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<b>Project</b>	Somerset Local Plan SA, inc. HIA	<b>Date</b>	May 2026
<b>Note</b>	Initial Spatial Options Assessment	<b>Ref</b>	UE0772
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<b>Status</b>	V1 Final		

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The spatial strategy for the Somerset Local Plan refers to the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and distribution of development across the plan area. It provides and communicates a spatial interpretation of the plan vision and can play an integral role in co-ordinating development and infrastructure delivery.
- 1.2 Somerset Council developed a long list of 19 initial spatial strategy options in response to data analysis, early engagement, Duty to Co-operate discussions and the evidence base. The development of initial spatial strategy options is described in detail in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper<sup>1</sup>. Council Officers then undertook a series of workshops to refine the spatial strategy options for further consideration. Six core options, which are considered to be reasonable in the context of delivering the vision and outcomes of the Local Plan, were selected. These six options have been subjected to high-level Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) with a view to informing the identification of a preferred spatial strategy. The Spatial Strategy Topic Paper also recognises additional potential spatial strategy options relating to new settlements, promoted sites and a blended strategy. These options are not yet spatially definable and therefore have not been considered within this assessment; however, future iterations of the SA/SEA will consider these as necessary.
- 1.3 This document presents a tabulated assessment of the six core spatial options against the SA/SEA Framework which comprises 11 objectives each supported by a series of decision-aiding questions. A simplified Framework is provided in Table 1.1, with a detailed version including all decision-aiding questions provided in Appendix I. The Framework was developed through the SA/SEA scoping process, which included the collection of baseline data and a policies, plans and programmes review to identify key issues and opportunities in Somerset. A draft scoping report was sent to the three statutory consultees<sup>2</sup> in October 2025. A further consultation on a refined version of the SA/SEA Framework was held with the statutory consultees in April 2026. Amendments to the scoping material and to the Framework itself were made in response to their comments.

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<sup>1</sup>Somerset Council: Topic Paper: Spatial Strategy, Local Plan 2045. Available [online](#).

<sup>2</sup> Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency

**Table 1.1: Simplified SA/SEA Framework**

SA/SEA Objective No.	SA/SEA Objective
1	Protect, restore and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity in Somerset
2	Provide affordable, accessible and decent housing in Somerset to meet local needs
3	Promote accessibility and create well-integrated communities
4	Actively promote health and wellbeing for residents across Somerset, including creation of "liveable" and healthy places
5	Protect Somerset's natural resources, including soils and agricultural land, water resources and clean air
6	Support efficient and sustainable use of natural resources
7	Minimise and contribute to radical reductions in carbon emissions and to achieving carbon neutrality in Somerset at an accelerated rate
8	Promote adaptation and resilience to the effects of climate change
9	Conserve and enhance local distinctiveness, the historic environment including heritage assets in and around Somerset
10	Protect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of valued landscapes in and around Somerset
11	Promote a vibrant local economy in Somerset

## 2 Methodology

- 2.1 A high-level assessment of each of the six spatial strategy options against the SA/SEA Framework has been undertaken. Each option has been assigned a score against each SA/SEA objective ranging from strong positive through to strong adverse. The scoring guide is provided in Table 2.1. The sustainability scores are indicative and provide a score relative to other options as opposed to absolute scores which require more information on the spatial distribution of individual site allocations. Future iterations of the SA/SEA will be based on absolute scores as the location of specific sites to accommodate the proposed growth at settlements becomes known.
- 2.2 The Spatial Strategy Topic Paper provides a detailed breakdown of the spatial strategy options by settlement, setting out how housing growth could potentially be distributed across each settlement within the settlement hierarchy. The distribution is indicative at this stage, intended to help guide broad understanding of how each option could differ spatially, though is not definitive and may well evolve as options are iterated, refined and move towards a preferred spatial strategy and site availability and options are layered in. This indicative distribution of growth has been overlaid with spatial constraints data to inform a prediction of potentially significant effects. The assessment is necessarily high-level as no information relating to where potential housing growth may occur within any given settlement, or individual site locations is available at this stage.

**Table 2.1: Scoring Guide**

Sustainability score	Description of effect
++	Strong positive effect
+	Minor positive effect
0	Neutral effect
-	Minor adverse effect
--	Strong adverse effect
+/-	Mixed effect
?	Uncertain effect

2.1 At this strategic, high level it is necessary to base the assessment on a series of assumptions about potential impacts and the distribution of environmental constraints across Somerset. To aid the reader and avoid too much repetition within the individual assessment tables those key assumptions underpinning the assessment for each SA/SEA objective are set out in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: High-level Assessment Assumptions**

SA/SEA Objective	High-level Assessment Assumptions
Objective 1: Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>Biodiversity interest in Somerset is widespread, but predominantly focussed outside of the existing settlements. Internationally and nationally designated sites are concentrated in the centre and north of the county, associated with the Somerset Levels and Severn Estuary.</p> <p>Locally designated sites, including Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites, are widespread across the county, including the urban areas.</p> <p>The HRA Screening and Scoping Report<sup>3</sup> provides a high-level assessment of the potential for each of the six spatial strategy options to have adverse effects upon European sites in and around the county with respect to air quality, water quality, recreational disturbance and urbanisation effects. Therefore the assessment of impacts reported here relating to European sites has been drawn from that study. Key assumptions within that study include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Water quality effects:</b> Although each option involves growth within nutrient-sensitive catchments, those that direct higher levels of development outside nutrient neutrality areas (such as around Bridgwater and the northern parts of the Plan area) are expected to have fewer negative impacts;</li> <li>• <b>Recreational disturbance effects:</b> At a high-level impacts are likely to be reduced when development is focussed to the south of the Local Plan area where fewer European sites are located; and</li> <li>• <b>Urbanisation effects:</b> Focussing new development within or adjacent to existing built-up settlements can reduce the need to create new sources of urbanisation</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Lepus (2025): *Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Somerset Local Plan, Screening and Scoping Report*, October 2025

SA/SEA Objective	High-level Assessment Assumptions
	<p>pressure. Spatial strategy options that direct a greater share of development to the south and southeast, where fewer European sites are located, are likely to pose a lower risk in terms of urbanisation impacts.</p>
<p>Objective 2: Affordable &amp; decent housing</p>	<p>All options are considered to be able to deliver the full housing requirement for Somerset. In the Spatial Strategy Options Paper, Option 6 falls short of the full requirement, but only because the remainder would be delivered outside the listed settlements in the wider open countryside.</p> <p>The most deprived communities in Somerset, falling within the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England (2025 census), are found in the Tier 1 settlements of Taunton, Yeovil and Bridgwater and the Tier 2 settlement of Highbridge.</p> <p>In the majority of cases, larger sites provide opportunity for a greater range of types and sizes of home.</p>
<p>Objective 3: Accessibility</p>	<p>The prediction of accessibility effects has been informed by the Settlement Role and Function Study and scoring arising out of the WSP Accessibility Tool<sup>4</sup>. The overall accessibility scores assigned in this study demonstrate increasing accessibility further up the settlement hierarchy, that is to say that the Tier 1 settlements have the highest accessibility, followed by the Tier 2 settlements etc. There is variability between settlements in each tier and in some instances, settlements do not follow the trend: for example North Petherton (Tier 3a) has a higher accessibility score than some Tier 2 settlements. But on the whole the settlements conform to this trend.</p> <p>Development in general is likely to stimulate provision of new infrastructure, including new services and facilities which will benefit new and existing residents. This includes in rural communities, although the scale of development would need to be significant enough to improve provision of services.</p>
<p>Objective 4: Health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Settlements with higher levels of accessibility are more likely to provide residents with better access to health infrastructure including healthcare, food retail, sports facilities and open space which are all indicators of good health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Higher levels of accessibility are more likely to provide opportunities for active travel with associated health benefits.</p>
<p>Objective 5: Protect natural resources</p>	<p>There is little Predictive Grade 1 and Grade 2 agricultural land in the county, although land around the fringes of some of the larger settlements does include pockets of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural resource, particularly Yeovil. Soilscales data suggests that the most fertile soils are largely located in the north and east of the county. Source protection zones extend within the settlements of Cheddar, Shepton Mallett, Frome, Crewkerne and South Petherton.</p> <p>The only Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Somerset encompasses the entire built up area of Yeovil.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Somerset Council (2026) Settlement Role and Function Study, available [online](#)

