreground.*
3. West from the low land around and east of Madey Mill towards the Church  
*Flat grassland around Madey Mill (Grade II\* LB).*
4. South west from Foldhill across the village towards Burrow Hill  
*Spire of Wesleyan Chapel; wooded hills in middle distance beyond village; Blackdown Hills on distant horizon.*
5. North from Ringwell Hill towards east edge of Martock village  
*Whole village in green and rural setting; old railway line marked by row of trees and bushes; Mendip Hills on distant horizon.*
6. North from Cripple Hill towards Parrett Vale  
*Extensive flat area of rural landscape; Victorian Parrett Works chimney; Kingsbury Episcopi Church tower.*
7. West from Ham Hill, with Martock largely hidden in the foreground.  
*Panorama of lowlands from the Blackdowns to the Mendips; Martock Church tower*

## 8. Built Environment and Heritage

### Overview

- 8.1 The history of Martock as a settlement area can be traced back to before the Domesday Book. At that time Martock was recorded as being a royal estate, owned by Queen Edith until the Conquest. It is likely to have had a minster church, which administered to the population of the nine settlements in Martock Hundred (Martock, Hurst, Bower-Hinton, Milton, Witcombe, Ash, Coat, Stapleton and Load). The Church is first mentioned in 1156, when it was in the possession of the Abbey of Mont St. Michel. The 'Martock Bean'<sup>31</sup> is an important legacy of the medieval period.
- 8.2 The Martock area was at its zenith of prosperity in the 16th century, which has provided it with a wealth of fine buildings of the period, constructed to a high standard using local hamstone<sup>32</sup>. Three main factors have given rise to this substantial built heritage: freehold ownership, a good economy and good building stone. Together they have created a strong visual impression of quality that has lasted down the centuries. Small terraces of housing (mainly of three houses) were built in almost every street in the Parish, except Stapleton, to house the burgeoning workforce as industrialisation occurred.
- 8.3 When the industrial and agricultural revolutions came, a large population was already in place to 'feed' them. In the 18th century, the wealthiest parishioners were the big clothiers making cloth and linen from wool and flax. The soil, geology and climate in the Parish lent itself to growing flax and hemp. Twine, rope and canvas manufacture, together with gloves made from the skin of the sheep, became dominant industries in the 18th and 19th centuries. In addition, the railway, arriving in 1852, enabled two iron foundries to have a big impact. Today these two metal-working complexes, Sparrows and Parrett Works, make excellent and characterful small industrial estates.
- 8.4 1853 was a key year in the development of Martock village; the Yeovil to Taunton line finally opened. This triggered a 40-year epoch of industrial and domestic building. It led to some fine Victorian terraces, particularly in North Street. Up to seventy shops were trading in the village at one point. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century estate housing, developed at the north end of the village, reflected some of the ideals of the Arts and Craft and Garden City movement of the day with communal areas, gardens large enough for family subsistence and a simple cheap 'box with a roof' architectural style with internal plumbing. This was also reflected in many of the Council built houses throughout the village from the turn of the twentieth century, the earliest being built near the station in the first decades of the twentieth century.
- 8.5 Our built heritage is reflected in the 200 or so listed structures that exist in the Parish. Two are Grade I and six are Grade II\*. Included amongst the grade II listed buildings and structures are 29 monuments, 4 churches, chapels and halls, 2 schools and halls, 2 factories (Parrett Works), and about 156 houses. Martock Parish is not short of other buildings and structures of note, which do not have the protection that comes with a statutory listing/designation but contribute much to the special character of Martock's built environment. Also, very significant to the character of the built environment are the spaces between the buildings that provide the setting and allow the glimpses and views that parishioners appreciate.

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<sup>31</sup> The cultivar *Vicia Faba* 'Martock' is probably the last of the truly local varieties of field bean. It dates from the medieval period and was grown extensively in England in the Middle Ages. It was first mentioned in parish records as early as the 12th century. *"It is named after the village of Martock in Somerset, where it was grown in the 12th century, where it was dried and used for bean feasting"* (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew)

<sup>32</sup> 'Hamstone' is the name given to stone from Ham Hill, Somerset

- 8.6 Both Martock and Coat have designated Conservation Areas, identified by the local planning authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Conservation Areas were designated because of their special architectural or historic significance, and because it is desirable to preserve or enhance their character and/or appearance. The Martock Conservation Area was designated in March 1971. It covers the historic areas of Martock, Hurst and Bower Hinton. The Conservation Area at Coat was designated in 1981. A fresh Conservation Area appraisal exercise would be supported by the Parish Council to re-appraise the boundaries of the Conservation Areas and update the description of key features of architectural and historic importance. The extent of the Conservation Areas for Martock and Coat is shown on the South Somerset Local Plan Policies Map, and in the Martock Village Design Statement.
- 8.7 Growth and development in the second half of the twentieth century has resulted in over 500 new dwellings being added to the stock and business/employment areas being consolidated. The industrialised area around the station expanded, particularly when, post-Beeching<sup>33</sup>, redundant railway space became available. Nearby, private housing estates developed on both sides of North Street, close to the industry, where land was relatively flat and well-drained areas. During this period, neither estate plans nor the house styles reflected any of the elements of design and character that over the ages had come to give Martock village its particular sense of place.
- 8.8 The most recent housing estates have been built on more challenging sites in the flood plain or resulted from the redevelopment of the sites of formerly large houses or redundant factory sites. The central site of Paull's Sailcloth factory, adjacent to the shopping centre, which was turned into a relatively high-density housing estate at the turn of the millennium, was the first major development in the village in recent times where an attempt was made to reflect traditional Martock's architectural styles and building materials.
- 8.9 In common with all villages, Martock has seen a lot of infill and garden building in the last few decades generating a mix of housing from individual buildings to mews developments of up to 16 or so houses. The success of these in blending into the Martock environment has been very mixed.

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<sup>33</sup> The 'Beeching Cuts' were a reduction of route network and restructuring of the railways, according to a plan outlined in two reports written by Dr Richard Beeching in 1963 and 1965.

Policy No. Mart9	Heritage Assets
<p><b>Proposals for development within the Conservation Areas of Martock and Coat should preserve or enhance these areas' special architectural or historic interest and safeguard their settings. Development proposals will be supported that maintain or enhance the character and setting of listed buildings and structures.</b></p>	
<p><b>Development proposals that affect a listed heritage asset must demonstrate how they have taken account of the significance of the asset in protecting or enhancing the said building or structure for the appreciation of existing and future generations.</b></p>	
<p><b>Any renovations or alterations of buildings or structures identified as heritage assets requiring planning permission should be designed sensitively, and with careful regard to the heritage asset's historical and architectural interest and setting.</b></p>	
<p><b>Development proposals in the setting of a heritage asset should provide a clear assessment of the significance and impact of the proposal on the asset and its setting and justify the design approach taken.</b></p>	
<p><b>Development proposals should avoid any harmful effect on non-designated heritage buildings and features, where possible.</b></p>	

- 8.10 The listed buildings and structures in the Parish are afforded statutory protection by way of listed building consent, which is required for all works of demolition, alteration or extension to a listed building that affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. They are also subject to Local Plan Policy EQ3, which is designed to safeguard a heritage asset.
- 8.11 There are many buildings and structures in the Parish that we regard as having a local historic or heritage value that are not listed by Historic England. Policy Mart9 is intended to recognise both statutory and non-statutory heritage assets of the Parish and ensure that they are provided with an appropriate level of protection which reflects their status.
- 8.12 The NPPF (para. 184) says we should recognise that heritage assets are *“assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations”*. We should *“set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats”* (NPPF para. 185). The area is steeped in history, considerable archaeology and many buildings of note representing the various epochs of development and growth. A recent audit of ‘non-designated’ heritage assets, which contribute to Martock’s character identified industrial premises, a range of dwelling types, gateways and railings, bridges and walls, early drainage and street furniture as potential entries on a locally approved schedule of local heritage value.
- 8.13 The Local Plan offers *“support for communities to identify locally significant historic buildings and in their preparation of neighbourhood plans”*. The Parish Council intends to establish and maintain a schedule of local heritage value (not designated heritage assets). It is hoped that buildings and structures on the ‘Martock Schedule of Local Heritage Value’ will be included on the South Somerset List of Local Heritage Assets once it has been created.
- 8.14 In accordance with the NPPF (paras. 195-197) consideration of a development proposal should take account of the significance of the heritage asset and apply a balanced judgment regarding the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset and the value placed on it by the community.
- 8.15 The Conservation Area Appraisal and the Martock Design Statement provide important guidance on the architectural and historic significance of the area’s buildings and spaces and how they should be regarded.

The areas listed below and identified on Maps 6a and 6b are designated as Local Green Spaces and will be protected from development due to their particular local significance and community value:

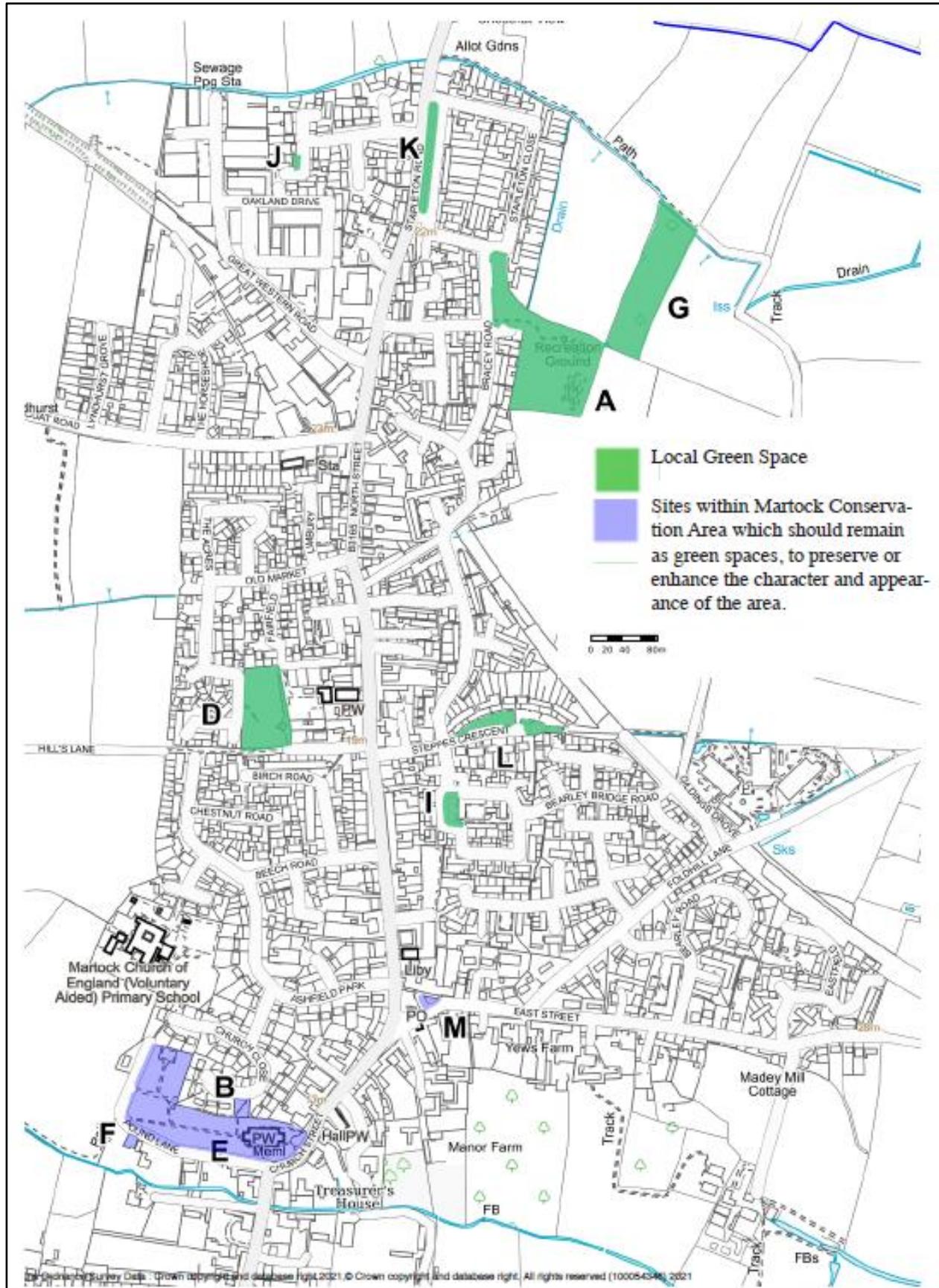
- A. Bracey Road Recreation Area
- C. Higher Orchard
- D. Hills Lane Park
- G. Old Orchard, adj. Bracey Road Rec.
- I. Paulls Close/Vincent Way
- J. Play Park, Lavers Oak
- K. Stapleton Road/Stapleton Close
- L. Steppes Crescent Green

