

# Strategic Development Location – M5 to A38 Corridor - Churchill North Somerset

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Location Map

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## 1.0 Location characteristics

### 1.1 Site Location

Land to the northwest of Churchill and Langford.

### 1.2 Size

Approx. 165ha gross, 85ha net residential area.

### 1.3 Relevant planning status and designations

- Proposed Local Green Space designation within Langford – *Land to the West of Rowan Way*.

### 1.4 Current land use

Predominantly in agricultural use.

## 2.0 Suitability (Constraints & Opportunities)

### 2.1 Strategic Opportunity

The JSP - Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy consultation identified the M5 to A38 Corridor as accommodating up to a further 5,400 dwellings in the plan period to 2036. The background evidence (*Assessment of Strategic Development Locations Beyond Settlement Boundaries*) identified Churchill along this corridor as a location with strategic development potential to be explored further. Further work has identified potential for around 2,800 dwellings at Churchill/Langford that, alongside the potential at Banwell, has reduced the overall dwelling potential on the M5 to A38 Corridor to around 4,700 dwellings.

### 2.2 Site characteristics

Location predominantly comprises agricultural fields, on undulating land, with a high point around Windmill Hill at around 75m AOD with significant archaeological interest. Hedgerows and watercourses are extensive across the area reinforcing the rural character. King Road passes through the site as well as a number of footpaths. Churchill Academy and Sixth Form is located close to the area off of Churchill Green. Various watercourses run in a northwest direction across the site including Churchill rhyne.

### 2.3 Physical & Environmental constraints

**Heritage:** the listed Church of St John the Baptist requires sensitive treatment and its setting may extend some way towards Langford. Any development will need to be sensitive to this feature that may have a significant influence on development capacity achievable in the vicinity. Churchill Green open space immediately to the north of the church likely to have key role in this regard occupying a field parcel bounded by trees and forming an immediate setting to the church and so it would be desirable to retain undeveloped.

The Concept Diagram shows an indicative green corridor linking from Windmill Hill to the west providing some separation of the church from development parcels to the north. Further more detailed visual appraisal is required to ascertain the setting

of importance and the appropriate treatment and layout of any nearby development through more detailed masterplanning.

**Archaeology:** Area has high archaeological potential. An Iron Age univallate hillfort and Roman Fort is identified at Windmill Hill as well as other notable features of significance in the area generally. Further investigations necessary.

**Landscape:** The development area sits on higher land and falls into the J2: River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland Landscape Character Area of moderate character in good condition. It would be desirable to create distinct blocks of development that respect the existing character and form of settlement along the Mendip Hills edge rather than expanses of linear development. This can help to maintain the rural character. The form of development and interaction with surrounding countryside will be important considerations in creating new settlement that blends well with the landscape and will be an important consideration for masterplanning in due course.

### *Mendip Hills AONB*

Although the site is located outside of the AONB, the potential for adverse impact on it is present. The landscape strategy may be beneficial in helping to accommodate development with minimal impact on the AONB.

**Ecology:** The area is likely to be utilised by horseshoe bats<sup>1</sup> for foraging and commuting particularly from the south of the village to the east and north connecting woodland areas and the Langford Brook. The area has numerous linear hedgerows that are likely to assist bat commuting and some with watercourses providing opportunities for foraging. This may lead to specific requirements associated with the new development including for example the inclusion of 'dark corridors', retention of key habitats, and other measures to safeguard bats and their habitats. One opportunity may be to provide a green corridor from open countryside to the west, connecting to Windmill Hill and woodland features there<sup>2</sup>, and then linking to open countryside and woodland features to the south (shown indicatively on the Concept Diagram). The design of the new link road should also seek to minimise impacts, including for example tree planting with canopy and low level lighting subject to suitability and acceptability.

Consideration will be given to the protection of nationally significant species and habitats, notably Section 41 habitats and species. Examples of Section 41 habitats include: species rich lowland meadows, wet woodlands, traditional orchards, and reed beds. Examples of Section 41 species that have suffered sharp declines in population and/or distribution, include the Common Toad, Hedgehog, House Sparrow, Brown Hare and Skylark, as well as many insect species. Wildlife corridors and features such as 'stepping stone habitats' and other natural features need to be incorporated into new development to safeguard key habitats identified within Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006).

**Flood risk:** Area of search for development located in flood zone 1. Areas of land at risk of tidal/fluvial flooding are located to the north of the area (outside of the area of search for development) that coincides with a network of man-made watercourses required to manage surface water on the levels landscape, as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bats are Annex II species notified as mobile qualifying features of the Mendip Limestone Grasslands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC designated under the EC Habitats Directive as part of the Natura 2000 network of European Sites

<sup>2</sup> The area surrounding Windmill Hill is identified as a biodiversity enhancement area.

key watercourses including the Congresbury Yeo. High water table and poor water conveyance are recognised issues affecting the area that would influence the location, scale and suitability of development and the need for measures to ensure there are no adverse impacts on or outside of the development area.