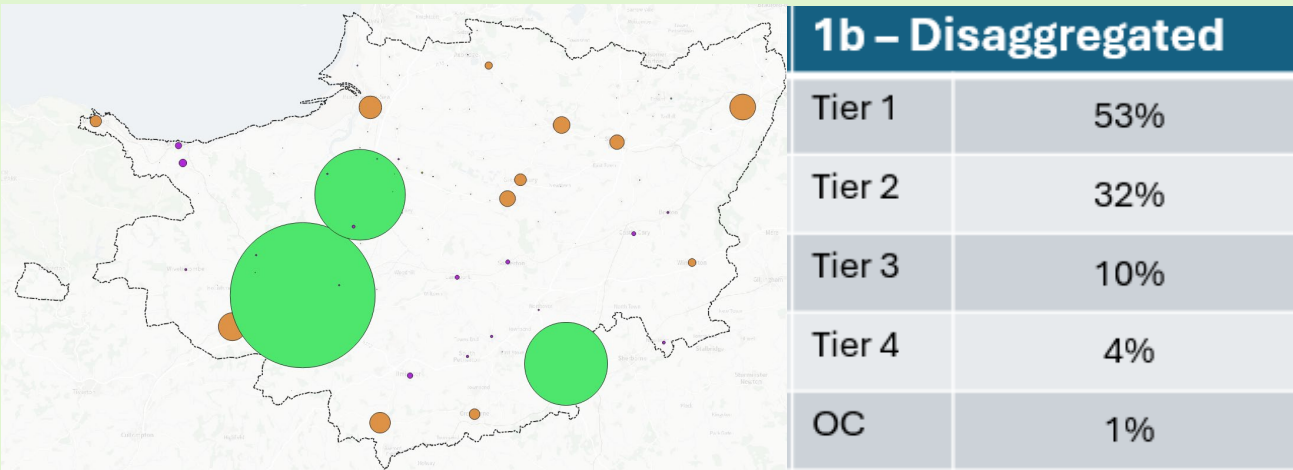
<b>SA/SEA Objective</b>	<b>High-level Assessment Assumptions</b>
6: Efficient & sustainable use of resources	<p>Higher density development is more likely to be appropriate in the larger settlements. Minerals safeguarding areas are spread throughout the county.</p>
7: Minimise carbon emissions	<p>Development in settlements with higher accessibility scores is considered to have lower associated carbon emissions as residents will be less reliant on private vehicles.</p> <p>On the whole, digital connectivity and broadband speeds are higher in the urban areas, thereby providing better opportunities for working for home.</p> <p>In terms of domestic carbon emissions, it is not possible to differentiate between spatial options based on their ability to connect directly into a renewables generation site; however, larger sites, which are more likely to come forward in the higher tier settlements, are likely to be better suited to having a direct connection and also have greater potential for district-heating networks.</p> <p>Peaty soils are important carbon sinks. Developing on peaty soils can release large amounts of carbon into the atmosphere. There are areas of deep peaty soils and soils with peaty pockets throughout Somerset, with the deep peaty soils predominantly in the centre of the county; these are mostly located beyond the existing urban areas.</p>
8: Adaptation & resilience to climate change	<p>Development in the flood zone will be susceptible to the effects of flooding exacerbated by climate change.</p> <p>Different soil types influence rates of runoff and infiltration and in turn the effectiveness of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). Soils data indicate a range of soil types across the county. Impermeable soils could potentially exacerbate the effects of flooding and limit the effectiveness of SuDS.</p> <p>Climate change adaptation and resilience will largely be site specific and dependent on how an individual development comes forward.</p>
9: Historic environment	<p>Heritage assets are spread throughout the county with listed buildings and conservation areas concentrated within settlements for the most part, including small villages. There are also a number of scheduled monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs) and two battlefields in the county. Areas of archaeological importance are largely concentrated in the centre of the county outside the existing settlements for the most part. Heritage impacts, both direct and indirect through impacts to setting, will be highly location specific.</p>
10: Landscape	<p>There are a number of National Landscapes across Somerset and the Exmoor National Park lies in the west of the county. These areas will be highly sensitive to development, and development in proximity to these areas could adversely impact landscape character and alter views from within the sensitive areas. The Spatial Strategy Topic Paper acknowledges potential for impacts up to 2km from a designated landscape. Ultimately, the potential for a development to impact upon the landscape will depend upon its layout, design, orientation, scale, massing and material selection amongst other things.</p>

SA/SEA Objective	High-level Assessment Assumptions
11: Economy	<p>Settlements with high levels of accessibility are more likely to provide residents with better access to employment and training opportunities.</p> <p>Development within settlements is likely to contribute to the vitality and viability of these communities.</p>

### 3 Assessment Tables

- 3.1 Table 3.1 to Table 3.6 set out the assessment for each spatial strategy option. A description of each option is provided at the beginning of each table, together with an indicative visualisation taken from the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper. The visualisations display a coloured dot for each settlement within the settlement hierarchy, coloured according to its tier. Each dot is sized according to the level of growth that would be accommodated in the relevant spatial strategy option. The dots are indicative of this relative share of the growth, and are not intended as a definitive boundary or to suggest all land falling within them is appropriate for development. The option numbering is not consecutive as these are a subset of options from a longer list set out in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper. These six spatial options are those selected for further assessment and iteration as they are considered to be reasonable in the context of delivering the vision and outcomes of the Local Plan.
- 3.2 Table 3.7 provides a score summary of all options alongside one another for ease of comparison.

**Table 3.1: Spatial Strategy Option 1b Appraisal**

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 1b: Combined Roll-Forward by Settlement												
		<p>This option involves using the existing pattern of growth distribution from each area and continuing this into the Somerset Local Plan.</p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="1355 496 1854 962"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">1b – Disaggregated</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tier 1</td> <td>53%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 2</td> <td>32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 3</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 4</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OC</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	1b – Disaggregated		Tier 1	53%	Tier 2	32%	Tier 3	10%	Tier 4	4%	OC	1%
1b – Disaggregated														
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Tier 3	10%													
Tier 4	4%													
OC	1%													
1: Biodiversity & geodiversity	-	<p>Of all six options, Option 1b allocates the greatest percentage of development to Tier 1 and 2 settlements. Directing the majority of growth to these higher order settlements is likely to avoid significant adverse ecological effects to the habitats and species supported by these international and national designations for the most part, although there are exceptions. The HRA Screening and Scoping Report identifies some potential for contributions to air quality effects at European sites associated with Option 1b, although development in higher tier settlements will be able to maximise use of sustainable transport modes limiting emissions. In terms of water quality, Option 1b would result in development within the catchments of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar and the River Axe SAC thereby contributing to phosphate pollution at these sites in the absence of mitigation. At a high-level, the HRA Screening and Scoping Report identifies that recreational disturbance effects are likely to be reduced when development is focussed in the south of</p>												

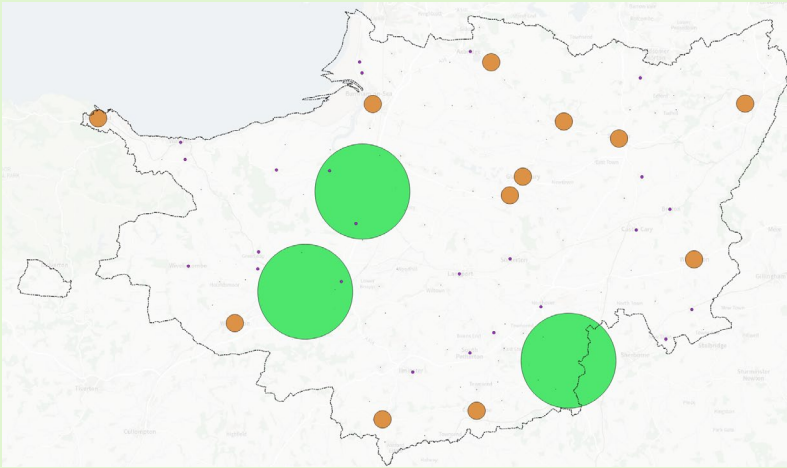
SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 1b: Combined Roll-Forward by Settlement
		<p>the county; Option 1b therefore has potential for some recreational impact. Option 1b is predicted to exert fewer urbanisation effects given that development in the higher tiers of the settlement hierarchy is prioritised.</p> <p>Taunton is the most constrained of the Tier 1 settlements with respect to local ecological designations, particularly associated with the River Tone and other streams flowing through the town. There is potential for more minor adverse effects to the habitats and species associated with these designations from direct habitat loss or non-physical disturbance.</p> <p>Within this option, just 14% of growth would be directed to Tier 3 and 4 settlements and only 1% to the very small settlements, classified as open countryside. Whilst there is potential for adverse effects, given the scale of development proposed, these are predicted to be comparatively minor.</p> <p>Development focussed around urban extensions to main settlements has potential to deliver Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) measures around towns and enhance nature. More limited development in the countryside may also reduce detrimental impacts upon more sensitive ecological areas and other aspects of LNRS delivery.</p> <p>Overall, minor adverse biodiversity effects are predicted for Option 1b.</p>
2: Affordable & decent housing	++	<p>The spread of growth in Option 1b would be consistent with the settlement hierarchy with the greatest growth in Tier 1 and 2 settlements, and limited development in rural communities.</p> <p>Given that Option 1b directs the majority of development to the Tier 1 settlements, it is considered to have potential to provide affordable housing in the most deprived communities in Somerset. The extent of impacts will depend on the exact location of the preferred site allocations, as well as viability and other policy requirements.</p> <p>The types and size of dwellings to be provided will largely be driven by the size of individual site allocations with larger sites generally providing more opportunity for range of types and sizes of home. Whilst individual site allocations have not yet been selected, it is reasonable to assume that the larger Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements, where the majority of growth is directed in Option 1b, are more likely to have the necessary infrastructure to accommodate larger development sites with positive effects as the housing needs of more groups of people are met.</p> <p>Overall strong positive effects in terms of housing provision are predicted for Option 1b.</p>
3: Accessibility	++	<p>By directing the majority of growth to the highest tiers of the settlement hierarchy and by limiting growth in the smaller settlements, Option 1b is predicted to have strong positive accessibility effects for new residents as they would have to travel less to access local services and would have better access to sustainable modes of transport when they do need</p>