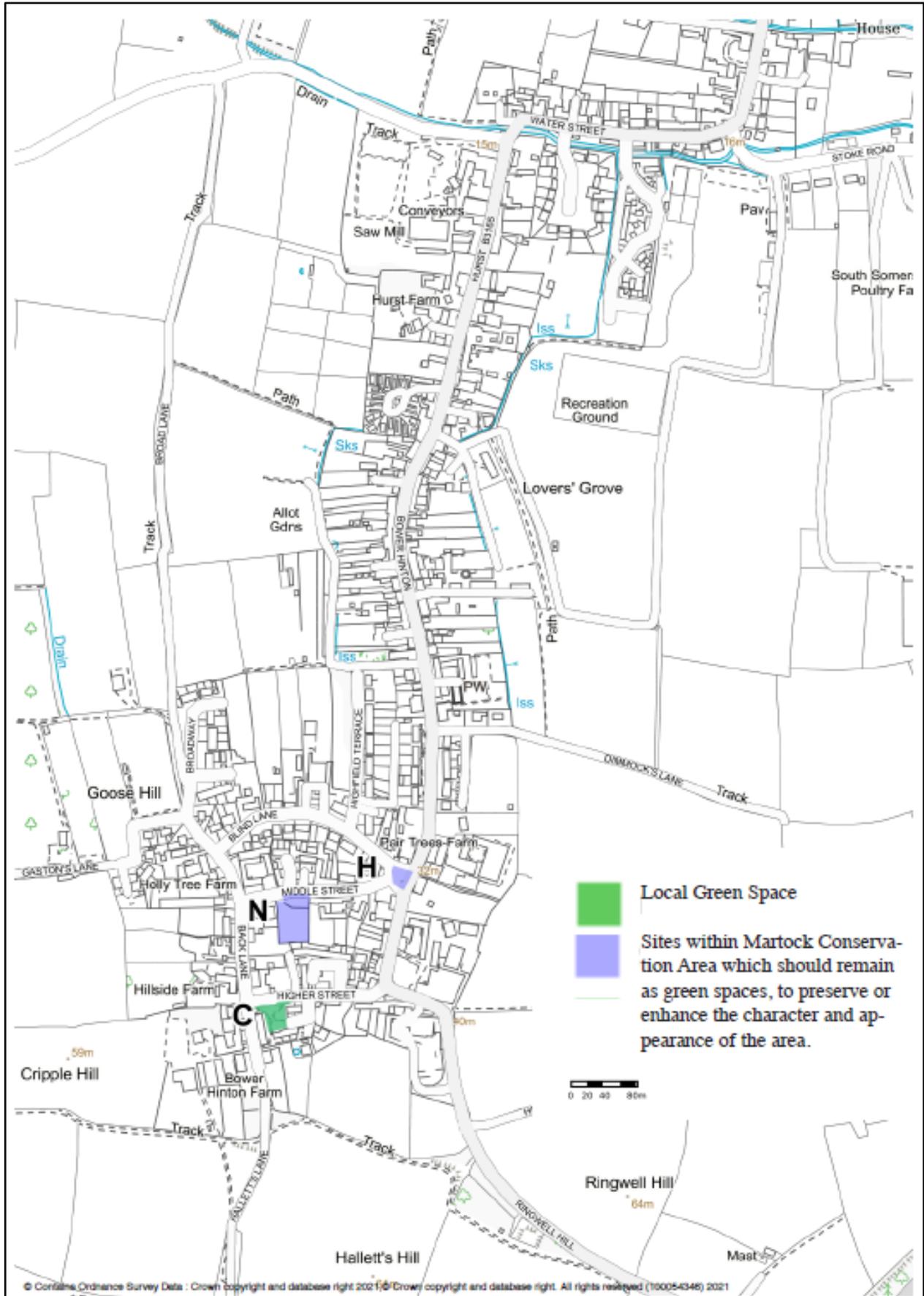
Development proposals which lead to the loss of, damage to or adverse impact on these local green spaces will not be supported.

- 8.16 An appraisal of local play areas, parks and amenity spaces was carried out by a task group on behalf of the Parish Council. It took a view on their role, use and value to the local community and their eligibility to be designated as 'local green space'. The conclusions from this assessment are reflected in the list of local green spaces in Policy Mart10 and identified on Maps 6a and 6b.
- 8.17 The NPPF (para. 99) enables us to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to the community. We are pleased to recognise that the Parish has several small green areas that contribute significantly to the appearance and character of the local area and provide for a range of informal community leisure activities of the local population, not least providing somewhere safe for young children to play, as many of them do. Martock Parish Council will be exploring how to reinforce their value as part of a network of green infrastructure throughout the town.
- 8.18 The areas identified in policy Mart10 meet the criteria of the NPPF (para. 100) which enables them to be designated as 'local green space'. These criteria are:
- *where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
  - *where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
  - *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*
- 8.19 Each designated site has been subject to an assessment to establish whether it meets the criteria of the NPPF. This assessment can be viewed on the website<sup>34</sup>. In summary:
- 8.20 **Bracey Road Recreation Area** (site A) is the location of a popular play area for the young people of the Parish. It includes a BMX track. The formal recreation area is one of only three 'parks' in the area and serves the varied recreation needs of the nearby residential area. The area designated as Local Green Space includes the amenity area that provides entrance to the Recreation Ground. It is considered an integral part of the community's green space in this locality and a valuable and safe play area for younger children.
- 8.21 **Higher Orchard** (site C) is a grassed and well-maintained amenity space with mature trees that provides a green setting for the nearby retirement homes. It is being protected for its amenity value.

<sup>34</sup> See more information and 'Local Green Space Assessment Report' at <http://martockplan.org.uk/Environment/GreenSpaces.html>

- 8.22 **Hills Lane Park** (site D) is another local park that provides for a range of informal recreation activities for the residents of the area. It has a range of young children’s play equipment. It is being protected for its recreation value.
- 8.23 **Old Orchard, adj. Bracey Road Rec’** (site G) is a tranquil space, in contrast to the adjoining Recreation Ground, which is used by the community for quiet leisure activities. It has significant wildlife value.
- 8.24 **Pauls Close/Vincent Way** (site I) is a newly created garden area at the heart of a new development where several of the dwellings do not have their own private garden. It includes a lawn and planted with trees. It is being protected for its amenity value.
- 8.25 **Play Park, Lavers Oak** (site J) is a well maintained and well-used children’s play area with planting in middle of residential area, which provides a safe communal location for young families and children to meet. It is being protected for its recreation value.
- 8.26 **Stapleton Road/Stapleton Close** (site K) is a wide strip of boundary hedging and mature trees that forms a visual barrier between the main road and the residential area. It has the effect of bringing the countryside into the village from the north and helps form part of the settlement areas green infrastructure. It is being protected for its amenity value.
- 8.27 **Steppes Crescent Green** (site L) is a green just south of Steppes Crescent. It was created as a public space when the nearby houses were built in the early 1920’s by Yeovil Rural District Council as ‘Homes for Heroes’. An attractive area, it is integral to the design of the crescent, which is sufficiently fine to get a specific mention by name in Pevsner’s Somerset volume of ‘Buildings of England’. Despite some loss to provide necessary parking spaces, it is still a substantial green area that provides local amenity and is used for informal recreation. It is maintained by the Parish Council.
- 8.28 The Martock Conservation Area includes a number of green spaces which meet the criteria in the NPPF for local green spaces but have not been defined as such because of their existing status. The following areas should be preserved or enhanced, and their green character conserved:
- 8.29 **Church Close Amenity Area** (site B) with mature trees adds significantly to the setting of the new residential development. It provides a safe pedestrian route to the Church and churchyard.
- 8.30 **Martock Churchyard** (site E) is an important green space at the heart of the village it provides an accessible and tranquil amenity space for public enjoyment. It also provides an important green setting for the Church and other historic buildings in the vicinity and serves as a transition area between town and country.
- 8.31 **Old Methodist Churchyard** (site F) is a historic site that is now a wildlife garden maintained by a group of local volunteers. It provides a tranquil and attractive green environment and enhances the setting of the Parish Church. It is being protected for its amenity and historic value.
- 8.32 **Pair Trees** (site H) is a long-established amenity space with mature trees that is much appreciated by residents for its amenity value.
- 8.33 **The Village Green** (site M) is a small pocket park that provides a popular refuge and waiting area in the centre of the village. It is being protected for its amenity and recreation value.
- 8.34 **Middle Street Field** (site N) is considered by the community to be a valuable open green space adjacent to Bower Hinton Manor, a Grade II Listed Building. It is also within the Martock and Bower Hinton Conservation Area. Development here has been refused previously, as recently as 2013, because of the harm it would cause to the setting of the listed buildings and character and appearance of the conservation area. (Note, for clarification, site N does not include the gateway and parking area to the east of the field belonging to 123 Middle Street.)





Development proposals should, where appropriate, provide an assessment of the character of the site and its context (including landscape character and relationship to heritage assets) and show how the development fits in with these specific characteristics.

Development proposals within the confines of existing settlement areas will usually be supported provided they:

- i. are of a scale, massing, density and design in keeping with the local character of neighbouring buildings;
- ii. have access and parking arrangements that do not result in an unacceptable impact on road and pedestrian safety;
- iii. do not have an adverse effect on residential amenity;
- iv. will not cause nuisance to neighbouring uses; and
- v. will not have any other unacceptable environmental impact.

Wherever appropriate, development proposals should be designed in accordance with the guidance of the Martock Design Statement.

Development proposals should be of a high-quality design which:

- vi. uses locally appropriate materials and colours;
- vii. complements, and enhances where appropriate, existing development in the vicinity;
- viii. relates to the existing character of the locality; and
- ix. provides an appropriate level of landscaping, which complements and enhances the character of the local area.

- 8.35 Policy Mart11 recognises that development proposals requiring planning permission will come forward for additions, alterations, new building and redevelopment within each of the villages and hamlets in the Parish.
- 8.36 There is no doubting the unique character of Martock village “*a village of golden glowing stone*”<sup>35</sup> but, having a distinct character and much charm also applies to all the other settlements of the area. Many parishioners appreciate the beauty, architecture, diversity and history of the area, as was highlighted by the Martock Community Plan Household Survey 2017.
- 8.37 The NPPF (para. 124) tells us that “*good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*”. We expect very high standards of design for new development, but the community feels it has often been let down by the development industry. Policy Mart11 requires new development to be sympathetic and complementary to its location and neighbours rather than harmful. To guide developers the Martock Design Statement<sup>36</sup> has been prepared by a task group of parishioners, on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 8.38 The purpose of the Design Statement is to guide developers, in the interests of sustainable development, to make sure that new development respects the distinctive visual character of its location and the area generally. It is not about preventing development nor preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. The Martock Design Statement considers the detailed design references, materials, finishes, street scenes, and landscapes that collectively define the Martock sense of place and how these may be reflected in new developments.
- 8.39 Development proposals should ensure that they will preserve or enhance the architectural and historic character of the designated conservation areas. The Parish’s conservation areas would benefit from a fresh appraisal. Once completed we would expect the revised appraisal documents to provide an influential source of guidance and control to development within or adjacent to the conservation areas.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.picturesofengland.com/England/Somerset/Martock>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Supportingdocs/VDS.pdf>

**Development should be phased in tandem with the timely provision of infrastructure to help support sustainable growth. Proposals for new development that cannot demonstrate adequate measures to deliver appropriate infrastructure provision to offset its impacts will not be supported.**

- 8.40 *“The growth in population will be matched with growth in the economy in conjunction with the infrastructure provision needed to make this happen”* - says the Vision Statement<sup>37</sup> of the adopted Local Plan for South Somerset. A major concern to the local community is the capacity of local infrastructure (transport, water supply, wastewater and its treatment, energy (including heat), telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education, flood risk etc) to cope with growth. Infrastructure capacity is a significant limiting factor that needs addressing in the context of new development so not only can it cope, but it does not lead to any deterioration in the quality of life we currently enjoy.
- 8.41 The Somerset Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) in 2016<sup>38</sup> identifies the key strategic issues for Martock as being:
- flood risk and drainage, particularly where the river travels through the settlement
  - utilities - short term issues associated with a lack of electricity capacity
  - open space and community facilities - new housing will generate a need for additional open space and outdoor play space, sports, community and cultural facilities
- The IDP does not indicate any specific concerns about education and healthcare locally.
- 8.42 According to the IDP, delivery of this infrastructure will be dependent on securing contributions from development (where viable), along with obtaining other funding streams. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) took effect in South Somerset in 2017. It is used alongside funds from s106 obligations to provide infrastructure and mitigate any harm arising from developments. South Somerset District Council will use receipts collected via CIL to fund infrastructure. This need not be directly linked to the development from which CIL money has been collected. Once the Neighbourhood Plan has been made, however, Martock Parish will receive 25% of the receipts collected within its area for expenditure on infrastructure which the Parish Council considers necessary. Policy Mart12 requires developers to work with the local planning authority to ensure that the infrastructure needs, and the consequences of a development proposal are fully recognised. The infrastructure requirements to serve the development should be delivered without having a negative impact on the capacity and quality of infrastructure elsewhere in the Parish. Visual impact is also an important consideration so as not to be intrusive or harm the character of the location. The design of infrastructure should be informed by the Martock Design Statement.
- 8.43 Concern over the capacity of existing community infrastructure to cope with growth and further development has been expressed by several people during consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan. It is often a major discussion topic at the regular neighbourhood planning consultations carried out at the monthly Martock Farmers’ Market. Representations made by the Parish Council and other community interests in 2019 against major planning applications highlighted local concerns about the already over-subscribed primary school, the pressure being experienced by Martock Surgery and the lack of local job opportunities. These must be addressed in advance of a significant increase in the population to ensure that not only are new residents adequately provided for, but existing parishioners are not further disadvantaged.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council/your-council-plan-and-strategies/planning-policy/local-plan/>

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1214/j-plan\\_pol-web-site-2018-cil-idp\\_2015\\_16\\_part\\_2\\_issue.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1214/j-plan_pol-web-site-2018-cil-idp_2015_16_part_2_issue.pdf)

The Settlement Area Boundary of Bower Hinton/Martock is shown on Map 7.