A strategy for managing surface water will be required. This may include both site-specific measures e.g. suds, and more strategic solutions to enable the local environment to more effectively manage surface water. This has the potential to provide some betterment to existing areas where poor water conveyance and drainage is an issue. Flood catchment modelling may be required in due course.

A series of watercourses flow into the site including Churchill Rhyne and another to the north between Brinsea Farm and Ladymeade Farm. Potential to retain these within the green infrastructure network for enhanced biodiversity value.

**Other:** The Proposed Southern Strategic Support Main Pipeline runs close to the area on its western edge crossing Brinsea and then broadly following the existing pylon corridor route to Banwell Riverside. This is currently being delivered (planning application ref: 16/P/1095/F2). This may provide some constraint on development, as does the electricity pylon corridor both of which may have easement or wayleave associated. These features form a potential constraint to development beyond, and would have to be suitably addressed through detailed masterplanning

## **2.4 Existing development schemes**

The area has four proposed housing allocations; Pudding Pie Lane for 141; Says Lane for 43; land south of Bristol Road for 41; and Pudding Pie Lane (west) for 35. The first two have planning consent, the others a planning application in progress.

## **2.5 Opportunity**

Churchill and Langford are settlements located some 3-4 miles east of Weston-super-Mare and approx. 5 miles from Bristol Airport, and are two of the multiple settlements located on the main A371/A368/A38 highway corridor. The area to the northwest of Churchill offers an opportunity to create a new garden village well linked to existing settlements and supported by improved transport infrastructure to mitigate impact upon the transport network. This provides an opportunity to take traffic away from existing routes/villages. Green space would surround the garden village, some remaining in existing agricultural use and also providing opportunity for leisure and recreation, ecological mitigation and enhancement, heritage and archaeological safeguarding, and environmental mitigation.

# **3.0 Land uses, capacity, availability & viability**

## **3.1 Mix of uses**

At this stage would be expected to include residential, employment (mixed B Class, and non-B Class), retail, leisure, recreation, education and open space. Local Centre likely to contain mix of uses with location and scale to be confirmed through local planning process. Areas for surface water storage are also envisaged but these could be provided off/near-site, and should be designed to maximise wildlife value.

### 3.2 Employment (type/ha)

Employment provision and location to be addressed through the local planning process. Assumptions and suggestions provided here are initial scenarios for testing. North Somerset Council are currently preparing an Employment Land Review that will inform employment planning at the SDLs through the local plan.

This area is on the main A38 corridor with good links to Bristol Airport. Improvements to the transport network in this area may provide opportunities for employment development, including business opportunities associated with the airport. Potential to explore employment land opportunities close to the existing mushroom farm at Stock Lane to create a consolidated business park.

Potential for mixed B class employment well connected to new strategic transport routes. Initial scenarios to test are for around 7.4ha of B Class land that could translate to around 40800sqm.

### 3.3 Housing typology / density

Low Density Garden Village. Average net residential densities of around 30 to 40dph reflecting rural character of area and potential need for lower density development. A range of densities is recommended to create variety and character within the new settlement to respond to context, and to secure higher densities around centres of activity and public transport nodes.

### 3.4 Capacity

About 2,800 units.

### 3.5 Availability

Multiple landownerships present.

Additional land is likely to be required to deliver transport mitigations and other off-site infrastructure.

### 3.6 Viability

Viability likely to be dependent upon alternative sources of funding. See viability evidence for further information.

## 4.0 Concept Diagram

See Appendix 1 – Concept Diagram

*The Concept Diagrams provide the broad location or area of search for growth in each SDL denoted by the diagonal hatching. The extent of this covers the **gross development area** within which the range of land uses and features necessary to support the new development could potentially be provided, including residential, employment, education, retail, leisure, community uses, green infrastructure, and water storage as required. Development areas to be refined through more detailed work through the local planning process.*

## **5.0 Draft policy expectations for location**

### **5.1 Vision**

- Development of a new garden village to the north west of Churchill supported by new transport infrastructure.
- Form of development should respect the settlement character of the area and the rural characteristics present. In particular opportunities to safeguard the separate identity of Langford and Churchill should be explored alongside opportunities to create effective transport linkages between areas of settlement.
- Environmental enhancement and functioning of existing settlements once transport improvements are in place.

### **5.2 Housing capacity and other land uses**

- About 2,800 units of a range of types and sizes including affordable provision.
- New employment development shall be investigated and masterplanned into the development. Opportunities to link to the new transport infrastructure should be explored and the scope to support airport related businesses.
- Mixed use local centre to be provided, to be accessible to surrounding residential neighbourhoods and well connected to main highway network and public transport routes.
- Community uses, to be identified and integrated through masterplanning.
- Three primary schools of 2.4ha each to include early year's provision. Located to be accessible to surrounding neighbourhoods to maximise walking to school opportunities along safe and attractive routes.
- A secondary school is required for this and the Banwell SDL with location to be defined through more detailed masterplanning and consideration of educational requirements across North Somerset.
- Land to be identified to accommodate strategic transport mitigations and other infrastructure including both on-site, near-site and off-site requirements.
- Primary health care facility.