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 1b: Combined Roll-Forward by Settlement
		<p>to travel. Option 1b delivers the majority (24%) of growth to Taunton which has the highest accessibility score of all settlements in Somerset.</p> <p>Development in general is also likely to stimulate provision of new infrastructure, including new services and facilities which will benefit new and existing residents. However, distributing growth predominantly to the higher tiers of the settlement hierarchy is unlikely to provide new infrastructure in rural communities and is unlikely to address issues of rural isolation for existing communities. On balance, Option 1b is predicted to deliver strong positive effects in terms of accessibility, particularly for new residents.</p>
4: Health & wellbeing	+	<p>As for objective 3, residential development within the Tier 1 and 2 settlements is likely to provide new residents with good access to existing health infrastructure. This good accessibility is also predicted to promote opportunities for active travel with associated health benefits. On the flip side, development in the Tier 1 and 2 settlements is more likely to expose residents to poor air quality and high levels of noise without mitigation. Development in proximity to the most deprived communities in Somerset (as per objective 2) provides opportunities for improving access to health facilities for these communities. Existing residents in rural communities are less likely to benefit from new health infrastructure in this option. But on balance, minor positive health and wellbeing effects are predicted for Option 1b, particularly for new residents.</p>
5: Protect natural resources	+/-	<p>Focussing development within the existing urban areas of the Tier 1 &amp; 2 settlements will avoid impacts to valuable soil resources in Somerset, but development on the urban fringes may result in some losses of BMV land, particularly around Yeovil.</p> <p>In terms of water resources, some development is proposed for the settlements into which source protection zones significantly encroach. Taunton, Wellington and Cheddar fall within Drinking Water Protected Areas and so there is some potential for contamination of groundwater resources. The River Parrett runs through Bridgwater and the River Tone runs through Taunton and there is potential for contamination of these watercourses for Option 1b. Development within Yeovil could contribute to further deteriorations in air quality in the town.</p> <p>Overall, mixed effects are predicted associated with the protection of natural resources.</p>
6: Efficient & sustainable use of resources	++	<p>Focussing development to the settlements in the highest tiers of the settlement hierarchy is likely to maximise opportunities for development of brownfield land and opportunities for the remediation of contaminated land. Rolling forward existing patterns of growth from each individual planning area is likely to facilitate the development of committed sites. Higher density development is also more likely to be appropriate in the larger settlements further</p>

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 1b: Combined Roll-Forward by Settlement
		contributing to efficient land use. Safeguarded deposits of sand and gravel and building stone extend into some of the Tier 1 and 2 settlements, including Taunton and Bridgwater, and include undeveloped areas, which if allocated could result in the sterilisation of mineral resource. However, the potential for sterilisation is considered to be lower than for more rurally dispersed options. Overall, strong positive effects are predicted for Option 1b in terms of supporting efficient and sustainable use of natural resources.
7: Minimise carbon emissions	++	<p>The strong positive accessibility effects for Option 1b, described for objective 3 will contribute to reduced transport carbon emissions compared to more rurally dispersed options. On the whole, digital connectivity and broadband speeds are higher in the urban areas, thereby providing better opportunities for working for home. Larger sites, which are more likely to come forward in the higher tier settlements, are likely to be better suited to having a direct connection and also have greater potential for district-heating networks.</p> <p>Focussing development to the largest settlements in the county will largely avoid carbon emissions associated with development on peaty soils. Interaction with peaty soils is most likely around Glastonbury / Street, although these areas are mostly within the floodplain, and therefore are less likely to be suitable for development in any case. Overall strong positive effects are predicted for Option 1b in terms of minimising carbon emissions.</p>
8: Adaptation & resilience to climate change	--	A number of settlements where development is focussed in Option 1b, fall within flood zone 3 in particular Bridgwater, Highbridge & Burnham and Minehead & Alcombe. The latter two also include areas susceptible to coastal change. A number of Tier 1 and 2 settlements are not located on freely draining soils, potentially exacerbating the effects of flooding and limiting the effectiveness of SuDS. Whilst climate change adaptation and resilience will largely be site specific and dependent on how an individual development comes forward, at a high-level, Option 1b is considered to have the potential for strong adverse effects.
9: Historic environment	-	Heritage impacts, both direct and indirect through impacts to setting, will be highly location specific, however directing development within settlements, and particularly in the town and village centres, carries potential for impacts to listed buildings and conservation areas. Overall minor adverse effects are predicted for Option 1b.
10: Landscape	-	Taunton (Tier 1) and a large number of Tier 2 settlements fall within 2km of landscape designations. Most significant are Minehead & Alcombe (immediately adjacent to Exmoor National Park) and, Wells and Cheddar (immediately adjacent to the Mendip Hills National Landscape). Taunton extends marginally into the 2km buffer around Blackdown Hills and Quantock Hills National Landscapes. Wellington and Chard extend into the 2km buffer around Blackdown Hills National Landscape and Crewkerne extends into the 2km buffer around the Dorset National Landscape. However, given

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 1b: Combined Roll-Forward by Settlement
		the size and nature of these settlements and the surrounding infrastructure, overall landscape effects associated with Option 1b are considered to be minor adverse at a strategic scale, acknowledging that landscape impacts will ultimately be determined at a site level.
11: Economy	+	Option 1b will contribute to the vitality and viability of Tier 1 and 2 settlements, and is likely to provide good access to employment and training opportunities, as indicated by the strong positive accessibility score reported for objective 3. Rural communities will see less economic benefit in Option 1b but overall, minor positive effects are predicted.

**Table 3.2: Spatial Strategy Option 2c Appraisal**

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 2c: Tiered Percentage Growth												
		<p>This option would see a set percentage of growth in housing stock for each settlement depending on the tier of the settlement hierarchy, responding to some suggestions received during early engagement. Settlements in Tier 1 would see a 45% increase in existing housing stock, 35% increase for Tier 2 settlements, 25% for Tier 3 settlements, 15% increase for Tier 4 settlements and 5% increase for settlements in the open countryside.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">2c – Varied %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tier 1</td> <td>47%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 2</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 3</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 4</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OC</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	2c – Varied %		Tier 1	47%	Tier 2	35%	Tier 3	11%	Tier 4	7%	OC	1%
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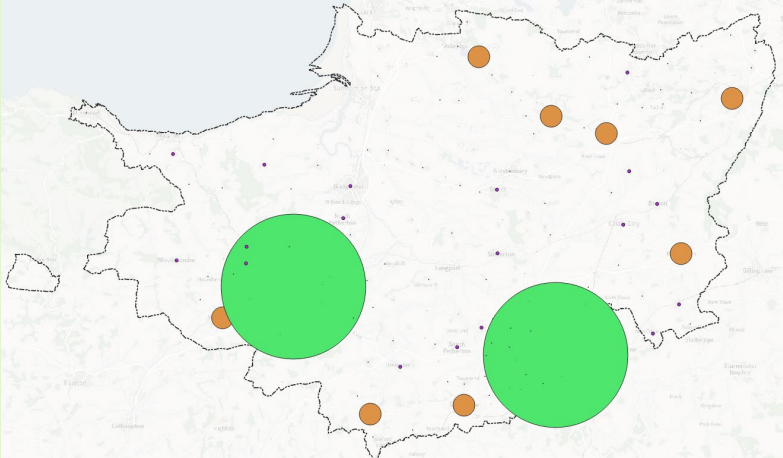
SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 2c: Tiered Percentage Growth
1: Biodiversity & geodiversity	-	<p>The spatial distribution of growth for Option 2c is similar to Option 1b, with the Tier 1 and 2 settlements receiving the greatest percentage of growth, but with a slight dispersal shift as comparatively more growth is proposed in a number of different smaller settlements across tiers 3, 4 and the open countryside. The HRA Screening and Scoping Report identifies some potential for contributions to air quality effects at European sites associated with Option 2c, although development in higher tier settlements will be able to maximise use of sustainable transport modes limiting emissions. In terms of water quality, Option 2c would result in development within the catchments of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar and the River Axe SAC thereby contributing to phosphate pollution at these sites in the absence of mitigation. At a high-level, the HRA Screening and Scoping Report identifies that recreational disturbance effects are likely to be reduced when development is focussed in the south of the county; Option 2c therefore has potential for some recreational impact. Option 2c is predicted to exert fewer urbanisation effects given that development in the higher tiers of the settlement hierarchy is prioritised.</p> <p>In terms of local designations, there is potential for more minor adverse effects associated with habitat loss and non-physical disturbance within settlements such as Taunton and also around the Tier 3, 4 and open countryside settlements which receive 18% of growth. Whilst development focussed around all settlements has potential to deliver on associated LNRS measures and enhance access to nature, these reasonable levels of development in the countryside will likely have a detrimental impact upon more sensitive ecological areas and other aspects of LNRS delivery.</p> <p>Overall, biodiversity effects are predicted to be similar to Option 1b. Minor adverse effects are predicted overall.</p>
2: Affordable, accessible & decent housing	++	<p>The spread of growth in Option 2c would be consistent with the settlement hierarchy with the greatest growth in Tier 1 and 2 settlements, and limited development in a more dispersed spread of rural communities.</p> <p>As for Option 1b, Option 2c directs the majority of growth to Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements containing the most deprived communities in Somerset, and actually allocates slightly more homes in Highbridge &amp; Burnham. Therefore, Option 2c is considered to have potential to provide affordable housing in these communities, although the extent of impacts will depend on the exact location of the preferred site allocations, as well as viability and other policy requirements.</p> <p>The types and size of dwellings to be provided will largely be driven by the size of individual site allocations with larger sites generally providing more opportunity for range of types and sizes of home. Whilst individual site allocations have not yet been selected, it is reasonable to assume that the larger Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements, where the majority of growth is directed in Option 2c, are more likely to have the necessary infrastructure to accommodate larger development</p>