- A. Development proposals within the Settlement Area Boundary will be supported provided that the proposal:**
- i. makes an appropriate use of a brownfield site; or**
  - ii. is infill and surrounded by existing development; and**
  - iii. in other ways complies with the policies in the development plan.**
- B. The inappropriate development of residential gardens, where such development would harm local character, will not be supported.**
- C. Development on land adjoining the Settlement Area Boundary north of Coat Road and south of Hills Lane, as shown on Map 7, which meets local housing needs, achieves good design standards, does not compromise the landscape character and setting of Martock/Bower Hinton and has no adverse impact on the setting of the Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, will be supported; and**
- D. Small-scale development on land adjoining the Settlement Area Boundary will be supported if:**
- i. there is a demonstrable local need for the development; and**
  - ii. it forms a logical extension to the existing built-up area; and**
  - iii. it is appropriate to a village setting in terms of scale, height and massing; and**
  - iv. it does not constitute ribbon development or lead to the coalescence of Martock/Bower Hinton with other settlements; and**
  - v. it does not compromise the special landscape character and setting of Martock/Bower Hinton; and**
  - vi. there is no adverse impact on the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings; and**
  - vii. in other ways it complies with policies in the development plan.**

- 8.44 The further growth of Martock/Bower Hinton should be a gradual, incremental process to ensure the unique character of the area is safeguarded, and we remain a sustainable settlement and community. This overall approach to development is consistent with the Local Plan's settlement strategy for rural centres<sup>39</sup>.
- 8.45 We have concluded that the use of a settlement area boundary as a policy device is appropriate to exercise some control on growth and to protect local countryside and the extensive areas of moderate to high landscape sensitivity in the area. Map 7 shows the settlement area boundary for Martock/Bower Hinton as redefined by a recent review exercise<sup>40</sup>. The boundary is a policy device, consistent with the NPPF, to focus and facilitate growth on the sustainable settlement area of Martock/Bower Hinton, thus ensure housing and other development is located "*where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities*" (NPPF para. 78). Policy Mart13 supports development within the settlement area boundary, provided it is appropriate i.e. complies with policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, the Local Plan and, wherever necessary, takes full account of the latest Conservation Area Management Plan.
- 8.46 The Local Plan requires the Parish of Martock to provide for a share of the district's strategic growth in housing and employment land. Regarding new housing, the Local Plan sets a housing requirement figure of 230 dwellings over the plan period (2006 – 2028). The Neighbourhood Plan must accommodate this scale of growth as a minimum.

<sup>39</sup> As a 'Rural Centre', "*Development in smaller but still sizeable settlements is likely to be less sustainable and so should be geared to meet local needs and address affordable housing issues. Small scale economic activity is not considered out of keeping in these settlements in order to: support economic activity that is appropriate to the scale of the settlement; extend the range of services to better meet the needs of the settlement and immediate surrounds; and meet identified local needs.*" Para. 5.21, South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028)

<sup>40</sup> <http://martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Housing/Settlement%20boundary%20criteria.pdf>

- 8.47 Community consultation has established that there is little community support for large-scale development or growth in excess of the Local Plan target. It is considered judicious however to allow for a modest excess, above the strategic target, that will help satisfy both needs and demands and avoid the housing market over-heating through a severe constraint on supply.
- 8.48 The Local Plan is undergoing a review and taking a longer-term perspective, up to 2036. We are informed by “*emerging work*” on the Local Plan Review that 330 new dwellings for Martock/Bower Hinton for the period 2016-2036<sup>41</sup> would be an acceptable contribution to the overall district target. At 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018, there had been 45 completions between 2016 and 2018 and there were 75 commitments (in planning approvals). “*The residual housing requirement is 210 dwellings.... this would equate to 10.5 (11) new homes per year over the 20-year LPR period*”<sup>42</sup>. This rate does not conflict with our preferred development strategy of gradual and incremental growth. The ‘Local Plan Review Preferred Options’ document proposes two sites for new housing development outside the Settlement Area Boundary west of Martock/Bower Hinton. These are illustrated on Map 7 as potential sites for new housing development though they should not be regarded as allocations until the new Local Plan has confirmed their status and been adopted.
- 8.49 The community’s position, established through local consultation, is that development should focus on the defined settlement area as described on Map 7. This is in accordance with the Local Plan Policy SS1 that recognises Martock/Bower Hinton as a Rural Centre “*where provision for development will be made that meets local housing need, extends local services and supports economic activity appropriate to the scale of the settlement*”. Accordingly, we shall support appropriate development within the settlement area boundary.
- 8.50 Our judgement, based on recent land availability assessments<sup>43</sup> and our own local ‘call for sites’, is that land outside the settlement area boundary may also be needed to provide additional housing within the next ten years to satisfy the on-going strategic requirements of the Local Plan. The community does not favour encouraging development at other rural settlements in the area. In accordance with Local Plan Policy SS2 development in rural settlements (not market towns or rural centres) should be strictly controlled and limited and “*proposals should be consistent with relevant community-led plans and should generally have the support of the local community*”.
- 8.51 To ensure a continued supply of housing land throughout the plan period, Policy Mart13 provides conditional support for development contiguous with the settlement area boundary. To be consistent with our strategy of gradual and incremental growth, any such development proposal should either seek to align with Policies MB1 and MB3 of the emerging Local Plan Review and be located on the sites North of Coat Road or South of Hills Lane or be small in scale and constitute a logical extension of the current built-up area. All proposed development contiguous with the settlement boundary should have a positive effect on the character of the local area. Land that is recognised for its moderate or high landscape sensitivity should be avoided. The Martock Peripheral Landscape Assessment of 2008<sup>44</sup> (see Map 2) provides a useful guide, which should be supplemented by an up-to-date assessment of landscape sensitivity for individual applications whenever appropriate.
- 8.52 Policy Mart13 does not set a numeric limit on the scale of any particular housing scheme as this may be seen as being overly prescriptive and potentially preventing otherwise acceptable development and the meeting of identifiable local housing needs. Small scale should be seen in general terms as applying to a scheme that is modest and limited in scope or extent. In the absence of any other national or local policy-based definition it is expected that the scale of development will be judged having regard to

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<sup>41</sup> Para. 8.41, ‘Preferred Options Consultation’ Report, (Reg. 18), South Somerset Local Plan Review 2016-2036

<sup>42</sup> Email letter from Specialist – Strategic Planning, South Somerset DC, Oct 2018

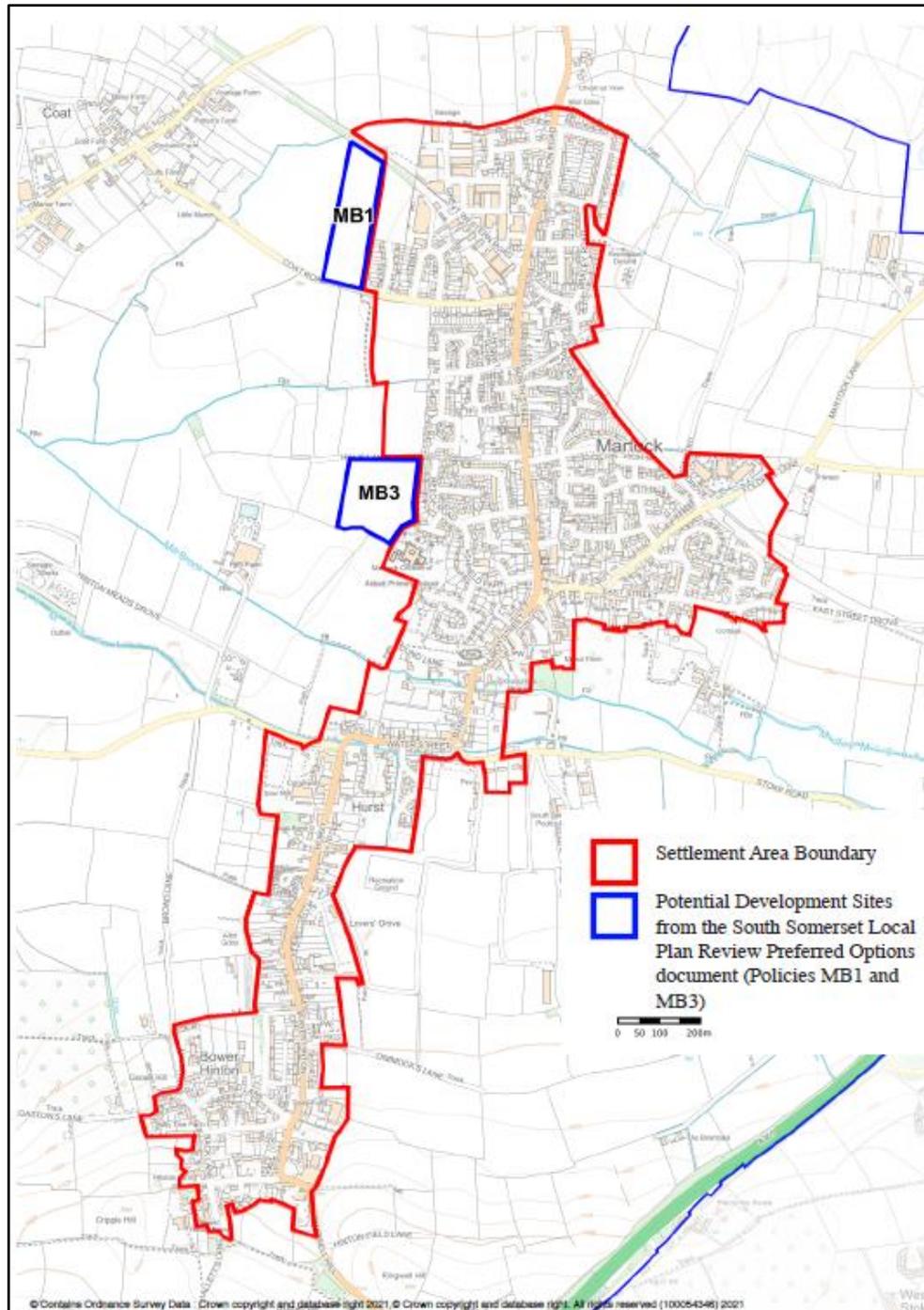
<sup>43</sup> Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Report, South Somerset District Council, Feb 2017

[https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1965/helaa\\_report\\_2018\\_final.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1965/helaa_report_2018_final.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1814/peripheral-landscape-study\\_martock.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1814/peripheral-landscape-study_martock.pdf)

Government criteria established for differentiating between ‘major’ and ‘minor’ developments<sup>45</sup>. Schemes larger than nine dwellings are classed as ‘major’ development. Such schemes should not normally be regarded as small scale for the purpose of interpreting policy Mart13. A development of 10 or more dwellings will only be acceptable if the number of dwellings is justified primarily by locally identified need and in the interests of achieving a viable and coherent scheme. All major development proposals should demonstrate how the infrastructure needs of the development will be adequately addressed.

*Martock NP Map 7 – Martock/Bower Hinton Settlement Area Boundary*



8.53 The definition of the settlement area as a focus for development, is also intended to ensure that future development does not encroach on land essential to maintain a separation with neighbouring settlements such as Stapleton and Coat and Ash.

<sup>45</sup> Government guidance for residential development defines ‘minor’ development as one where the number of dwellings to be constructed is between 1 and 9 inclusive. Where the number of dwellings to be constructed is not given in the application, a site area of less than 0.5 hectares should be used as the definition of a minor development.

To ensure that Coat and Stapleton maintain their separate identity, setting in the landscape and local built character and extent, a local green gap (as indicated on Map 8) will be maintained to prevent coalescence.

