Explanatory note to accompany the Draft Development Contributions Supplementary planning Document (Consultation Draft)

Monday 1 November 2010

Overview
The Consultation Draft (available to download as a PDF file and as an online consultation document) sets out North Somerset Council’s anticipated approach to securing financial contributions from developments towards the infrastructure which those developments require. Such contributions are secured through a Section 106 agreement relating to a planning permission.

The document addresses both:

- **strategic infrastructure** needs that have been costed and translated into a financial contribution per dwelling. In addition non residential development will also be expected to contribute in respect of certain services. However at this stage this will not include employment development; and,

- **Site by site** financial contributions.

The document considers two main geographic areas of North Somerset. These are:-

- The Weston Urban Area – which is further split into:
  - the Urban Area excluding the proposed new Parklands and Winterstoke Villages; and,
  - the proposed new Villages; and,

- The area outside the Weston Urban Area.

The document covers 12 different infrastructure categories including both North Somerset Council and external services, and is the result of extensive consultation leading to the detailed requirements set out in the Consultation Draft.

The document seeks to reflect the present problems of development viability whilst at the same time setting out clearly the infrastructure requirements that the development programme demands.

The Consultation Draft will be consulted upon from 1 November to 13 December 2010 and comments can be made online at [www.consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk](http://www.consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk).

**Key issues and focus of consultation**
The scale of the charges identified is significant and has key implications for the viability of development and delivery of infrastructure and services generally. However the Draft is being prepared at a time when there is
considerable uncertainty surrounding future service structures and availability of funding. It is considered that the Consultation Draft is sufficiently flexible to accommodate changes within services including an ongoing review mechanism.

At this stage comments are primarily sought on the **methodology** and the suggested application of charges. The delivery of infrastructure will be the subject of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) being prepared by the council, and this document along with the Development Contributions SPD and other Local Development Framework documents will provide the overall framework for development and infrastructure delivery. The IDP will include issues including prioritisation, wider funding sources and delivery timetables.

Comments to the following areas in particular are sought:-

- the range of services included, and comment on specific service areas,
- development viability and the Market Recovery Mechanism,
- the application of the Standard Charges as proposed,
- Actual delivery of infrastructure in particular any scope for reducing the costs and improving efficiency of delivery. The Draft does not seek to identify delivery models, however, views on the choice of delivery models, particularly with consequences for the Consultation Draft and charges would be welcomed.
- There is a section on co-location of facilities in the Consultation Draft and particularly the potential benefits of this e.g. reducing infrastructure costs and subsequent Standard Charge costs.
- It is recognised that the coordinated delivery of large scale development can assist in the efficient funding and delivery of infrastructure and may result in reduced costs. The overall cost of infrastructure in respect of the Winterstoke and Parklands villages will be highly dependent on the master planning work and future mechanisms adopted for service delivery and infrastructure provision. The council therefore seeks views on how best to secure and deliver the community infrastructure outlined in this Consultation Draft.

**Key consultation questions**
The following questions can be responded to online at [www.consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk](http://www.consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk) in addition to any other comments you may have.

- Are there any services which are not included in the document that you think should be?
- If you are planning a development do you think that it is straightforward to assess your development contributions commitments?
• Is it clear to you that the document is dealing with both 'strategic' requirements based on an amount per dwelling AND site specific requirements that will be dealt with as before by section 106 agreement obligations?

• If you are planning a development do you think that it is straightforward to assess your development contributions commitments?

• Do you consider that Part 3 is a useful summary of what is necessarily a long and complex document?

• Do you think the right balance is achieved between market reality and planning objectives? In this regard do you agree with the proposed Market Recovery Mechanism and the approach to viability generally?

• What do you think of the Standard Charge based approach to strategic infrastructure alongside site specific financial contributions?

• What do you think of the approach to Affordable housing?

• Do you agree with the Charging areas rationale, and the approach to charging different types of development but only having Standard Charges applied to residential development?

• We would welcome views on the delivery of infrastructure, e.g. through works in kind.

• Some of the services seek revenue contributions. Please comment on this.

• Do you have any further comments?

Next steps
Ongoing review will take place on the contents of the Consultation Draft in close collaboration with the services involved as the document progresses towards adoption.

This will include discussions around the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review on the 20 October 2010 and its implications for service delivery across the services within the SPD.

In the event that sources of funding become available that were not anticipated in the Consultation Draft, charges within the Consultation Draft will be reduced accordingly to reflect the new funding structure.
The Consultation Draft will go on to be adopted in 2011, and will be closely aligned to the IDP and other Local Development Framework documents.