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 2c: Tiered Percentage Growth
		sites with positive effects as the housing needs of more groups of people are met. Overall strong positive effects in terms of housing provision are predicted for Option 2c.
3: Accessibility	++	<p>As for Option 1b, by directing the majority of growth to the highest tiers of the settlement hierarchy and by limiting growth in the smaller settlements, Option 2c is predicted to have strong positive accessibility effects for new residents as they would have to travel less to access local services and would have better access to sustainable modes of transport when they do need to travel. Option 2c delivers the majority (20.2%) of growth to Taunton which has the highest accessibility score of all settlements in Somerset, this is slightly less that Option 1b allocates to Taunton.</p> <p>Development in general is also likely to stimulate provision of new infrastructure, including new services and facilities which will benefit new and existing residents. However, distributing growth predominantly to the higher tiers of the settlement hierarchy is unlikely to provide new infrastructure in rural communities and is unlikely to address issues of rural isolation for existing communities, even though Option 2c delivers slightly more rural dispersal. On balance, strong positive effects are predicted in terms of accessibility, particularly for new residents, with the magnitude of effects slightly reduced compared to Option 1b.</p>
4: Health & wellbeing	+	<p>As for objective 3, residential development within the Tier 1 and 2 settlements is likely to provide new residents with good access to existing health infrastructure. This good accessibility is also predicted to promote opportunities for active travel with associated health benefits. On the flip side, development in the Tier 1 and 2 settlements is more likely to expose residents to poor air quality and high levels of noise without mitigation. Development in proximity to the most deprived communities in Somerset (as per objective 2) provides opportunities for improving access to health facilities for these communities. Existing residents in rural communities are less likely to benefit from new health infrastructure in this option. On balance, minor positive health and wellbeing effects are predicted for Option 2c, particularly for new residents, with the magnitude of effects slightly reduced compared to Option 1b.</p>
5: Protect natural resources	+/-	<p>As for Option 1b, focussing development within the existing urban areas of the Tier 1 &amp; 2 settlements will avoid impacts to valuable soil resources in Somerset, but development on the urban fringes may result in some losses of BMV land, particularly around Yeovil.</p> <p>In terms of water resources, some development is proposed for the settlements into which source protection zones significantly encroach. The River Parrett runs through Bridgwater and the River Tone runs through Taunton and there is potential for contamination of these watercourses for Option 2c. The River Brue also runs through Highbridge &amp; Burnham which would receive slightly more development in Option 2c than Option 1b. Development within the Yeovil</p>

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 2c: Tiered Percentage Growth
		AQMA could contribute to further deteriorations in air quality in the town. Overall, mixed effects are predicted associated with the protection of natural resources.
6: Efficient & sustainable use of resources	++	As for Option 1b, focussing development to the settlements in the highest tiers of the settlement hierarchy is likely to maximise opportunities for development of brownfield land and opportunities for the remediation of contaminated land. High density development is also more likely to be appropriate in the larger settlements further contributing to efficient land use. Safeguarded deposits of sand and gravel and building stone extend into some of the Tier 1 and 2 settlements, including Taunton and Bridgwater, and include undeveloped areas, which if allocated could result in the sterilisation of mineral resource. However, the potential for sterilisation is considered to be lower than for more rurally dispersed options. Overall, strong positive effects are predicted for Option 2c in terms of supporting efficient and sustainable use of natural resources.
7: Minimise carbon emissions	++	The strong positive accessibility effects for Option 2c, described for objective 3, will contribute to reduced transport carbon emissions as for Option 1b, although the slight rural dispersal within this option provides slightly less opportunity for reduced transport emissions compared to Option 1b. On the whole, digital connectivity and broadband speeds are higher in the urban areas, thereby providing better opportunities for working for home. Larger sites, which are more likely to come forward in the higher tier settlements, are likely to be better suited to having a direct connection and also have greater potential for district-heating networks. Opportunities for larger sites are slightly fewer than for Option 1b in light of the rural dispersal. As for Option 1b, focussing development to the largest settlements in the county will largely avoid development on peaty soils which serve as important carbon sinks. Overall strong positive effects are predicted for Option 2c in terms of minimising carbon emissions, although the magnitude of positive effects is reduced compared to Option 1b
8: Adaptation & resilience to climate change	--	Compared to Option 1b, Option 2c sees a larger proportion of the Tier 2 growth allocated to Highbridge & Burnham and Minehead & Alcombe, both of which fall within flood zone 3 and which are close to areas susceptible to coastal change. Whilst climate change adaptation and resilience will largely be site specific and dependent on how an individual development comes forward, at a high-level, Option 2c is considered to have the potential for strong adverse effects.
9: Historic environment	-	As for Option 1b, heritage assets are present in the majority of settlements to which Option 2c directs development. Heritage impacts, both direct and indirect through impacts to setting, will be highly location specific, however directing development within settlements, particularly in town and village centres, carries potential for impacts to listed buildings and conservation areas. Overall minor adverse effects are predicted for Option 2c.

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 2c: Tiered Percentage Growth
10: Landscape	-	<p>Similar landscape effects are predicted as for Option 1b although some greater dispersal could also lead to increased local landscape issues. A number of Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements are located within 2km of these designated areas, as described in the Option 1b objective 10 commentary. Option 2c allocates a larger proportion of Tier 2 growth to Minehead &amp; Alcombe which are immediately adjacent to the Exmoor National Park, increasing the magnitude of potential adverse landscape effects here. As for Option 1b, minor adverse effects are predicted at a strategic scale, acknowledging that landscape impacts will ultimately be determined at a site level.</p>
11: Economy	+	<p>Option 2c will contribute to the vitality and viability of Tier 1 and 2 settlements, and is likely to provide good access to employment and training opportunities, as indicated by the strong positive accessibility score reported for objective 3. Development in some smaller settlements will contribute to the vitality and viability of these communities. Overall, minor positive effects are predicted.</p>

**Table 3.3: Spatial Strategy Option 4b Appraisal**

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4b: Climate Resilience												
		<p>This option avoids significant growth in the areas at greatest risk of impacts from climate change, focussing on fluvial flood risk and coastal elements as key indicators of this.</p> <p>To arrive at this option, settlements were buffered by 200m to provide an indicative growth area around settlements. These indicative growth areas were then overlaid with flood zone, coastal erosion and ground instability constraints<sup>5</sup>. Settlements were downgraded in the settlement hierarchy depending on the extent of overlap with these constraints. The overall plan growth was then distributed across the settlements in each of the updated tiers.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <table border="1" data-bbox="1346 595 1854 1054" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">4b – Climate resilient</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tier 1</td> <td>48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 2</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 3</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 4</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OC</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	4b – Climate resilient		Tier 1	48%	Tier 2	29%	Tier 3	10%	Tier 4	10%	OC	3%
4b – Climate resilient														
Tier 1	48%													
Tier 2	29%													
Tier 3	10%													
Tier 4	10%													
OC	3%													
1: Biodiversity & geodiversity	+	Option 4b directs significantly less development to the Tier 1 settlement of Bridgwater and the Tier 2 settlement of Highbridge & Burnham on account of the significant flood risk constraints in and around these towns.												

<sup>5</sup> Further detail of the overlay analysis and the specific datasets used is set out in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper

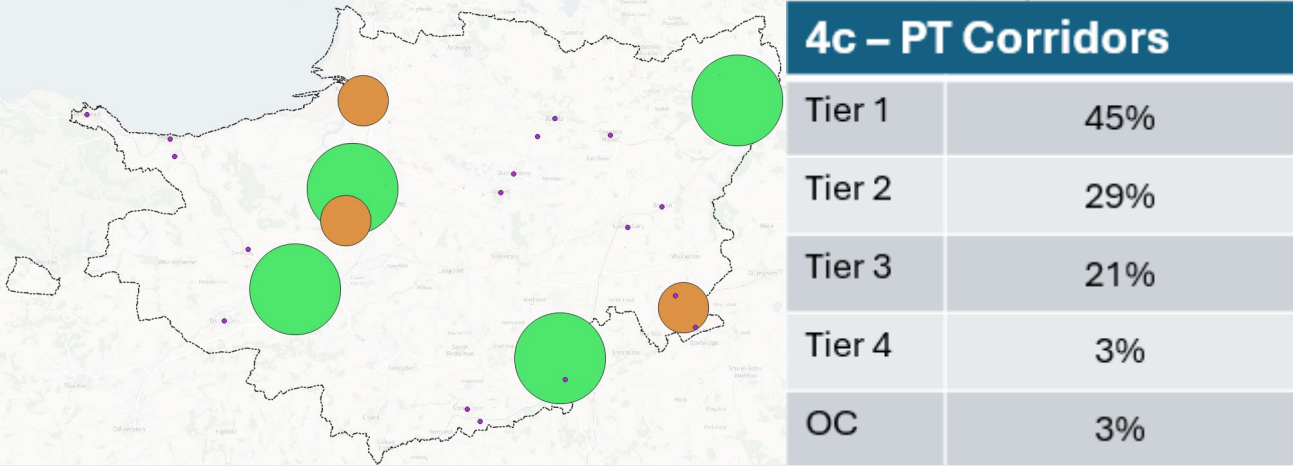
SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4b: Climate Resilience
		<p>The HRA Screening and Scoping Report identifies some potential for contributions to air quality effects at European sites associated with Option 4b, particularly associated with development in the lower tiers of the settlement hierarchy where there are fewer sustainable transport modes and therefore higher potential for emissions. In terms of water quality, Option 4b would result in development within the catchments of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar and the River Axe SAC thereby contributing to phosphate pollution at these sites in the absence of mitigation. Option 4b significantly reduces development in the north of the county in areas of tidal flood risk and therefore recreational disturbance impacts (particularly to the Severn Estuary) are likely to be the lowest of all options. Option 4b is predicted to exert relatively few urbanisation effects given that development in the higher tiers of the settlement hierarchy is prioritised.</p> <p>In terms of local designations, there is potential for minor adverse effects associated with habitat loss and non-physical disturbance in Taunton and around the Tier 3, 4 and open countryside settlements which receive 23% of growth. Option 4b also sees less development directed to Glastonbury; here the urban area itself is not considered to be particularly ecologically sensitive but there is a significant Local Wildlife Site (South Moor) to the south / southwest of the town. Limiting growth in the town is likely to reduce recreational pressures on the site.</p> <p>Development focussed around remaining settlements has potential to deliver on associated LNRS measures and enhance access to nature in those locations. But some settlements would see few enhancements with reduced levels of growth. This may also overburden sensitive areas close to the areas taking more growth. Reasonable levels of development in the countryside may have a detrimental impact upon more sensitive ecological areas and other aspects of LNRS delivery.</p> <p>More generally, flood plains often coincide with ecologically diverse habitats which deliver a wide range of ecosystem services. Therefore Option 4b is considered to have comparatively beneficial impacts in terms of preserving these habitats and associated functions.</p> <p>Overall, although there is considered to be potential for some adverse ecological effects, on balance minor positive effects are predicted particularly in light of comparative reduction in recreational disturbance effects and the ecological benefits of preserving the floodplain.</p>
2: Affordable, accessible &	-	Option 4b would fail to deliver homes where local needs arise. Compared to all other options, Option 4b directs development away from Bridgwater, Highbridge & Burnham and Minehead & Alcombe on account of the associated flood risk. There is significant market and affordable housing need arising from Bridgwater and Highbridge & Burnham