### **5.3 Transport**

- The development will contribute to a strategic transport package including a new distributor route connecting to the A38, and connection and improvement to the A368/A38 junction. This is a package of transport works with an early phase identified as the Banwell Bypass. Additional improvements to existing network also required.
- This is a summary headline of the key transport requirements, is not definitive of the required transport mitigations and further detailed work will be progressed on transport matters. See Joint Transport Study and background papers for further detail.

### **5.4 Green infrastructure**

- The principle of multi-functional and interconnected green infrastructure should be pursued to offer multiple benefits including to wildlife and biodiversity, recreation, and flood attenuation and to include requirements for delivery, future maintenance and management.

- The approach to green infrastructure should seek to support the rural character for example by creating 'soft' edges to the development blending well into the surrounding countryside. This is likely to be important in protecting the setting of the AONB.
- Windmill Hill forms a key feature of landscape, heritage and ecological value that should form a focal point within the network of green infrastructure and safeguard the setting of the historic village of Churchill. Churchill Green also considered to have a key role within the green network and is considered to form an important part of the setting to the church.
- Identification of specific uses on green spaces surrounding new settlement particularly between existing settlements including potential for strategic gaps.
- Additional strategic green infrastructure to avoid significant impacts to Natura 2000 sites

## 5.5 Infrastructure requirements

- Suitable drainage infrastructure including to reduce rate of run-off, and provision for long-term storage, and with benefits to water quality. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity should be explored.
- Ecological mitigation including features designed to safeguard habitats and species, retention of key habitats and replacement where necessary.
- Sustainable energy infrastructure including opportunities for heat networks explored early in order that any enabling measures can be secured to enable an efficient and effective delivery. The form and layout of development, and the distribution of land uses is likely to be a key issue in designing the infrastructure. Management of the infrastructure going forward should also be considered.
- Potential requirements for utilities upgrades.

## 5.6 Energy

- Opportunities to secure a zero carbon new settlement will be explored including incorporating a range of sustainable measures, including potential district heating, renewables, energy generation, passivhaus standard homes, homeworking measures and electric car charging facilities etc.

## 6.0 Barriers to delivery - critical interventions

### 6.1 Key identified risks to suitability, availability and achievability

The critical risks are:

- Un-coordinated piecemeal development that fails to secure in a coordinated way, the necessary provision and improvement of services, facilities and infrastructure.
- Delivery of strategic transportation improvements delivered at a suitable time to facilitate development within the JSP plan period. Early prioritisation / delivery required to enable development to be delivered. Land assembly for highway outside of the SDL will be critical to enabling development.
- Drainage constraints.
- Ecological/ biodiversity impacts.
- Impact on the AONB.

**6.2 Key actions needed to reduce risks (e.g. investment in new infrastructure, dealing with fragmented land ownership, environmental improvement, or a need to review development plan policy)**

- Collaborative approach between public and private partners to achieve planning policy framework through local plan process, subsequent masterplanning and development management processes to secure consensus on phasing of infrastructure and approach to delivery.
- Clear understanding of transport requirements, options, and costs supported by funding strategy and means of delivery. Consensus achieved with development partners on schemes required and means of delivery. Pursue opportunities for funding bids where available.
- Consider utilising New Towns legislation to deliver development effectively with required infrastructure. Review of developer contributions and wider funding strategy as part of selection of appropriate development delivery model.
- Ongoing dialogue between flooding agencies. Further investigations are required to understand the existing drainage conditions of the area, the additional impacts of development including volumes of run-off, and the potential options for mitigation if required.
- It is expected that ecological issues can be addressed through masterplanning and the integration of suitable features/safeguarding on or off site. Further engagement with Natural England required to scope additional evidence required. Ecological issues to be addressed on a strategic basis across SDL.
- Further consideration of landscape strategy including in consultation with the Mendip Hills AONB unit.

## 7.0 Indicative trajectory

7.1 Assumed lead in time of 9 years, to allow for strategic transportation measures to be funded and programmed, preparatory stages e.g. site acquisition, and setting in place of the Development Plan. Indicative build-out rate of 50-300 dpa. Estimated annual average rate of 243 dwellings.

Critical dependencies include: provision of strategic transport mitigations; funding measures identified and in place during lead-in phase; provision of suitable ecological/environmental mitigation; and land assembly including for enabling infrastructure; legal/delivery structures in place.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
<b>Churchill</b>										50	75

2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	Capacity within Plan period
150	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	2675

Post 2036	Total Capacity
125	2800

# Appendix 1 –Concept Diagram