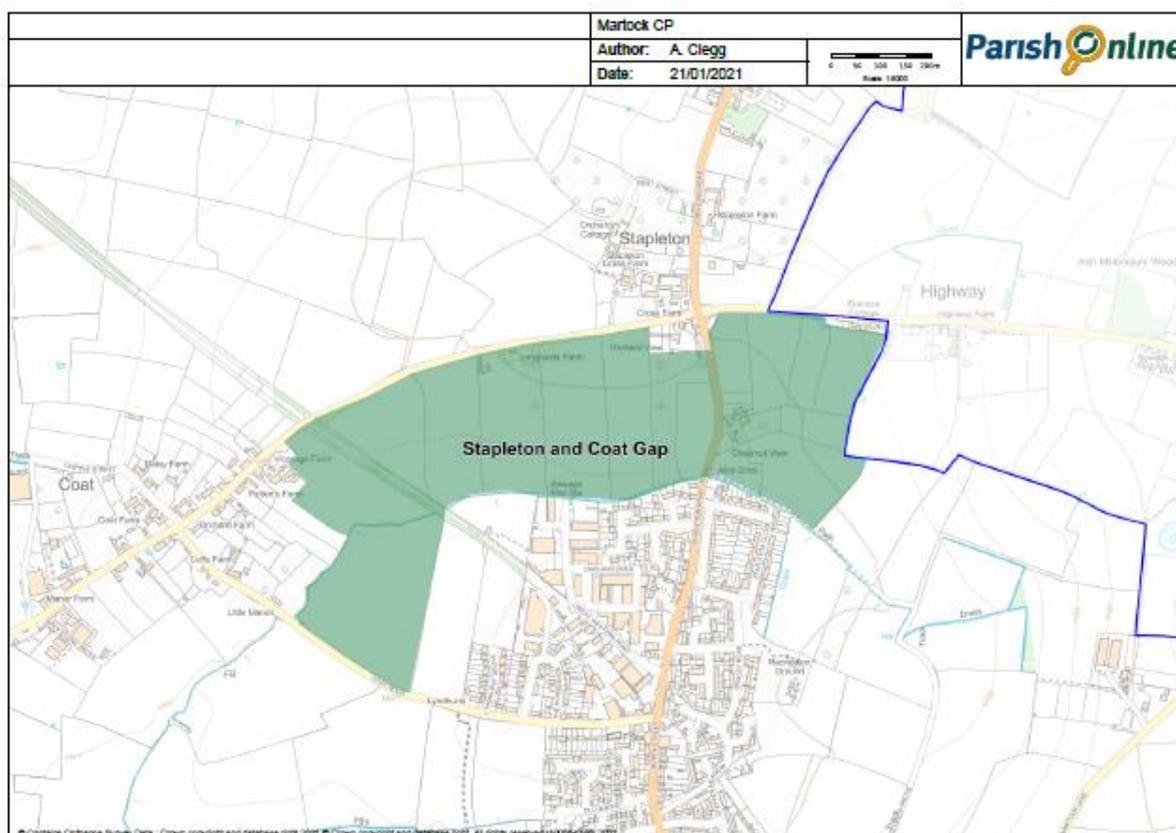
Proposals for development within the local green gap will only be supported where they:

- i. are for measures to prevent flooding; or,
- ii. propose improvements to access to the countryside; or,
- iii. are for essential agricultural uses; and,
- iv. do not compromise the visual openness and landscape character of the gap; and,
- v. do not compromise the character or setting of important local heritage assets.

8.54 We have indicated the importance of the local countryside and the need to keep the sprawl of settlements to a minimum by defining a Settlement Area boundary policy that places focus on new development being in Martock/Bower Hinton and on its built edge. However, we are keen to reinforce this principle with a specific policy that seeks to maintain an adequate buffer or ‘local green gap’ between both Coat and Stapleton and Martock/Bower Hinton, specifically to prevent coalescence. The principle of a buffer to prevent coalescence or urban sprawl and protect the integrity of the settlements was raised in comments received during consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan. The value in preventing coalescence is recognised by the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment<sup>46</sup>, which identifies that the open countryside which provides the setting of Martock and other rural settlements is a key characteristic of the area and very sensitive to change. The whole of the local gap area shown on Map 8 is ‘rated’ as high or moderate landscape sensitivity.

8.55 Proposals in the local gap area will only be supported for uses or development that are essential because of their location or need on the site proposed. Notwithstanding this, proposals that qualify for development in these local green gaps must not take place at the expense of the quality of the landscape or setting. Policy Mart14 seeks to ensure this is taken fully into account.

*Martock NP Map 8 – Stapleton and Coat Local Gap*



<sup>46</sup> [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1814/peripheral-landscape-study\\_martock.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1814/peripheral-landscape-study_martock.pdf)

**Proposals for micro-generation within settlement areas that require planning permission will be supported where:**

- i. any negative impacts on the built, natural or historical environments can be acceptably mitigated; and**
- ii. there are no unacceptable impacts on neighbouring properties.**

- 8.56 The NPPF (para. 151) calls for a provide a positive strategy for energy from renewable sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily. The Parish produced a Sustainable Development Plan<sup>47</sup> in 2013, to promote energy efficiency and encourages renewable energy. We recognise however that there are local concerns about the impact of large-scale installations on the landscape and also on the built environment, particularly the conservation areas. Footnote 49 to paragraph 154 of the NPPF cautions against commercial scale renewable and low carbon development outside areas specifically identified as suitable for wind energy development in the development plan. Martock has not been identified as suitable for commercial scale development.
- 8.57 Policy Mart15 reflects that as a community we support an increase in renewable energy use and provision for the development of micro-generation installations within the settlement areas. We would include small-scale solar panel or tile installations, small, single wind turbines, biomass systems and geo-thermal installations, as long as their scale and design are appropriate to their location and acceptably sensitive to the character of the area. Guidance is offered in the Martock Village Design Statement, which should be taken into account by applicants for planning permission.

**Wherever appropriate, new development should seek to achieve high standards of sustainable development, and demonstrate in proposals how design, construction and operation will:**

- i. reduce the use of fossil fuels;**
- ii. promote the efficient use of natural resources, the re-use and recycling of resources, and the production and consumption of renewable energy;**
- iii. promote water efficiency and the use of natural SuDs systems and features;**
- iv. adopt and facilitate the flexible development of low and zero carbon energy through a range of technologies; and**
- v. where possible, link the provision of low and zero carbon energy infrastructure in new developments to existing buildings.**

- 8.58 The Martock Sustainable Development Plan<sup>48</sup> was produced by the Parish Council in 2013 to influence the future growth of residential development in a controlled way. Rather than solely by the consideration of individual applications on a one-off ‘piecemeal’ basis, it presents a guide to developers and to the Parish on how to judge the sustainability credentials of a development proposal. It includes a Sustainability Appraisal checklist, based on a South Somerset District Council Sustainability Appraisal framework, that is used by the Planning Committee of Martock Parish Council to assess the credentials all planning applications for residential and industrial development.
- 8.59 Policy Mart16 encapsulates the sustainability appraisal objective of “*reducing contribution to climate change and vulnerability to its effects*” and places it in a policy setting. Local Plan Policy EQ1, requires climate change aspects to be considered in the design of new development. Consistent with the NPPF (para. 148) to “*support the transition to a low carbon future*”, policy Mart16 requires all major

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/260.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/260.pdf>

development proposals to demonstrate, through design, construction and operation, that they will achieve a high standard of energy efficiency and an acceptably low carbon footprint. How this can be done in an area where design and character issues are significant is addressed in the Martock Design Statement<sup>49</sup>. For major housing developments we are encouraging the adoption of the principles of passive solar design and the habitual installation of renewable energy technologies and low energy systems (see policy Mart21).

- 8.60 Policy Mart16 is also consistent with the parish approach to flood risk minimisation as reflected in the Martock Parish Flood Guide for Developers<sup>50</sup>. It encourages the use and application of natural drainage systems that will not only avoid flooding but also contribute to: improving water quality; increasing biodiversity; providing amenity benefits, such as additional public open space; providing additional habitats; and contributing to the character of the 'new place'. The Environment Agency is keen that water efficiency measures should be incorporated into development as this conserves water for the natural environment and allows cost savings for future housing occupants. It has expressed support<sup>51</sup> for policy Mart15.

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<sup>49</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Supportingdocs/VDS.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Supportingdocs/FloodGuide.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Comments on Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan, Env. Agency, 20 Sep 2019

## 9. Housing

### Overview

- 9.1 The demand for housing in the Martock area remains buoyant. It is particularly popular with mature house purchasers because it offers an ‘escape to the countryside’ yet provides easy access to a range of amenities in the village. Larger detached 4-bedroom houses are always in demand. Smaller dwelling units are also sought after, which puts in-comers in direct competition with local households trying to get on the housing ladder. We expect an increased demand for specialist housing from elderly parishioners as the resident-population ages, if current trends continue.
- 9.2 Whilst we lack a recent local housing needs survey, the response to the 2017 Household Survey identified that a high proportion of parishioners feel that more affordable housing, for local people who cannot afford open market housing, is needed and the Parish is most in need of more low cost/starter homes for purchase. This is confirmed by the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment<sup>52</sup>, which identified the significant issue that is affordability. South Somerset District Council has an overall target for 35% affordable housing on new developments, although this is under review and likely to be reduced<sup>53</sup> to reflect the reality that affordable housing contribution within developments is regularly reduced following an ‘open book’ viability testing process. Wherever possible, the Local Plan says, two thirds of affordable housing should be provided as social-rented. The remaining third should be other forms of affordable housing, such as intermediate rent, affordable rent, shared ownership or other affordable home ownership products.
- 9.3 We are guided by the local planning authority on the minimum provision of dwellings to meet future housing needs and demands over the period of the adopted Local Plan. The majority of new housing development in the district is to be focused on Yeovil, as the principal town in South Somerset. Martock/Bower Hinton, being categorised as a third-tier settlement, i.e. a ‘rural centre’ according to the Local Plan, is expected to contribute a fair share of the overall total of new dwellings allotted to the rural settlements. The confirmed Housing Requirement Figure set in the Local Plan is 230 dwellings between 2006 and 2028. This has already been exceeded (at winter 2019). The target continues to shift and move forward, however. The Local Plan Review has proposed that 330 new homes should be built in the Martock/Bower Hinton area between 2016 and 2034.
- 9.4 With regard to the provision of housing in rural areas, the NPPF (para. 78) states that to “*promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.*” In accordance with the NPPF, housing development in Martock Parish should be focussed on Martock/Bower Hinton.
- 9.5 To achieve the strategic housing target of the Local Plan and to ensure that the supply of housing continues to meet local needs, we are supportive of new residential development of an appropriate scale and type taking place throughout the plan period. The housing policies in the Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan are aimed at ensuring that the housing needs and aspirations of local people have primacy in future housing development.

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<sup>52</sup> Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Taunton Deane Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report, JG Consulting, Oct 2016 [https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/14834/SHMA-October2016/pdf/Somerset\\_final\\_SHMA\\_Oct2016.pdf?m=636162028823900000](https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/14834/SHMA-October2016/pdf/Somerset_final_SHMA_Oct2016.pdf?m=636162028823900000)

<sup>53</sup> Comments on Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan, SSDC, 20 Aug 2019

Policy No. Mart17	Housing Development
<p><b>Development proposals for residential developments will be supported provided they:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i. contribute to meeting an objectively assessed housing need;</b></li> <li><b>ii. contribute positively to the built environment in the vicinity of the site;</b></li> <li><b>iii. incorporate separate and satisfactory access and parking provision;</b></li> <li><b>iv. provide adequate external amenity space, refuse and recycling storage;</b></li> <li><b>v. incorporate measures to minimise water consumption and an appropriate sustainable drainage scheme; and</b></li> <li><b>vi. conforms to other relevant policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.</b></li> </ul>	

- 9.6 The Neighbourhood Plan is required to conform to the strategic policies of the Local Plan. The adopted South Somerset Local Plan regards Martock/Bower Hinton as a rural centre with *“a local service role where provision for development will be made that meets local housing need”* (Local Plan Policy SS1).
- 9.7 The Local Plan states provision should be made for sufficient development to meet an overall district requirement of at least 15,950 dwellings in the plan period April 2006 – March 2028 inclusive. The majority of new housing is being directed towards Yeovil as the principal town in the district, followed by a reduced level at each of the market towns, and then a smaller allocation for each of the ‘rural centres’, of which Martock/Bower Hinton is one. A total housing requirement is allocated for rural settlements; with decisions on how much, and where, to be determined in conjunction with the aims of Policy SS2, which *“strictly controls”* development in rural settlements. Neighbourhood planning for Martock has provided an opportunity for the community to consider what is the appropriate scale of development for our Parish and where such development should take place.
- 9.8 As explained in paragraph 8.48, some 210 new homes will be required in Martock/Bower Hinton to contribute to South Somerset District’s housing target for 2036. Three possible sites for new development are identified in the emerging Local Plan Review Preferred Options document. All are located on the western edge of the existing Martock/Bower Hinton settlement. The site subject to emerging Policy MB2 - Land south of Coat Road lies within the Settlement Area Boundary, as shown on Map 7. Policies MB1- Land north of Coat Road, and MB3 – Land south of Hills Road are also shown on Map 7, but they lie outside the defined Settlement Area Boundary.
- 9.9 It is felt inappropriate to set an alternative target, but rather to have a policy approach that is based on an appreciation of local needs and the availability of suitable land, whilst ensuring development is of a scale, amenity and design commensurate with the rural character of the area. Accordingly, policy Mart17 supports high-quality residential development, of an appropriate scale in suitable locations as determined by other policies in the development plan, which is satisfactorily served by local infrastructure and sufficiently self-contained so as not to harm the amenity of the local area. The Martock Village Design Statement should help determine what is an adequate external amenity space, and whether satisfactory space has been provided for refuse and recycling storage.
- 9.10 The adequacy of off-road parking provision for new housing development is a significant matter given the widespread concerns about the congestion and safety on local roads. New developments should conform to the current highway access and parking guidance of South Somerset District Council<sup>54</sup> unless there is a very good reason not to do so.