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4b: Climate Resilience
decent housing		<p>which is displaced to other locations to be met in this option. The market may not be able to deliver these volumes in some locations, and so overall delivery would be at higher risk. Opportunities for affordable housing provision in the most deprived communities in Bridgwater, Highbridge &amp; Burnham are also limited in this Option, although opportunities still exist within Taunton and to a greater extent in Yeovil than for other options given that Yeovil would see higher housing growth in Option 4b.</p> <p>The types and size of dwellings to be provided will largely be driven by the size of individual site allocations with larger sites generally providing more opportunity for range of types and sizes of home. Whilst individual site allocations have not yet been selected, it is reasonable to assume that the larger Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements, where the majority of growth is directed in Option 4b, are more likely to have the necessary infrastructure to accommodate larger development sites with positive effects as the housing needs of more groups of people are met. Overall minor adverse effects in terms of housing provision are predicted for Option 4b given the failure to deliver where local needs and demands arise.</p>
3: Accessibility	+/-	<p>Whilst Option 4b still sees the majority of growth directed to Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements which have good accessibility, there is more rural dispersal compared to Options 1b and 2c therefore increasing potential to address issues of rural isolation through provision of services in these rural communities. Option 4b does not, however, make the most of infrastructure in those Tier 1 and Tier 2 communities affected by flood risk, including Bridgwater, Highbridge &amp; Burnham, Glastonbury and Minehead &amp; Alcombe. Overall, mixed effects are predicted but the magnitude of both positive and negative effects are likely to be reduced when compared to Options 1b and 2c.</p>
4: Health & wellbeing	+/-	<p>Flooding and climate resilience are significant sources of anxiety and issues for public health and safety and therefore Option 4b would have a positive impact in this regard. Overall accessibility to health infrastructure is considered to be lower in Option 4b as more development is distributed to the smaller settlements, which on the whole, have a lower accessibility score. Growth in these smaller settlements however, is less likely to expose residents to poor air quality and high levels of noise. Option 4b does not make the most of health infrastructure in those Tier 1 and Tier 2 communities affected by flood risk, including Bridgwater, Highbridge &amp; Burnham, Glastonbury and Minehead &amp; Alcombe and is likely to impact future investment in infrastructure and jobs in these towns. There is also less development in proximity to the most deprived communities in Somerset (as per objective 2) and hence there are fewer opportunities for improving access to facilities for these communities. Mixed effects are predicted overall to reflect the positive effects on overall</p>

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4b: Climate Resilience
		public health and safety but to also reflect the lower accessibility of smaller settlements and the missed opportunities to make use of health infrastructure in the larger towns affected by flood risk.
5: Protect natural resources	+/-	<p>Flooding plays an important role in soil fertility, depositing nutrients which naturally fertilise the land and reduce the need for artificial chemical fertilisers. Generally, avoiding development in the floodplain will have beneficial effects in terms of protecting soil resources. Avoiding the floodplain will also protect wetlands by regulating water levels.</p> <p>More specifically, Option 4b sees more development in the Tier 4 and open countryside settlements than Options 1b and 2c, and therefore there is considered to be potential for losses of BMV and fertile soils. Shepton Mallett, Crewkerne and Cheddar receive more development in Option 4b compared to all other options and therefore there is considered to be greater potential for contamination of drinking water resource given the presence of the source protection zones (2c and 3) in parts of those towns. Taunton, Wellington and Cheddar fall within Drinking Water Protected Areas and so there is some potential for contamination of groundwater resources. There is potential for contamination of the River Tone which runs through Taunton. Development in Yeovil is also significantly increased compared to all other options, and therefore the potential for deterioration of air quality within the AQMA is high. Mixed effects are predicted overall because although localised losses of natural resources are possible, there is a benefit of flooding in terms of soil fertility.</p>
6: Efficient & sustainable use of resources	+	<p>With more development in the Tier 4 and open countryside settlements compared to Options 1b and 2c, there is considered to be slightly more potential for greenfield development although the majority of development is still directed to the largest settlements presenting opportunities for brownfield development. The potential for minerals sterilisation is considered to be very slightly increased compared to Options 1b and 2c, but ultimately effects will be dependent on where sites are allocated compared to deposits of mineral resources. Overall, minor positive effects are predicted as the majority of development is still directed to the higher tier settlements.</p>
7: Minimise carbon emissions	+	<p>Natural floodplains can store large amounts of carbon, and therefore generally avoiding development in the floodplain will minimise carbon emissions associated with land use change. Mixed accessibility effects are predicted for Option 4b, as reported for objective 3, and carbon emissions are likely to increase associated with increased private vehicle use in those small settlements allocated for development. On balance, minor positive effects are predicted for Option 4b in terms of minimising carbon emissions.</p>

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4b: Climate Resilience
8: Adaptation & resilience to climate change	++	Option 4b would have strong positive effects in terms of climate change resilience. By avoiding development in the floodplain and in areas at risk of coastal erosion, the risks to new residents from the effects of climate change are significantly reduced. Floodplains themselves also provide a core part of “nature-based solutions” to climate change, providing space for rivers to expand safely, reducing pressure on engineered flood defences. Reducing development in floodplain therefore will also benefit existing communities, as well as providing economic benefits (see objective 11).
9: Historic environment	-	Potential impacts to heritage assets in Bridgwater, Highbridge & Burnham, Minehead & Alcombe and Glastonbury will be avoided in Option 4b, although this is balanced by increased potential for impact in Yeovil, although assets are spatially very restricted to the centre. There is considered to be increased potential for impacts in Cheddar, much of which is designated for archaeology potential, and in Crewkerne, much of which is designated as a conservation area. Heritage impacts, both direct and indirect through impacts to setting, will be highly location specific. Overall minor adverse effects are predicted for Option 4b.
10: Landscape	-	Option 4b directs development away from Minehead & Alcombe on account of its flood risk, and therefore the potential for adverse landscape effects to the Exmoor National Landscape is significantly reduced for Option 4b. For the other settlements, landscape effects are predicted to be similar to Options 1b and 2c; minor adverse effects are predicted at a strategic scale, acknowledging that landscape impacts will ultimately be determined at a site level.
11: Economy	-	There are broad economic benefits of a climate resilient approach to development, not least reduced mitigation costs. However, Option 4b would have significant adverse economic impacts in the communities Bridgwater, Glastonbury, Highbridge & Burnham and Minehead & Alcombe and development would not make the most of job opportunities in these communities or training opportunities at Bridgwater College. Conversely, Yeovil and Taunton are likely to experience strong economic growth in Option 4b. Development in some smaller settlements will contribute to the vitality and viability of these communities. On balance, adverse economic effects are predicted as the localised economic impacts of such reduced delivery in the larger settlements within the flood zone are considered to outweigh the overall broad economic benefits.

**Table 3.4: Spatial Strategy Option 4c Appraisal**

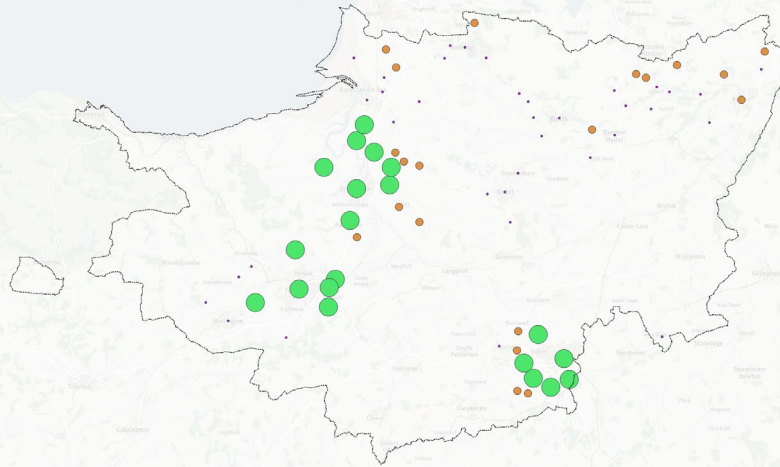
SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4c: Public Transport Corridors												
		<p>This option focusses development along high-frequency public transport corridors, supporting sustainable travel and infrastructure investment.</p> <p><i>To arrive at this option, the accessibility / connectivity of every settlement by public transport was established as part of the Settlement Role and Function Study, utilising the WSP Accessibility Tool. On the basis of these scores, settlements were prioritised into five bands. Each priority band was assigned a percentage of the overall housing growth, with that figure distributed equally amongst settlements in that band.</i></p> <div data-bbox="562 595 1850 1062">  <table border="1" data-bbox="1346 595 1850 1062"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">4c - PT Corridors</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tier 1</td> <td>45%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 2</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 3</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 4</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OC</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	4c - PT Corridors		Tier 1	45%	Tier 2	29%	Tier 3	21%	Tier 4	3%	OC	3%
4c - PT Corridors														
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1: Biodiversity & geodiversity	-	<p>Focussing development to public transport corridors significantly reduces the spread of development between the Tier 2, 3 and 4 settlements, that is to say that fewer settlements within those tiers see development compared to other options. In general terms, reducing the number of settlements across which development is spread is likely to reduce opportunities for minor localised adverse ecological effects.</p> <p>The HRA Screening and Scoping Report considers Option 4c to be the best option for minimising air quality effects to European sites given the focus around public transport corridors. In terms of water quality, Option 4c would result in</p>												