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/2184/highwayaccessandparking.pdf>

**New residential development should favour small dwellings meaning dwellings with 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms.**

**Development proposals on sites for 10 or more dwellings must contain an appropriate mixture of house types and sizes and show how they contribute to meeting current local housing needs of the neighbourhood area by referring to an up-to-date assessment of local housing need.**

- 9.11 The latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) carried out on behalf of South Somerset District Council<sup>55</sup> guides strategic housing policy and allocations. However, at the “local level” it recommends “*in applying these [district-wide mix of affordable and market homes] to individual development sites regard should be had to the nature of the development site and character of the area, and to up-to-date evidence of need as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level*”. Local Plan Policy HG5 seeks to achieve a range house types and sizes across the District, particularly on large sites of ten or more dwellings. On small sites, the type and size of homes should be taken in the context of the surroundings and contribute towards sustainable development. The current indicative targets for market housing by type and size, based on the SHMA, is for 5-10% 1-bedroomed, 30-35% 2-bedroomed and 40-45% 3-bedroomed.
- 9.12 The NPPF (para. 61) requires us to assess the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community and for them to be reflected in planning policies. This is particularly important when it is evident that there is a local housing need that should be met, and limited opportunities to do so.
- 9.13 The community informed us via the 2017 Community Survey that there is a recognised need for small dwellings including accessible housing for disabled people, sheltered housing for older or disabled people and to a lesser extent retirement housing. It was also made plain that large houses (4+ beds) and flats are considered in plentiful supply by a large majority and not a priority for development.
- 9.14 Policy Mart18 places emphasis on the provision of small dwellings in all residential developments. On larger developments, of 10 or more dwellings, there should be a mix of dwelling types and sizes which includes a majority of smaller dwellings i.e. with one, two or three bedrooms. Developers are encouraged to demonstrate that proposed housing mix of sizes and types is locally relevant and takes account of the re-housing needs and aspirations of the existing parishioners of Martock.
- 9.15 Unless viability or other material considerations, such as the character of the surrounding area, show a robust justification for larger dwellings, we favour smaller dwellings on smaller sites, whether the development is for affordable or open-market dwellings or a mix. The Martock Village Design Statement should be used to inform decisions as to what mix of housing types and sizes may or may not be appropriate in any specific location in the Parish.

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<sup>55</sup> Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Taunton Deane Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report, JG Consulting, Oct 2016

[https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/14834/SHMA-October2016/pdf/Somerset\\_final\\_SHMA\\_Oct2016.pdf?m=636162028823900000](https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/14834/SHMA-October2016/pdf/Somerset_final_SHMA_Oct2016.pdf?m=636162028823900000)

Where the threshold for affordable housing requirements applies, development proposals will be supported where:

- i. They contribute to meeting the local housing needs of Martock as defined in the most up-to-date Housing Needs Assessment in terms of type, size and tenure; and,
- ii. Are provided principally for occupancy by a person or persons (household) with a local connection who:
  - a) do not have access to open market housing;
  - b) is a resident of Martock Parish, or has a local connection with the Parish because of family ties or a need to be near their workplace.

In the event that an occupier who fulfils both (or either) of criterion (a) or (b) cannot be found within a reasonable period of time, then (b) will be widened:

- 1) firstly, to a person(s) with a local connection to the neighbouring parishes of Ash, Long Sutton, Tintinhull, Stoke Sub Hamdon, South Petherton, Kingsbury Episcopi and Muchelney because of family ties or a need to be near their workplace;
- 2) secondly, to a person(s) with a connection to Ilminster, Crewkerne, Ilchester, Yeovil and their neighbouring parishes because of family ties or a need to be near their workplace; and,
- 3) thirdly, to a person(s) with a connection to the wider South Somerset District.

Affordable housing should be provided in perpetuity, (in accordance with the most up-to-date Government policy), for example, through a Community Land Trust or other community housing scheme which retains stock for the benefit of the local community at an accessible cost.

- 9.16 The NPPF (para. 61) requires us to be responsive to the need of different groups in the community and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing. The community informed us via the 2017 Community Survey that more affordable housing for local people who can't afford open market housing is needed.
- 9.17 The Local Plan endeavours to maximise affordable housing delivery, with an *“objective to include all residential development in the affordable housing contribution process, thereby capturing a significant proportion of developments that would otherwise be exempt, without threatening viability or reducing housing delivery”*. However, the District Council's objectives, set out in Local Plan Policies HG3 and HG4, were rendered out of date by a major change in Government policy on the delivery of affordable housing. The Government's new policy, referenced in paragraph 63 of the NPPF, is that no affordable housing obligation should be placed on non-major development schemes of nine dwellings or less or sites of less than 0.5 hectares. Policies HG3 and HG4 of the current Local Plan have not been applied by the District Council to non-major developments since the change in Government policy. The 'Local Plan Review Preferred Options' document requires major development schemes to include provision for 29% affordable housing.
- 9.18 Policy Mart19 is intended to ensure that any gain from affordable housing is appropriate for the Parish in terms of meeting an identifiable need; meeting the key criteria of being the right tenure, so as to be genuinely affordable to the right people; be allocated to households that qualify as being local; and remain part of the affordable housing stock of the Parish and regarded as a Parish asset in the long-term.
- 9.19 To ensure consistency and fairness in housing priority in the local area, policy Mart19 mimics the affordable housing policy of the neighbouring South Petherton Neighbourhood Plan. It recognises that we are part of a wider, but still local, housing market. Martock Parish Council will maintain a liaison with adjoining parishes regarding local housing need.

**Community Housing<sup>1</sup> schemes may be supported outside (but adjacent or well-related to) the settlement area boundary of Martock/Bower Hinton on sites where housing would not otherwise be permitted, providing the development:**

- i. provides an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes reflecting identified local need and meets demand based on the current Local Housing Needs Assessment or evidence from local community housing groups and the Parish Council;**
- ii. contributes to a wider mix of housing tenures, types and sizes in the area;**
- iii. meets the allocation and occupancy requirements of policy Mart18;**
- iv. preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area;**
- v. does not result in the development of isolated homes in the countryside;**
- vi. does not have a significant negative impact the geodiversity, biodiversity, landscape and character of the area; and**
- vii. the land is held in trust as a community asset in perpetuity.**

**Footnote**

**<sup>1</sup> Community Housing is defined as residential development by a group who build on land that is held in common ownership or trust for the benefit of the residents.**

- 9.20 The Parish Council will be pro-active in the provision of housing to meet local needs. This includes encouraging the involvement of community housing providers. Policy Mart20 opens up the possibility that a community housing development project of the right type, could be supported on land where market housing development would not be supported or permitted. This is known as exception-site development. The NPPF (para. 77) supports “*opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs*”.
- 9.21 To meet the exception site requirements of Policy Mart20, the development proposal would need to be made by a bona fide ‘community housing’ body. It would need to demonstrate that it is meeting a specific and identifiable local housing need and a substantial majority of the dwellings on the site should meet an acceptable definition of ‘affordable in the local context. A small proportion of open market housing may be permissible on the development but only if it is shown to be necessary to make the development viable and priority is given to purchasers with a local connection that are seeking a permanent local residence.
- 9.22 Any site brought forward for exception-site development must be in relatively close proximity to a settlement area and the development proposal must demonstrate that it will contribute positively to the sustainability of the area and community whilst minimising any harmful impacts on the environment. Development proposals within areas of higher landscape sensitivity such as those categorised as moderate or high, shown on Map 2, are unlikely to be supported.

**The provision of plots on major housing developments for local self-builders registered on the South Somerset list is supported.**

- 9.23 The Government has, as recently as 2015, introduced legislation to promote and facilitate self-building and custom housebuilding as part of the national strategy to widen affordable housing solutions.
- 9.24 South Somerset District Council, along with other district and county councils in England, is required to keep a self-build and custom housebuilding register. South Somerset has set up a Register<sup>56</sup> of individuals, and associations of individuals, who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in South Somerset for their own self-build and custom housebuilding. At July 2018, the Council's database held a list of 86 interested parties who have applied to be on the Register; a substantial rise from 23 on the Register in May 2016. The number of local registrations, at July 2018, is few. Only a couple of persons, of the 86 on the South Somerset Register, expressed a preference for a site in the Martock area. Numbers are expected to grow as awareness of the Register and the opportunities become known. The Parish Council will play its part in encouraging local self-builders.
- 9.25 The legislation also states that "*relevant authorities must give suitable development permission to enough suitable serviced plots<sup>57</sup> of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area. The level of demand is established by reference to the number of entries added to an authority's register during a base period*".
- 9.26 Regardless of the current low level of interest there is community support for the prospect of a proportion of plots on major housing developments (i.e. developments of 10 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5 hectares or more) being offered to local self-builders. Policy Mart21 puts in place a policy that expresses that support, if the resultant development conforms with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

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<sup>56</sup> <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council/your-council-plan-and-strategies/planning-policy/self-build-and-custom-build-houses/>

<sup>57</sup> A serviced plot of land is a plot of land that either has access to a public highway and has connections for electricity, water and waste-water, or, in the opinion of a relevant authority, can be provided with access to those things within the duration of a development permission granted in relation to that land.

**The principles of passive solar design and the use of renewable energy technologies and low energy systems should be encouraged for all new housing developments.**

**Dwellings should be built whenever possible with the orientation of the principal habitable rooms taking account of passive solar gain and energy efficiency maximised whilst ensuring that the site layout provides acceptable standards of privacy and amenity to all residents.**

**Roof-mounted solar panels and photovoltaic panels should be designed to minimise visual impact.**

- 9.27 Consistent with our approach to low energy, more sustainable development, we expect developers of housing schemes to use design and layout take advantage of the solar-gain that could be achieved on any particular housing site as long as the development proposals confirms with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and where necessary, complies with Conservation Area policies and guidance.
- 9.28 Local Plan Policy EQ1 says *“climate change should be considered in the design of new development, incorporating measures such as solar orientation, maximising natural shade and cooling....”*. Policy Mart21 encourage serious consideration and application, wherever appropriate in the design and layout of new housing developments, of the principles of passive solar design and the use of renewable energy technologies and low energy systems on all new housing developments.
- 9.29 Passive solar design refers to making use of the sun’s energy for the heating and cooling of living spaces. Passive solar design is the siting and design of buildings to maximise the use of the sun’s energy for heating and cooling. Passive solar design takes advantage of natural characteristics in building materials and air to help reduce the additional energy needed for heating and cooling. The PPG says that *“policies can encourage sites to be planned to permit good solar access to as many buildings as possible. The potential benefits of passive solar design can only be realised by careful siting and layout..... It is important that passive design considers the potential for overheating in the summer, as well as reducing need for heating in the winter.”*<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> PPG Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 26-013-20140306, Mar 2014

## 10. Local Economy

### Overview

- 10.1 Martock has long had a vibrant and successful local economy, which was initially agrarian based. It became 'industrialised' in the 18th century with clothiers making cloth and linen from wool and flax. Twine, rope and canvas manufacture, together with gloves made from the skin of the sheep, became dominant industries in the 18th and 19th centuries. The remnants of this industrial period can still be seen today in the buildings and industrial areas that remain, such as the two Victorian iron foundries, Sparrows and Parrett Works. Its legacy is the almost 250 businesses that are based in Martock today, employing thousand or so local people.
- 10.2 Parrett Works and Sparrows Works are thriving small industrial estates today. The former railway station area is now the location of the largest local industrial estate in the area, Martock Business Park, which comprises over 90 units and fully occupied. There is one smaller estate on the Stoke Road based on former farm buildings, which is developing.
- 10.3 Many local businesses are small. Martock Parish has a high number of sole traders and small business owners. Martock has a tradition of supporting small specialist entrepreneurs such as engineering companies that have spun off from the local aircraft industry and also the numerous art and craft businesses. The requirement for a continued supply of small business units is considered essential to sustain the local economy. However, when opportunities such as the recent closure of the glove factories arise, the commercial pressure has been towards a change to residential use.
- 10.4 There is also a growing hospitality industry. In 2018 there are two hotels, the chalet and caravanning site at Parrett Works, and a number of houses offering bed and breakfast. As well as addressing the needs of business visitors to Yeovil and Yeovilton they serve the A303 passing trade and holidaymakers visiting both coasts.
- 10.5 According to the 2011 Census there was approaching 2,500 people in the Parish who were in employment. Despite being home to around 250 local businesses, a substantial proportion of the Parish's working population (over 50%) commutes out of the Parish for work. Ironically, Larger employers too often report local skills shortages. The need to sustain the local jobs market and increase skills amongst the workforce is being addressed by the Martock Job Club, which is funded primarily by the Parish Council.
- 10.6 The current Local Plan (2006-28) sets a target of 3.19 hectares of employment land to be developed in Martock over the plan period. The recent 'Local Plan Review Preferred Option' Document sets a requirement for 3.0 ha of new employment land in the Parish. This does not allocate the site at Ringwell Hill, where outline planning permission was granted for industrial use in 2006, but never developed.
- 10.7 Martock's retail function remains a significant facet of the local economy. Martock village is designated as one of the district's 'secondary centres' by the Local Plan, having shops that primarily serve the "day to day needs of their catchment areas". Martock is fortunate to have two convenience stores as well as a Post Office. Martock's shopping is 'centred' around the Moorlands Shopping Centre, with its nearby car park and adjacent to the Library. The availability of local shops and services is appreciated by the local community. Many parishioners say they would like to see more shops and better shops.
- 10.8 The new Martock Community Plan includes a commitment to "re-establish a business forum in Martock to promote local businesses and give a voice to retailers and employers"<sup>59</sup>. We shall use this forum to monitor the wellbeing of the local economy and assess the impact that planning policies are having business growth and employment.