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4c: Public Transport Corridors
		<p>development within the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar catchment but avoids the River Axe SAC catchment thereby minimises contributions to phosphate pollution at this site. Option 4c has a substantial percentage of growth within Frome which is located to the north east of the Plan area close to the Mells Valley SAC and also 8% of growth immediately adjacent to the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar at Highbridge &amp; Burnham increasing potential for recreational disturbance impacts at those sites. There are also a significant number of Local Wildlife Sites around Frome which may experience increased recreational pressures if there is public access. In terms of other local designations, there is potential for minor adverse effects associated with habitat loss and non-physical disturbance in Taunton and around the Tier 3, 4 and open countryside settlements which receive 27% of growth. Development focussed around remaining settlements has potential to deliver on associated LNRS measures and enhance access to nature in those locations. But some settlements would see few enhancements with reduced levels of growth. This may also overburden sensitive areas close to the areas taking more growth. This will likely mean overall limited development in the countryside which may have reduced detrimental impact upon more sensitive ecological areas and other aspects of LNRS delivery. Overall, minor adverse effects are predicted.</p>
2: Affordable, accessible & decent housing	++	<p>The spread of growth in Option 4c would be consistent with the settlement hierarchy with the greatest growth in Tier 1 and 2 settlements, and limited development in rural communities.</p> <p>Option 4c directs the majority of growth to Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements containing the most deprived communities in Somerset. Therefore, Option 4c is considered to have potential to provide affordable housing in these communities, although the extent of impacts will depend on the exact location of the preferred site allocations as well as viability and other policy requirements.</p> <p>The types and size of dwellings to be provided will largely be driven by the size of individual site allocations with larger sites generally providing more opportunity for range of types and sizes of home. Whilst individual site allocations have not yet been selected, it is reasonable to assume that the larger Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements, where the majority of growth is directed in Option 4c, are more likely to have the necessary infrastructure to accommodate larger development sites with positive effects as the housing needs of more groups of people are met. Overall strong positive effects in terms of housing provision are predicted for Option 4c.</p>
3: Accessibility	++	<p>Option 4c inherently scores positively with respect to accessibility as the direction of growth towards public transport corridors provides new residents with good access to the public transport network. The better connected settlements also tend to have greater levels of facilities further reducing the need and distances new residents may travel. Some</p>

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4c: Public Transport Corridors
		rural growth may also enable improvements in services and facilities in rural communities, and provide opportunities to link rural areas and address rural isolation through a corridor approach. Overall strong positive effects are predicted.
4: Health & wellbeing	+	As for objective 3, Option 4c is likely to provide new residents with good access to health infrastructure, including in the most deprived communities in Somerset. High levels of accessibility are also likely to promote opportunities for active travel with associated health benefits. Some rural growth may facilitate improvements in health facilities in rural communities. Development in the larger settlements could expose new residents to high levels of pollution and noise, whilst development in the smaller settlements carries less risk of pollution impacts. Overall minor positive effects are predicted.
5: Protect natural resources	+	Development around the urban fringes of the Tier 1 settlements may result in losses of BMV. However, the land around Frome and Highbridge & Burnham, where significantly more development is directed in Option 4c, is notably of lower agricultural value with fewer opportunities for losses of BMV. The potential for significant contamination of groundwater resources is considered to be limited for Option 4c; development in the north of Frome could present a significant risk of impact given the source protection zone there, as could development in Taunton given the Drinking Water Protected Area. There is potential for contamination of the River Parrett in Bridgwater and the River Tone in Taunton. Development within the Yeovil AQMA could contribute to further deteriorations in air quality in the town. Minor positive effects are predicted overall, because although there is potential for localised adverse effects, development in and around those few identified settlements is considered to carry less risk of loss of natural resources, particularly high value agricultural land.
6: Efficient & sustainable use of resources	+/-	Option 4c allocates more development to Tier 3 settlements, specifically North Petherton and Abbas & Templecombe. The majority of development is still directed to the larger settlements but there will be finite opportunities for brownfield development. Frome and Highbridge & Burnham are largely unconstrained with respect to minerals, but North Petherton and Abbas & Templecombe are much more constrained with much of the surrounding land designated for its mineral resources. Overall mixed effects are predicted.
7: Minimise carbon emissions	++	Directing development to public transport corridors with high service provision has potential to contribute to significant reductions in carbon emissions associated with private vehicle use, but this will also be dependent upon a certain level of services and facilities being available in these settlements as well as proximity to the existing / potential high frequency routes to enable access to public transport in that and other settlements. Larger developments in the higher tier settlements are likely to be better suited to having a direct connection and also have greater potential for district-heating

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4c: Public Transport Corridors
		networks. Opportunities for larger sites are slightly reduced in Option 4c with more rural dispersal. Focussing development around the largest settlements in the county will largely avoid development on peaty soils which serve as important carbon sinks. Overall strong positive effects are predicted for Option 4c in terms of minimising carbon emissions.
8: Adaptation & resilience to climate change	-	Of all the options, Option 4c sees the greatest amount of development directed to Highbridge & Burnham which falls within flood zone 3 and so is at high risk of tidal and fluvial flooding, as well as coastal change. As for the other options, this is also the case for the Tier 1 settlement of Bridgwater. However, Frome, North Petherton and Abbas & Templecombe are at lower risk of flooding, with restricted areas of fluvial flood risk associated with the rivers running through those settlements. Minor adverse effects are predicted overall.
9: Historic environment	-	The majority of the settlements allocated in this option carry risk of direct and indirect effects to heritage assets, particularly if development is located close to the town / village centres. Overall minor adverse effects are predicted, although effects will be highly location specific.
10: Landscape	0	Given the particular focus of development along the main southwest communications corridors and to the better connected settlements, Option 4c is considered to have lower landscape sensitivity overall. The majority of the Tier 2 settlements falling within 2km of a designated landscape see far less growth in Option 4c. Option 4c sees significantly more development in Frome compared to the other spatial options. The town is further than 2km from the Cranborne Chase & West Wilshire Downs National Landscape. Whilst this doesn't discount landscape effects, any effects are less likely to be significant. Overall, given the reduced spread of development, particularly within the Tier 2 settlements, and the focus on public transport corridors, adverse effects are considered to be negligible and much more localised compared to the other options. Negligible / neutral effects are therefore predicted at a strategic scale, acknowledging that landscape impacts will ultimately be determined at a site level.
11: Economy	+	Far fewer settlements, particularly in the lower tiers of the settlement hierarchy, would see growth in Option 4c with negative effects in terms of the vitality and viability of these towns and villages. Conversely, development in proximity to public transport corridors will promote access to town centres / retail and employment / training opportunities with positive economic effects. Therefore, on balance, minor positive effects are predicted.

**Table 3.5: Spatial Strategy Option 4d Appraisal**

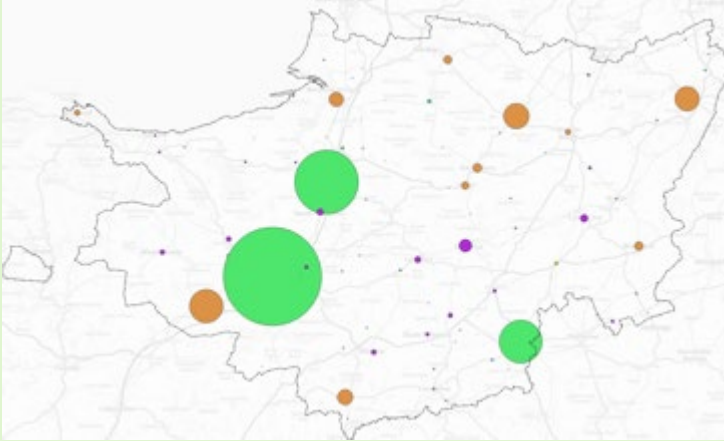
SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4d: Job Opportunity Focus												
		<p>This option maximises opportunities for growth close to higher density clusters of existing and proposed jobs. To arrive at this option, the Business Register Employment Survey (BRES) data was used to calculate the total number of jobs accessible within 5km of each settlement. Settlements were then split into five bands based on the number of jobs they potentially had access to. Each band was then ascribed a reasonable percentage of the overall growth, split evenly across settlements irrespective of tier.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <table border="1" data-bbox="1346 555 1850 1023"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="background-color: #004a7c; color: white;">4d – Jobs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tier 1</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 2</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 3</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 4</td> <td>42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OC</td> <td>32%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	4d – Jobs		Tier 1	9%	Tier 2	4%	Tier 3	12%	Tier 4	42%	OC	32%
4d – Jobs														
Tier 1	9%													
Tier 2	4%													
Tier 3	12%													
Tier 4	42%													
OC	32%													
1: Biodiversity & geodiversity	--	<p>Option 4d is the most rurally dispersed of all the options and would see a significantly greater percentage of growth directed to the smaller settlements in Somerset, with 86% of growth directed to tier 3, 4 and open countryside settlements. The HRA Screening and Scoping Report considers Option 4d to be one of the better performing options for minimising air quality effects to European sites as it minimises employment commuting requirements. In terms of water quality, Option 4d would result in development within the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar catchment but avoids the River Axe SAC catchment thereby minimises contributions to phosphate pollution at this site. There is significant development in the north of the county associated with settlements in the lower tiers of the hierarchy and</p>												