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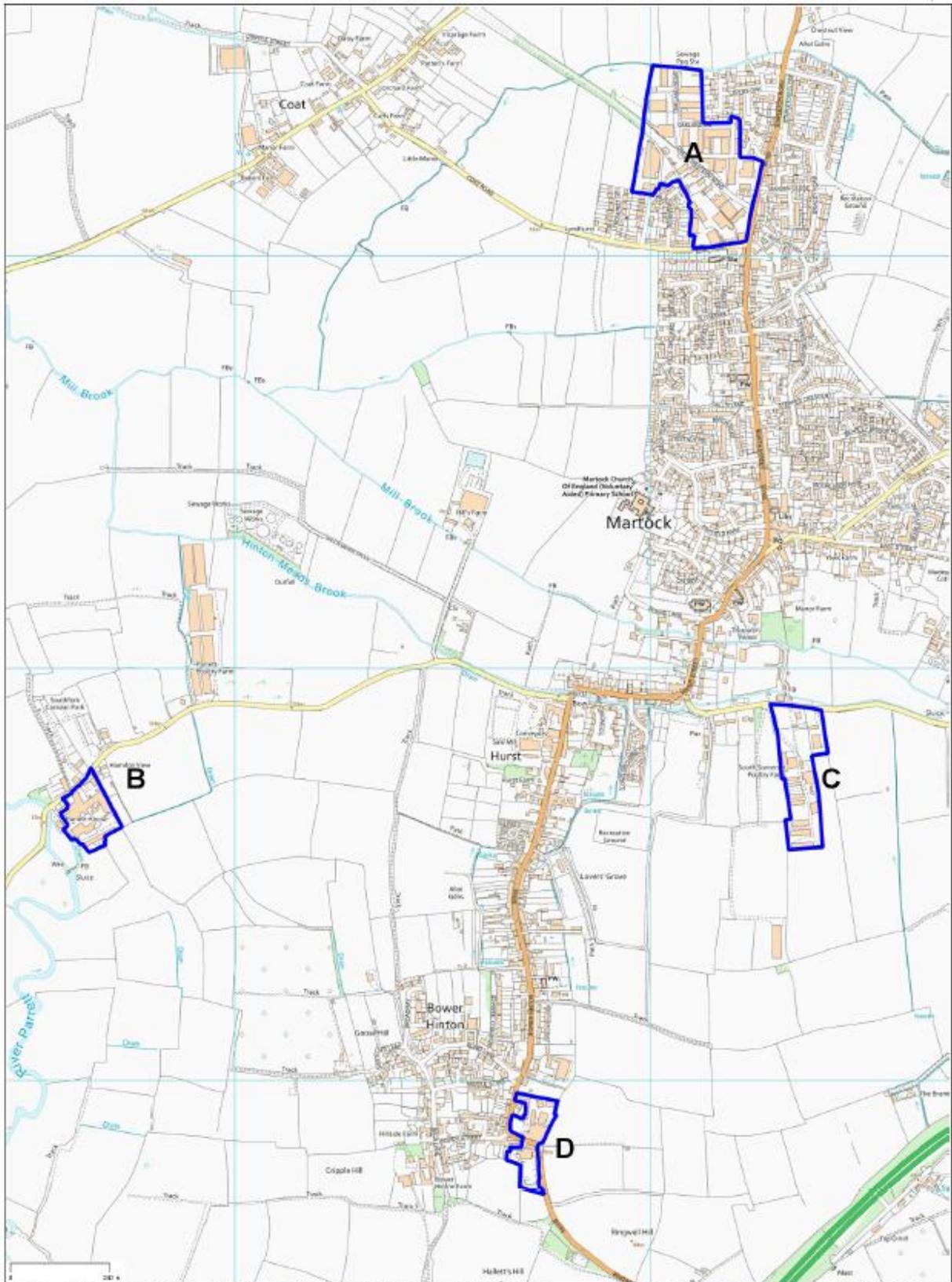
<sup>59</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/1802.pdf>

Policy No. Mart23	Business Areas
<p><b>Business development in the following business areas (identified on Map 9), including a proportionate outward expansion of the sites:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A. Martock Business Park</b></li> <li><b>B. Parrett Works</b></li> <li><b>C. Stoke Road</b></li> <li><b>D. Sparrows Works</b></li> </ul> <p><b>will be supported provided the development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i. is in keeping with those uses and business activity already on the site;</b></li> <li><b>ii. respects the character of its surroundings by way of its scale and design;</b></li> <li><b>iii. does not have an adverse effect on its neighbours;</b></li> <li><b>iv. does not have an adverse impact on the natural environment (landscape, biodiversity and habitats) or that negative impacts will be satisfactorily mitigated;</b></li> <li><b>v. does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the transport network and parking; and</b></li> <li><b>vi. safeguards residential amenity and road safety.</b></li> </ul>	

- 10.9 The defined business areas of the Parish are very important to our local rural economy and the overall sustainability of the area. The NPPF (para.83) is strong in its support for economic growth in rural areas. It states that we should support *“the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings”*.
- 10.10 The Local Plan Review Preferred Options Consultation document<sup>60</sup> recognised that *“self-containment is an issue”* for Martock. *“The travel to work data shows that over 80% of the population out-commute, with many going to Yeovil but also the Ilchester area”*. The Parish Council’s strategy is based firmly on supporting local business and creating more and better jobs for local people.
- 10.11 The focus of industry and enterprise in the Parish should remain the defined business areas shown on Map 9. They are long-established locations and provided accessible local employment to successive generations of parishioners. Policy Mart23 supports future business development at these locations shown on Map 9 provided the development is appropriate in scale and does not cause any unacceptable nuisance or harm to its surroundings or nearby land users.
- 10.12 South Somerset District Council has commented that by supporting an appropriate scale of business development and expansion at four well-established key sites, Policy Mart23 will assist one of the Local Plan’s objectives for the area i.e. to provide further employment opportunities as a means of securing greater self-containment<sup>61</sup>.
- 10.13 In concentrating industrial development at the established business areas, we are also seeking to ensure that the over-riding rural character of the Parish is safeguarded. However, these business areas are close to residential areas and sensitive wildlife habitats, which should not be adversely affected by any form of pollution resulting from the expansion of industrial activity at these locations.

<sup>60</sup><https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/s25316/7%20LPR%20Appendix%203%20Local%20Plan%20Review%20Preferred%20Options%20Document.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> Comments on Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan, SSDC, 20 Aug 2019



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**The development of new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses on brownfield sites or through the sympathetic conversion of redundant buildings will generally be supported subject to such development respecting local character and residential amenity, and the residual cumulative impacts on highway safety and the local transport network not being unacceptable.**

- 10.14 With over 250 locally based businesses, Martock is far from a dormitory area, and nor should it be so. The area has a long history of industrial activity that has underpinned its sustainability. It is a key aim to facilitate local enterprise in the interests of ensuring the local economy remains in good health and creating more and better local job opportunities. We are proud of the efforts and achievements of the Parish Council-sponsored Job Club to this end.
- 10.15 The NPPF says we should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise and planning policies should enable *“the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings”* (NPPF para. 83). We are keen to broaden the business base and appreciate that the policy approach espoused by the NPPF (para. 81) requires policies to be flexible enough to accommodate a variety of needs and changing business practices.
- 10.16 The Local Plan (2006-28) allocated a site of 2.8ha for employment purposes on land to the West of Ringwell Hill. This site was originally allocated in the 1991 Local Plan and it has still not come forward for development. The Local Plan Review Preferred Options document does not allocate this site. The allocation of large employment/business sites is a matter for the Local Plan.
- 10.17 Policy Mart24, is supportive in principle of business development on brownfield sites and through the redevelopment of redundant buildings in the neighbourhood area, provided it does not cause unacceptable nuisance or harm to the character or amenity of the locality.
- 10.18 Recent studies of the South Somerset economy have identified a reliance on the manufacturing sector, which is forecast to decline, and recognised how *“incredibly important micro-businesses are to the area”*<sup>62</sup>. In the hope that it will encourage and enable small enterprises, policy Mart24 offers support for new business development outside of the defined and allocated business areas, particularly through the conversion of redundant and other buildings, as long as it can be achieved without any unacceptable nuisances or harm to nearby land users and the local environment.

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<sup>62</sup> [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1326/long\\_term\\_-\\_economic-forecasting-report-july-17.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1326/long_term_-_economic-forecasting-report-july-17.pdf)

**The development of a super-fast communication infrastructure to serve the area will be supported where it is sensitively sited and sympathetically designed.**

**All new residential, educational and business premises development should endeavour to make adequate, appropriate and effective provision for high speed broadband and other communication networks.**

- 10.19 Access to a high-speed first-class communication service is no longer a privilege but a necessity. The NPPF (para. 112) wants to see plans “*support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections*”.
- 10.20 The main settlement areas of Bower Hinton and Martock village have superfast broadband available. Coat, Stapleton and the rural areas however still, at 2018, rely on standard broadband of up to 10Mbs<sup>63</sup>. The Government has stated that high speed internet speeds will be a legal right by 2020<sup>64</sup>. Mobile phone services coverage has improved gradually over the past few years. A recent (July 2018) interactive coverage map, produced by OpenSignal<sup>65</sup>, shows that the strength of coverage is strong in the south of the Parish but markedly weaker for some providers in the north and more rural areas of the Parish.
- 10.21 The Martock Local Community Plan 2018-23 includes amongst its key topics ‘Connecting Martock’, which has a vision statement that includes “*first class communication networks to keep residents informed and advised, to meet family, social, business and leisure needs*”.
- 10.22 Policy Mart25 is aimed at enabling the necessary infrastructure to be provided in a suitably non-intrusive manner and ensuring that the required infrastructure and ducting is in put place so that all parts of the Parish have a satisfactory connection to the nation’s communication network and ensure all new development can be satisfactorily linked to the local/national network.

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<sup>63</sup> Mbs = megabits per second

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/high-speed-broadband-to-become-a-legal-right>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/mobile-phone-providers/article/mobile-phone-coverage-map>

# 11. Transport and Travel

## Overview

- 11.1 Martock is made up of several small communities, several of which are effectively joined-up along the B3165, which runs North to South creating a large village with a distinctly linear format. The B3165 connects the village directly to the A303 trunk road. The A3088 provides a direct route to Yeovil, the regional centre and a major employment source, seven miles away.
- 11.2 The main settlement area experiences two main traffic problems. The road through Bower Hinton, as a designated B-class road, brings both cars and HGVs through this part of the village from the A303. However, the road often narrows and bends, with cars parked along it in the residential areas. This frequently creates a bottleneck. Vehicles regularly mount the pavement to pass one another, which puts pedestrians at risk. The second main traffic problem is the volume of traffic and size of vehicles passing along North Street in Martock village. Many HGVs use this route to access the industrial estate at the north end of village. Too often the consequence has been damaged roads, footpaths, bollards and garden walls. Traffic problems on the major routes mean that a high proportion of car traffic chooses to exit Martock via Foldhill Lane, Stoke Road or through the neighbouring parish of Ash. None of these routes has the capacity to cope with increased volumes nor provide a B-road standard junction onto the A303.
- 11.3 Many residents have to park their cars on the main road through the village. The road is lined with residential properties with no garages, driveways or front gardens. This is particularly the case through Bower Hinton and along North Street from Beech Road to Mow Barton.
- 11.4 A lack of off-road parking has not deterred car ownership or use. The motor car predominates local travel. Public transport services are not as comprehensive or as convenient as people would wish them to be, but they probably reflect the fact that only 13% of households have no access to a car or van and almost 80% of the working population who commute to work find it most convenient to do so by car or van<sup>66</sup>.
- 11.5 There is little doubt that the impact of traffic on daily life is a major concern to many parishioners. It is usually the most discussed issue at any consultation forum. The community is not without ideas of how things could be improved. Many of the potential solutions however are beyond the scope of a neighbourhood plan. Traffic management and human behaviour when in a motor vehicle, are matters to be pursued by the Parish Council.
- 11.6 Motor transport use could be reduced by the promotion of cycling and walking, as well as the promotion of the use of public transport and car sharing. The volume of cars using local roads could be reduced considerably if people were persuaded to walk to local shops, schools etc. Much of the main settlement area has pavements, although there are some notable exceptions, mainly Bower Hinton, East Street and Foldhill Lane. A recent study highlighted several deficiencies in Martock village, such as insufficient width and a lack of drop-kerbs, that make things difficult for people with disabilities or mobility problems.
- 11.7 Cycling could be encouraged by safer routes and the installation of secure cycle parking facilities. There are no dedicated on-road, and very few off-road, cycleways within Martock. A designated cycle route exists between Martock village and the village of Ash, but this is just a country lane with signage to indicate a cycle route.