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4d: Job Opportunity Focus
		<p>therefore there is significant potential for contributions to recreational disturbance effects. Urbanisation effects are predicted to be significantly higher as development is focussed to these lower tier settlements.</p> <p>This pattern of development also carries greater potential of more localised adverse ecological effects to locally designated biodiversity sites, as developments are more likely to be located close to sensitive habitats and protected species. Development focussed around remaining settlements has the potential to deliver on associated LNRS measures and enhance access to nature in those locations. But some settlements would see few enhancements with reduced levels of growth. This may also overburden sensitive areas close to the areas taking more growth. Overall, whilst the option suggests greater levels of development in the countryside, this is generally directed to specific rural settlements in close proximity to major urban areas with significant numbers of jobs. Wider areas of the open countryside would still see limited to no growth attributed to them, and as such, the option may have reduced detrimental impact upon more sensitive ecological areas and other aspects of LNRS delivery, although proximity of some rural settlements close to Bridgwater jobs (e.g. Huntspill and Middlezoy) could have a particular impact on nature recovery. Overall, strong adverse effects are predicted.</p>
2: Affordable, accessible & decent housing	+/-	<p>The spread of growth in Option 4d would be inconsistent with the settlement hierarchy with more than limited development in rural communities where they are in close proximity to high numbers of jobs.</p> <p>Growth is much more dispersed amongst the smaller settlements in Option 4d, compared to all other options. Development in proximity to the most deprived communities within the Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements is likely to be much more limited. Development would also likely would come forward on a large number of smaller sites, which may limit the range of types and sizes of dwelling delivered compared to the other options. Therefore, mixed effects are predicted in terms of housing provision for Option 4d.</p>
3: Accessibility	+/-	<p>Directing growth to the smaller settlements with lower overall accessibility means that new residents are less likely to have access to services and facilities and there will be fewer opportunities for sustainable patterns of transport to develop. That said, the accessibility of job opportunities provided in this option is likely to mitigate the distances new residents need to travel to work and provide opportunities for active travel to work. The scale of rural growth may potentially enable improvements in provision of services and facilities which may benefit existing communities. This may also help provide opportunities to link rural areas and address rural isolation in some villages. Overall mixed effects are predicted.</p>

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4d: Job Opportunity Focus
4: Health & wellbeing	+/-	Smaller settlements are less likely to provide new residents with access to existing health infrastructure. However, the accessibility of job opportunities provided in this option is likely to provide opportunities for active travel to work with associated health benefits. Option 4d does not make the most of health infrastructure in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements. That said, the scale of growth in smaller settlements may enable improvements in provision of services which will also benefit existing communities. Overall, mixed effects are predicted.
5: Protect natural resources	-	With significantly more development directed to Tier 4 and open countryside settlements, there is considered to be significant potential for loss of high value agricultural land and potential contamination of groundwater resources particularly in the north of the county. There is potential for contamination of river tributaries around Taunton and Bridgwater in particular. Significantly reduced development in Yeovil compared to the other options will, however, reduce the potential for deteriorations in air quality in the town. But overall minor adverse effects are predicted given the greater potential for losses across multiple resources.
6: Efficient & sustainable use of resources	--	With significantly more development directed to Tier 4 and open countryside settlements, there is considered to be significantly greater potential for greenfield development, and fewer opportunities for the re-use of developed land. This carries greater potential for mineral sterilisation. Overall, strong adverse effects are predicted.
7: Minimise carbon emissions	+/-	New residents will have good access to employment opportunities, including by bike, minimising carbon emissions associated with commuting to work. However, the overall lower accessibility scores of smaller settlements would likely increase reliance on private vehicles for other day to day activities. Smaller settlements are also less likely to have the infrastructure to accommodate larger developments, which carry greater opportunities for implementing low carbon technologies. Mixed effects are predicted.
8: Adaptation & resilience to climate change	-	Many of the smaller settlements which would see growth are at risk of tidal and / or fluvial flooding, particularly in and around Bridgwater and Highbridge and therefore development here would be more susceptible to the effects of climate change. Those in the east, including Frome, and southeast around Yeovil are considered to be less susceptible. Whilst climate change adaptation and resilience will largely be site specific and dependent on how an individual development comes forward, at a high-level, Option 4d is considered to have the potential for minor adverse effects as the amount of development in the flood plain is considered to be less than some other options.
9: Historic environment	-	The majority of the settlements across the settlement hierarchy where growth is directed in Option 4d, include sensitive heritage assets. Therefore, depending on those sites for allocation, there is considered to be potential for adverse

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 4d: Job Opportunity Focus
		heritage effects, both direct and indirect. Minor adverse effects are predicted, although effects will be highly location specific.
10: Landscape	-	Option 4b sees significantly more growth in the settlements lower down the settlement hierarchy which are considered to have higher landscape sensitivity. Whilst not all development will fall within 2km of a designated landscape, there is considered to be greater potential for adverse landscape effects associated with tranquillity and dark skies. Conversely, little growth is directed to settlements in the south and west of the county where the majority of the designated landscapes are found. On balance, minor adverse effects are predicted at a strategic level, acknowledging that landscape impacts will ultimately be determined at a site level.
11: Economy	+	Aligning housing growth with job opportunities recognises the strategic economic roles of areas in Somerset with significant numbers of jobs, and provides accessible job opportunities for new residents. However, many of the Tier 2 settlements including Chard, Crewkerne, Minehead and Wincanton which play more locally important economic roles receive very little growth as overall job numbers are smaller. Minor positive effects are predicted overall.

**Table 3.6: Spatial Strategy Option 6 Appraisal**

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 6: Real World Delivery												
		<p>This option reflects actual delivery trends and market behaviour, offering a pragmatic baseline scenario. To arrive at this option, housing monitoring data was consulted to understand how housing has been delivered in Somerset over the last 10 years. The overall plan growth was then distributed across settlements using the same pattern of delivery.</p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="1303 517 1733 959"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">6 – Real world delivery</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tier 1</td> <td>38%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 2</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 3</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 4</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OC</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	6 – Real world delivery		Tier 1	38%	Tier 2	30%	Tier 3	16%	Tier 4	11%	OC	5%
6 – Real world delivery														
Tier 1	38%													
Tier 2	30%													
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OC	5%													
1: Biodiversity & geodiversity	-	<p>Option 6 offers the most balanced spread of development across the settlement hierarchy. The HRA Screening and Scoping Report identifies some potential for contributions to air quality effects at European sites associated with Option 6, although development in higher tier settlements will be able to maximise use of sustainable transport modes limiting emissions. In terms of water quality, Option 6 would result in development within the catchments of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar and the River Axe SAC thereby contributing to phosphate pollution at these sites in the absence of mitigation. Option 6 has potential for some recreational impact where development is directed to the north of the county. Urbanisation effects are also likely where development is directed to the tier 3, 4 and open countryside settlements. There is considered to be greater potential for more localised adverse ecological effects, as developments in smaller settlements are more likely to be located close to sensitive habitats and protected species. 32% of growth is</p>												

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 6: Real World Delivery
		directed to tier 3, 4 and open countryside settlements. Development focussed around all settlements has potential to deliver on associated LNRS measures and enhance access to nature for most communities to a greater or lesser extent. This will likely mean quite significant levels of development in the countryside which may have a detrimental impact upon more sensitive ecological areas and other aspects of LNRS delivery. Minor adverse effects are predicted overall.
2: Affordable, accessible & decent housing	+	<p>The spread of growth in Option 6 would not be consistent with the settlement hierarchy with more than limited development in rural communities.</p> <p>Option 6 still directs the majority of growth to Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements containing the most deprived communities in Somerset, but to a lesser extent with more rural dispersal. Therefore, Option 6 is considered to have potential to provide affordable housing in these communities, although the extent of impacts will depend on the exact location of the preferred site allocations, as well as viability and other policy requirements.</p> <p>The types and size of dwellings to be provided will largely be driven by the size of individual site allocations with larger sites providing more opportunity for range of types and sizes of home. Whilst individual site allocations have not yet been selected, it is reasonable to assume that the larger Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements, where the majority of growth is directed in Option 6, are more likely to have the necessary infrastructure to accommodate larger development sites with positive effects as the housing needs of more groups of people are met. Overall positive effects in terms of housing provision are predicted for Option 6, but of a lesser magnitude than Option 1b, 2c and 4b on account of higher rural dispersal.</p>
3: Accessibility	+/-	Option 6 directs growth to a wider range of settlements, with an increased requirement across all rural settlements. The smaller settlements have lower levels of overall accessibility as local services will be less accessible to new residents overall, and they will be less well connected to the sustainable transport network. The scale of growth in smaller settlements is unlikely to be sufficient to significantly improve provision of services to benefit existing communities. Mixed effects are predicted overall.
4: Health & wellbeing	+/-	As for objective 3, overall accessibility to health infrastructure will be mixed with better access in the larger settlements and more restricted access in the smaller villages. The scale of growth in smaller settlements is unlikely to be sufficient to significantly improve provision of services to benefit existing communities. Mixed effects are predicted overall.