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<sup>66</sup> At the time of the 2011 Census

**Policy No. Mart26                      Public Transport**

**Development proposals to help maintain and enhance existing public transport provision or further sustainable transport modes will be supported.**

- 11.8 As a community we recognise that we should be reducing the use and impact of the private motor car. For many however the motor car is considered essential because education and health facilities are located elsewhere in the district. However, the cost of owning/running a car and the limitations of the public transport service places limitations on the lives of too many parishioners. 25% of respondents to the Martock Community Plan Household Survey 2017<sup>67</sup> said that they were affected by a lack of public transport.
- 11.9 The NPPF (para. 84) says plans should “*exploit any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport)*”. There are limits to what can be done in a land use plan. The Parish Council promotes sustainable transport options. The Martock Community Plan 2018-23 includes the following actions: “*undertake a review of bus services and work with the County Council to improve evening and weekend services; create a voluntary/commercial passenger service running between South Petherton Bower Hinton and the north Martock; and improve cycle parking facilities near services and transport links*”<sup>68</sup>.
- 11.10 Policy Mart26 indicates that, should development proposals come forward specifically to foster public or community sustainable transport modes, such as an interchange area or facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles, they will be welcomed.

**Policy No. Mart27                      Off-Road Parking**

**Development proposals to provide additional off-road parking spaces will be supported where they do not have an adverse impact on:**

- i. the character of the local built environment**
- ii. the quality of the surrounding natural environment**
- iii. the visual amenity of the area**
- iv. the safety of pedestrians and other road users**
- v. flood risk (including local surface water flooding)**

**Permeable materials for surface parking areas should be used where practicable.**

- 11.11 The historic development pattern that still prevails in the settlement areas means that most roads are narrow in width and lined with residential properties with no garages, driveways or front gardens. On-road car parking is an obstacle to emergency vehicles, an impediment to travel and, too often, a danger to road users. The Martock Community Plan Household Survey 2017 showed that a large proportion of parishioners are unhappy with the traffic and parking in and around the village/Parish. Many homeowners would like to be able to park their car off-the road, but the historic development pattern is often a constraint to change. Adequate off-road parking provision is required for all new development (see policy Mart17).
- 11.12 Policy Mart27 recognises that it would be good to reduce on-road parking. It supports proposals to create off-road parking spaces if they can be provided in an acceptable manner, which includes respecting the integrity of the historic environment. How this could be achieved, along with guidance on appropriate materials, is addressed in the Martock Village Design Statement<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/1528.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/1802.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Supportingdocs/VDS.pdf>

**Measures to provide wider and safer footpaths and improved pedestrian and cycling routes within and between local settlement areas will be supported provided they do not result in unacceptable harm to local character.**

- 11.13 Whilst most of the main settlement area of Martock/Bower Hinton is generally well served by pavements, we are aware that much of it is below the minimum acceptable width of 1.8m and, for significant lengths of footway, it is below the width required for wheelchair users. There are no dedicated on-road, and very few off-road, cycle routes within the Parish. A designated cycle route exists between Martock village and the village of Ash, but this is just a country lane with signage to indicate it is a recognised cycle route.
- 11.14 The NPPF (para. 110) says we should “*give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas*”. The new Martock Community Plan 2018-23 includes the following action: “*survey the pavements and paths throughout the urban area to review the difficulties caused to mobility scooters*”<sup>70</sup>.
- 11.15 Policy Mart28 supports development that is aimed at making walking and cycling in and between the settlement areas easier and safer. Consultations have shown that the community is supportive of the provision of safe cycling routes from the periphery of the main settlement area to the centre, particularly the school. There is general support for improvements to footpaths too, although this needs to be considered in the context of the historic fabric of the settlement area and the inappropriate loss of old pavements.

**Where appropriate, development specifically to implement traffic management measures that will improve highway safety will be supported providing the measures are:**

- i. of a design that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area with regards to scale, layout and materials; and**
- ii. have been subject to consultation with the local community.**

- 11.16 In the interest of giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and creating safe and secure layouts, policy Mart29 offers support to development required to implement traffic management measures that are sympathetically designed and have the support of the community. Traffic management is a matter that causes much debate and potential traffic management measures are several. We expect any development proposal that affects a long-term change in traffic behaviour to be the subject of a full consultation with the community and the proposed scheme to have the backing of the Parish Council.
- 11.17 Guidance on what would be appropriate in an area of special architectural and historic character can be found in the Conservation Area Appraisal and the Martock Village Design Statement<sup>71</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/1802.pdf>

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Supportingdocs/VDS.pdf>

**The provision of improved disabled access arrangements to public buildings will be strongly supported.**

- 11.18 Too many of the public buildings of the Parish have inappropriate access arrangements that discriminate against those with disabilities. We recognise that tackling this problem is not easy for some of the historic buildings of the Parish. However, we do believe that safe and suitable access to for all people should be the aim.
- 11.19 Policy Mart30 provides in principle support, for improved disabled access arrangements to public buildings throughout the Parish. Further guidance will be found in the Martock Village Design Statement<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Supportingdocs/VDS.pdf>

## 12. Community Wellbeing

### Overview

- 12.1 Martock comprises the historic settlement areas of Bower Hinton, Hurst, Martock, Coat, Highway, Parrett Works and Stapleton. At first appearance, it seems a traditional long South Somerset village (about 2.5 miles from north to south), but it also comprises some large housing estates to the east and west of the main settlement that have been built within the last 50 years. The 2011 Census put the total population of Martock parish at 4,766 - the size of a small town. Since 1964 the population of the UK has grown by approximately 18.7%. In comparison, the population of Martock has grown by 114% since 1961.
- 12.2 However, it lacks many of the facets that normally characterise a town, such as a definable town centre, a bank, secondary school, hospital, police station, DWP job centre or large supermarket. The lack of local services in Martock is in part due to the fact that over 50% of parishioners in employment and 100% of young people over the age of 11 commute out of Martock every weekday for work or school. Martock remains a large village, a status that most parishioners wish to retain.
- 12.3 The growth of Martock as a community has not been matched with the necessary growth in infrastructure. As a community, we are very reliant on major towns, particularly Yeovil, for the provision of key services such as education and health.
- 12.4 As regards education for younger children, there are several successful local pre-school groups that serve the Parish. Martock's primary education needs are met largely within its parish boundaries, by Martock Church of England Primary School and, within a mile, at Ash Church of England Primary School. The local primary school is popular and was over-subscribed (winter 2018/19). The network of support groups for younger families is considerable, but largely voluntary.
- 12.5 Within the boundaries of the Parish there is a GP surgery, dentist, chemist and an optician. The Martock Practice also has a surgery at the new health complex at South Petherton, which includes South Petherton Community Hospital and a chemist. Access to other health and wellbeing services require parishioners to travel. Yeovil District Hospital provides acute admissions and supports most out-patient's appointments. Yeovil also provides access for Adult and Children Social Care, Mental Health Support, Job Centre Plus and provision for Training and Work Programmes.
- 12.6 The Parish has a very active community and social life, this is reflected in the wide range of clubs, societies and community groups that are active in the Parish<sup>73</sup>. The array of suitable places and spaces available for community activity is a contributory factor. The 'Our Place Martock' team were asked if they considered current leisure facilities and spaces in the Parish fit for purpose. The reply we received was *"yes, facilities are looked after by the Parish Council and are kept to a high standard. There is a specific sub-committee 'Buildings and Open Spaces' that look after these facilities. Keeping them fit for purpose is part of their role. Recently the pavilion has been re-decorated, changes to the Parish hall have been made and the outdoor spaces are always being discussed to enhance them for the residents"*.
- 12.7 Martock Recreation Ground, off Stoke Road, is the focus of organised recreation/sport in the Parish. It serves the recreation needs of a much wider area and hosts some district-wide events. It covers 22 acres of parkland and is easily accessible, with a large car park. It is one of the largest village-located recreation spaces in Somerset. It has long needed additional sports club facilities, which remains the focus of a fund-raising campaign.

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<sup>73</sup> <http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Planpages/Documents/LocalContextReport.pdf>

Policy No. Mart31	Existing Community Facilities
<p><b>Development proposals to ensure that locally valued community facilities remain viable and suitable for community use will usually be supported.</b></p> <p><b>Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of community facilities, which require planning permission, will only be supported where:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i. there is no reasonable prospect of viable continued use of the existing building or facility which will benefit the local community;</b></li> <li><b>ii. they have been subject to consultation with the local community; and,</b></li> <li><b>iii. it will provide an alternative use for which there is local support.</b></li> </ul>	

- 12.8 The community facilities such as the Parish Hall, the Market House, the Library, Martock Youth Centre, the churches and church halls serve a range of community functions and purposes. They provide space for health and wellbeing surgeries and groups. They host many social activities and are used for a range of indoor leisure and recreation purposes. The community facilities and spaces we have play an important part in sustaining community life and cohesion.
- 12.9 The NPPF (para. 92) encourage us to *“guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs”*. The Government introduced changes to the Use Classes Order in England on 1st September 2020, notably with the introduction of a new Use Class E, incorporating shops, financial and professional services, cafe/restaurants, offices, research and development businesses, clinics, health centres, day nurseries, day centres and gymnasiums. As a result, not all changes of use of community facilities now require planning permission.
- 12.10 Policy EP15 in the Local Plan focusses on local shops, post office, public house, community or cultural facility and protects them from loss unless they are proven to be *“unviable as demonstrated by a viability assessment”*. The Local Plan also recognises the value of community halls, which are multi-purpose buildings often provided by the community for the community. *“They provide space and facilities for a range of local activities and increasingly for community services. It is therefore important that community halls are maintained and enhanced and where new communities are being formed or expanded through new development, there is an intention to ensure adequate provision of community hall space”*.
- 12.11 Policy Mart31 protects existing community halls and community facilities unless they are deemed as being no longer required or suitable for community use. In recognition that community interests and demands can change over-time, the policy supports necessary alterations or extensions to community facilities to ensure that they can continue to provide for community activity and services, so long as they conform with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 12.12 South Somerset District Council is *“pleased to note recognition of retail and service functions as significant facets of the local economy”*<sup>74</sup>. The stance towards maintaining and enhancing community facilities through Policy Mart31, and Policy Mart32, has been welcomed by the District Council and confirmed as being in accordance with Policy EP15 of the adopted Local Plan.

<sup>74</sup> Comments on Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan, SSDC, 20 Aug 2019

Development proposals to facilitate new or additional community services and facilities within the area will be supported where they meet a need identified by the community, or by a body with statutory responsibility for a particular service, providing:

- i. they do not undermine the viability or vitality of existing facilities;
- ii. they do not create unacceptable noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance to neighbouring residential properties;
- iii. they do not cause traffic congestion, adverse traffic impact upon local amenity or adverse impact on traffic flow on local roads; and
- iv. access and off-street parking can be satisfactorily provided without harming existing residential and other uses.

- 12.13 Our sustainability as a community would be much enhanced by the availability and delivery of local services, not least because it would reduce the need to travel distances by motor vehicle. At present parishioners must add to the traffic travelling to Yeovil for most health services, for instance. The Community Plan Household Survey 2017<sup>75</sup> identified how important health facilities are to local people (93%, 172 respondents, finding them 'extremely/very important'). The 'Our Place Martock'<sup>76</sup> project highlighted how many parishioners are disadvantaged because of distance from health, social, welfare and other services. The Project is working hard to reduce dependency on many of these services. This does require providing local support, improving access to services, tackling loneliness and social isolation and improving employment opportunities and prospects. It does require having accessible services and facilities available in the local area.
- 12.14 The NPPF (para.92) encourages us to plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities. The Martock Community Partnership brings together a range of service providers *"to work together to build a safe, vibrant, fully inclusive and thriving community, in which we are all proud to live and work"*<sup>77</sup>.
- 12.15 We are proud of the community facilities we have (see paragraph 12.8) but recognise they have their limits and constraints, particularly as several of them are also historic buildings on confined sites. The new Martock Community Plan, for instance, recognises the limitations of the Youth Centre and includes a commitment to explore *"realistic options appraisal to provide a new youth centre that will meet the future needs of Martock for youth provision in a cost-effective manner"*<sup>78</sup>. Policy Mart32 is supportive of the development of additional community facilities if there is an identifiable local need.

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/1528.pdf>

<sup>76</sup> The 'Our Place' initiative now continues under the more general heading of 'Community Services'

<sup>77</sup> 'Making the Most of Martock', Community Partnership Constitution

<http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/18.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.martockonline.co.uk/UserFiles/File/1802.pdf>

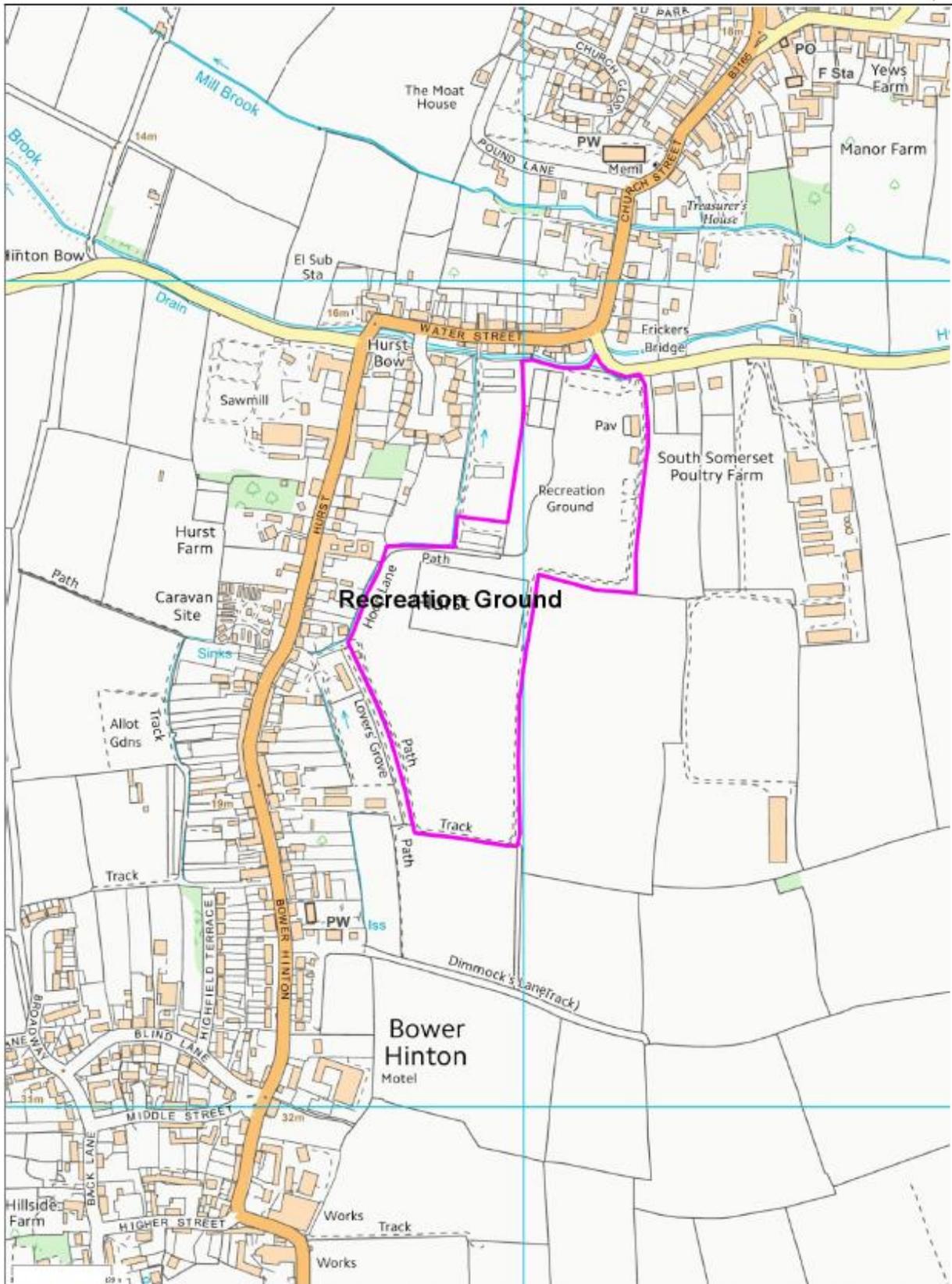
- 1. Sports and recreation facilities and pitches at Martock Recreation Ground will be safeguarded. Proposals which result in a loss of sports and recreation facilities and pitches and/or their capacity and/or their availability for community use at the site (shown on Map 10) will only be supported where the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss. Proposals which replace existing facilities and pitches should demonstrate that they benefit the community and there is secured community access.**
- 2. Proposals to provide additional outdoor sports and recreational facilities that meet identified local needs and broaden recreation opportunities are supported where they comply with other policies of this Plan.**

- 12.16 The NPPF (para. 97) makes it plain that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, *“should not be built on unless they are proven to be surplus to requirements or they are being replaced by something equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location”*.
- 12.17 Martock Recreation Ground is the focus of recreation and sports activity in the Parish. It covers 22 acres of parkland and includes facilities for a wide range of outdoor activities such as football, rugby, cricket and tennis. It has a MUGA<sup>79</sup> and several types of children’s play facilities. It also has a pavilion with changing and showering facilities, which does need up-grading. The new Martock Community Plan 2018–2023 has identified some key improvements and enhancements to ensure the Recreation Ground continues to meet modern recreation demands.
- 12.18 Policy Mart33 puts protection in place for this important area of sporting and other recreational activities, delineated on Map 10. However, we are not just intent on protecting it from loss of area or facilities as a result of development. We are supportive of improvements and additional facilities on the site that help meet local recreational needs and promote increased participation.
- 12.19 The provision of sufficient community infrastructure in the Parish to encourage healthy leisure and recreational activities and meet the growing and changing leisure needs and demands of the population is an important aspect of the community’s agenda. The NPPF (para. 96) recognises that *“access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities”*.
- 12.20 The Parish Council will work closely with the local planning authority and other appropriate bodies to maintain a robust and up-to-date assessment of the local needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision, taking into account the latest levels and standards of provision.
- 12.21 Policy Mart33 supports development proposals to provide additional outdoor sports and recreational facilities should the need be identified. We expect the local community to be involved in the detailed planning of sports facilities, which should be informed by the design guidance on offer from Sport England<sup>80</sup> to ensure they are fit for purpose.

<sup>79</sup> MUGA = Multi Use Games Area

<sup>80</sup> Active Design, from Sport England, provides ten principles to help ensure the design and layout of development encourages and promotes participation in sport and physical activity.

<https://www.sportengland.org/media/3964/spe003-active-design-published-october-2015-high-quality-for-web-2.pdf>



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## 13. Monitoring the Neighbourhood Plan

- 13.1 There is no statutory requirement for the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies to be monitored.
- 13.2 Martock Parish Council will monitor the impact of policies on change in the neighbourhood area by considering the effectiveness of the policies in the planning application decision-making process. We will do this by referring to this Plan when reviewing planning applications. We will keep a record of the application, any applicable neighbourhood plan policies, and comments from the Parish Council, together with the eventual outcome of the application.
- 13.3 A full or partial review of this Plan may be triggered by changes to legislation, changes to national or county-wide or district planning policies or significant planning issues being raised by the local community which cannot be dealt with effectively by a combination of national, district and/or existing neighbourhood plan policies. Five years from the date the Plan is made, we will consider the need and value in undertaking some form of Neighbourhood Plan Review.

## 14. Glossary

The following terms may be used in the Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan:

**Affordable Housing** - Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

**Ancient Woodland** – a woodland which has existed since the year 1600 or earlier.

**Biodiversity** - is the term used to describe the whole variety of life on Earth. It includes not only all species of plants and animals, but also the complex ecosystems they live within. It ranges from species and habitats which are considered commonplace to those considered critically endangered.

**Biodiversity Net Gain** - is an approach to development which aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand.

**Bridleways** - are footpaths, but additionally users are permitted to ride or lead a horse and ride bicycles. Horse drawn vehicles are not allowed. Cyclists must give way to pedestrians and horse-riders. Motorcycling is not allowed.

**Brownfield Land and Sites** - Previously developed land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

**Character** - A term often used in relation to Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings, but also to the appearance of any rural or urban location in terms of its landscape or the layout of streets and open spaces, often giving places their own distinct identity.

**Climate Change** - Long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind and all other aspects of the Earth's climate. Often regarded as a result of human activity and fossil fuel consumption.

**Conservation Area** – is an area of special architectural or historic interest, designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1991, whose character and appearance it is desirable to preserve and enhance. There are special rules on some development in conservation areas.

**County Geological Site** - sometimes also called a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS) County Geological Site. The geological or geomorphological equivalent of a CWS. They are non-statutory and identified by a group of experts.

**County Wildlife Site (CWS)** - an area of significance for its wildlife in at least a county context i.e. it may be of county, regional or even national importance.

**Curtilage** - The area normally within the boundaries of a property surrounding the main building and used in connection with it.

**Economically Active** - Persons in work or actively seeking work.

**Flood Risk Assessment** - An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

**Flood Zones** - have been created by the Environment Agency to be used within the planning process as a starting point in determining how likely somewhere is to flood. A flood zone is predominantly a planning tool and doesn't necessarily mean somewhere will or won't flood.

**General Permitted Development Order (GPDO)** - The Town and Country Planning GPDO 2015 provides permitted development rights for a specified range of development, meaning that those activities do not require an application for planning permission. However, agricultural buildings and certain telecommunications equipment covered by permitted development rights are also subject to a prior approval procedure.

**Green Infrastructure** - is a strategic network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life in sustainable communities. It provides habitats for and aids migration of wildlife, flood water storage, urban cooling and local access to shady outdoor space as well as creating attractive spaces for recreation.

**Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)** - A HRA tests the impacts of a proposal on nature conservation sites of European importance and is a requirement under EU legislation for land use plans and projects.

**HELAA: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment – previously SHLAA** (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) a Government requirement of local planning authorities. Its purpose is to identify sites with potential for housing and employment purposes; assess their development potential; and assess when they are likely to be developed.

**Infrastructure** - the necessary supporting ‘infrastructure’ of utility services, transport, schools, open space, community, health and leisure services.

**Infrastructure Delivery Plan** – is a framework for private and public investment. It identifies as far as possible the infrastructure needs of growth and/or new development, and the associated costs, phasing, funding sources and responsibilities for delivery.

**Landscape Character Area (LCA)** - Single unique areas that are the discrete geographical area of a specific landscape type.

**Listed Buildings** - Buildings which have been recognised by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) as having special architectural or historic interest.

**Local Green Space** - Green areas of particular importance to local communities, which meet the criteria of the NPPF (para. 100), designated as ‘local green space’ to provide special protection against development.

**Local Plan** - A portfolio or folder of documents (Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), setting out the planning strategy for a local planning authority area.

**Local Planning Authority** - The public body whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a specific area. All references to local planning authority apply in this Plan to South Somerset District Council

**NPPF** - The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of communities.

**Neighbourhood Plan** - A plan prepared by a town or parish council or a neighbourhood forum for a specific neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

**PPG** - National Planning Practice Guidance is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It was launched in March 2014 and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

**Permissive Paths** - It is possible for landowners to allow access over their land without dedicating a right of way. These accesses are called permissive paths. To the user, they are often indistinguishable from normal highways, but there are some important differences:

- a permissive path must have some sign or similar indication that it is not intended to be a right of way
- the landowner can close off or divert the path if they wish to do so, without any legal process being involved
- the landowner can make restrictions which would not normally apply to highways, for example to allow horse riding but not cycling, or the other way around

**Public Right of Way** - is a highway over which the public have a right of access along the route.

**Ridge and Furrow** – is an archaeological pattern of ridges and troughs created by a system of ploughing used in Europe during the Middle Ages, typical of the open field system.

**Qualifying Body** - Either a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum, which can initiate the process of neighbourhood planning.

**Section 106** - The section of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that provided for the creation of planning obligations, now replaced by Section 46 of the 2004 Act. Section 106 agreements allow local authorities to ensure that developers provide the infrastructure needed to support new developments. Often referred to as “planning gain”.

**Scheduled Monument** - is an historic building or site of national importance that is included in the Schedule of Monuments kept by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The regime is set out in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (1).

**Stepping Stones** - unconnected areas of semi-natural habitat close to corridors, allowing more mobile species to move through the landscape.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** - is a study of the way the housing market works in any particular area. It looks into the type of households living in the area, where they work and what sort of housing they live in. It attempts to estimate future housing needs across the area, broken down by tenure and size of housing.

**SuDS** - A solution which manages surface and groundwater sustainably by mimicking natural drainage regimes and avoiding the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses. SuDS aim to reduce surface water flooding, improve water quality and enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of the environment.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** - Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** - The consideration of policies and proposals to assess their impact on sustainable development objectives.

**Sustainable Development** - is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Use Classes** - The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 put uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class.

**Wildlife Corridor** - Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.