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 6: Real World Delivery
5: Protect natural resources	+/-	Higher levels of rural dispersal are considered likely to increase adverse impacts to natural resources. There is potential for losses of BMV agricultural land both around the fringes of the Tier 1 settlements and around the smaller settlements. Potential contamination of groundwater resources could occur as development is proposed for settlements into which source protection zones and Drinking Water Protected Areas encroach. There is potential for contamination of the River Tone in Taunton and the River Parrett in Bridgwater, and associated tributaries. Compared to all other options, except Option 4d, Yeovil would see a lower level of growth, which would minimise potential deterioration in air pollutant levels within the AQMA. Mixed effects are predicted.
6: Efficient & sustainable use of resources	-	With more rural dispersal, there is considered to be greater potential for greenfield development, and fewer opportunities for the re-use of developed land. This carries greater potential for mineral sterilisation. Overall, adverse effects are predicted, but of a lower magnitude than for Option 4d.
7: Minimise carbon emissions	-	Accessibility is predicted to be mixed for Option 6, and therefore development is not considered to make full use of existing public transport infrastructure in reducing carbon emissions associated with private vehicle use. There will be some development in smaller settlements which are less likely to have the infrastructure to accommodate larger developments, which carry greater opportunities for implementing low carbon technologies. Minor adverse effects are predicted overall.
8: Adaptation & resilience to climate change	-	Many of the settlements receiving growth will be vulnerable to tidal and / or fluvial flooding to varying degrees, although Bridgwater, Highbridge & Burnham and Minehead, which are particularly sensitive, receive a smaller percentage of growth compared to some of the other options. Minor adverse effects are predicted.
9: Historic environment	-	The majority of the settlements across the settlement hierarchy where growth is directed in Option 6, include sensitive heritage assets. Therefore, depending on those sites for allocation, there is considered to be potential for adverse heritage effects, both direct and indirect. Minor adverse effects are predicted, although effects will be highly location specific.
10: Landscape	-	Landscape effects associated with Option 6 are considered to be similar to Options 1b and 2c with Taunton and a number of Tier 2 settlements within 2km of designated landscape receiving significant growth. Minor adverse effects are predicted at a strategic scale, acknowledging that landscape impacts will ultimately be determined at a site level.
11: Economy	+/-	With development spread widely across the settlement hierarchy, there may be insufficient growth to stimulate regeneration and revitalisation of larger towns, although development in the smaller settlements may contribute to

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Score	Spatial Strategy Option 6: Real World Delivery
		maintaining the viability and vitality of these settlements. Access to employment and training opportunities is predicted to be mixed. Mixed effects are predicted overall.

**Table 3.7: Spatial Strategy Options Score Summary**

	Option 1b	Option 2c	Option 4b	Option 4c	Option 4d	Option 6
1: Biodiversity & geodiversity	-	-	+	-	--	-
2: Affordable, accessible & decent housing	++	++	-	++	+/-	+
3: Accessibility	++	++	+/-	++	+/-	+/-
4: Health & wellbeing	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	+/-
5: Protect natural resources	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	-	+/-
6: Efficient & sustainable use of resources	++	++	+	+/-	--	-
7: Minimise carbon emissions	++	++	+	++	+/-	-
8: Adaptation & resilience to climate change	--	--	++	-	-	-
9: Historic environment	-	-	-	-	-	-
10: Landscape	-	-	-	0	-	-
11: Economy	+	+	-	+	+	+/-

## 4 Summary and Next Steps

- 4.1 The six spatial options attract a range of scores across the eleven sustainability objectives. Option 1b (Combined Roll-Forward) and Option 2c (Tiered Percentage Growth) result in a similar distribution of growth across the county, with the Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements receiving the majority of housing growth. The two options therefore attract the same scores across all objectives given the strategic nature of the assessment, with minor differences reflected in the supporting commentary. Together with Option 4c, these options also attract the greatest number of strong positive scores largely driven by the high accessibility scores which carry knock on benefits in terms of health and minimising carbon emissions associated with private vehicle use. Option 4d (Job Opportunity Focus), which confers the most rurally dispersed pattern of development, scores the most poorly with adverse or mixed effects predicted across the majority of the SA/SEA objectives. This is driven by relatively poor accessibility of smaller settlements, and greater potential for the loss of natural resources, including biodiversity. Of all the options, Option 6 (Real World Delivery) spreads growth most evenly across the settlement tiers. The option also performs poorly, with mixed or adverse scores across the majority of the SA/SEA objectives. This perhaps demonstrates the need for a directed spatial strategy to deliver strong positive sustainability effects, but which also carries the risk of strong adverse effects against different conflicting objectives.
- 4.2 It is worth noting that the objectives concerning biodiversity, historic environment and landscape score adversely for almost all options. These impacts are highly location specific and therefore strategic level assessment is less able to reflect the nuances between options. This illustrates how high level assessment is not able to differentiate between some aspects of the options because they are so dependent on specific directions of growth or specific site options. Subsequent rounds of SA/SEA focussed in on individual settlements and / or sites will drill into these matters further.
- 4.3 Health is a cross cutting theme in the SA/SEA, which includes Health Impact Assessment (HIA). Therefore, whilst there is a dedicated health and wellbeing objective, many of the wider determinants of health are reflected in other objectives. For example under objective 2, the ability of options to provide affordable housing and housing for a range of groups, including specialist housing, will be an indicator of positive health outcomes. Similarly, under objectives 4 and 5, the ability of options to minimise risk of exposure to poor air quality and high levels of noise, and minimise risk of worsening existing air quality will also be indicators of positive health outcomes.
- 4.4 These assessment findings will inform further discussions and workshops with the Council to further iterate the spatial options and ultimately arrived at a preferred spatial strategy. It is envisaged that the preferred spatial strategy, together with a series of other parameters, will drive the selection of individual sites to be considered for allocation and which will be subjected to individual site SA/SEA.

# Appendix I:

# SEA/SA Framework

SA/SEA Objective No.	SA/SEA Objective	Decision Aiding Questions	Relevant Assessment Regime
1	Protect, restore and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity in Somerset	Will the policy or proposal safeguard internationally, nationally and locally protected biodiversity sites or species?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal increase habitat connectivity and enhance biodiversity, including supporting the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Is the policy or proposal likely to give rise to significant adverse effects on wetlands or water dependent habitats, including through phosphate pollution or altered hydrology, having regard to catchment context?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Could the policy or proposal affect existing habitats known to support pollinators, particularly wildflower-rich grasslands?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal increase the tree canopy?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal avoid the introduction and spread of non-native species?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal minimise the risk of increasing vector borne diseases particularly from ticks and mosquitoes as temperatures rise?	SA/SEA, HIA
2	Provide affordable, accessible and decent housing in Somerset to meet local needs	Will the policy or proposal help to meet identified housing need in Somerset?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposals provide a mix of dwelling sizes and types to support the local housing market?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal provide affordable housing, particularly in the most deprived communities?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal provide housing for a range of groups, including specialist housing for older people, and key workers?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal deliver accessible housing?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal deliver accommodation for gypsies and travellers?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal enable high quality, healthy homes?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
3	Promote accessibility and create well-integrated communities	Will the policy or proposal enable active and sustainable modes of transport?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal provide convenient access to local services and facilities by a range of transport modes, particularly in rural areas?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal provide new, accessible community facilities?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal address issues of rural isolation?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
4	Actively promote health and wellbeing for residents across Somerset, including creation of "liveable" and healthy places	Will the policy or proposal protect and / or enhance valued, existing open / play spaces?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal provide new accessible and safe open / play space and / or appropriate access to existing open / play space by a range of transport modes?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal facilitate participation in sports through provision or enhancement of sports facilities, particularly in the most deprived areas of Somerset?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal enable sufficient access to accessible natural green space?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal provide good accessibility to local food retail, particularly in the most deprived areas in Somerset?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal enhance space for local community food growing/selling infrastructure?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal support good access to healthcare facilities?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal contribute to the creation of a distinctive public realm and a strong sense of local identity and community?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal contribute to the regeneration of the built environment in urban or rural places, including Somerset's market towns?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA

SA/SEA Objective No.	SA/SEA Objective	Decision Aiding Questions	Relevant Assessment Regime
		Will the policy or proposal provide safe and navigable public realm for vulnerable users?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal minimise risk of exposure to poor air quality and high levels of noise and light pollution, particularly for vulnerable groups?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal minimise risks to public health and safety including by avoiding areas of greater risk associated with HSE constraints and emergency planning?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
5	Protect Somerset's natural resources, including soils and agricultural land, water resources and clean air	Does the policy or proposal have the potential to adversely impact soil resources?	SA/SEA
		Will the policy or proposal protect best and most versatile agricultural land?	SA/SEA
		Will the proposal be adequately served by sewerage and water infrastructure?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal protect rivers, wetlands and avoid adverse water quality effects, having regard to catchment context?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal minimise risk of adverse effects to drinking water sources?	SA/SEA, HIA
		and	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal minimise risk of worsening existing air pollution?	SA/SEA, HIA
6	Support efficient and sustainable use of natural resources	Will the policy or proposal enhance the current housing stock or facilitate the development of committed sites?	SA/SEA
		Will the policy or proposal encourage the development of brownfield land and / or the reuse and appropriate adaptation and retrofit of historic buildings?	SA/SEA
		Will the policy or proposal maximise potential opportunities for the remediation of contaminated land?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal minimise use of new materials and prioritise reuse and recycling of materials?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal safeguard mineral resources and minimise risk of sterilisation?	SA/SEA
		Will the policy or proposal support high quality delivery at appropriately high density?	SA/SEA
7	Minimise and contribute to radical reductions in carbon emissions and achieving carbon neutrality in Somerset at an accelerated rate	Will the policy or proposal support electrification of energy demand and reduce the need for the use of fossil fuels?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal reduce transport emissions by reducing dependency on private vehicles, and facilitating use of active travel, public transport and EVs?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal increase digital connectivity thereby reducing the need to travel?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal increase renewable and low carbon energy generation as well as energy storage?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal support a low carbon and circular economy?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal contribute to improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty, particularly in rural and the most deprived areas?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
8	Promote adaptation and resilience to the effects of climate change	Will the policy or proposal promote nature based solutions and Sustainable Drainage Systems?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal minimise vulnerability to extreme weather, sea level rise and coastal erosion?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the proposal minimise the risk of exposing new and existing residents to flooding from fluvial, surface water, groundwater, tidal and reservoir sources?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal reduce the risk of overheating?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal conserve and enhance green and blue infrastructure?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal result in additional carbon capture in trees, grassland, wetlands or by other means?	SA/SEA, HIA
9	Conserve and enhance local distinctiveness, the historic environment including heritage assets in and around Somerset	Will the policy or proposal conserve and / or enhance local heritage and distinctiveness?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal conserve and / or enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets, their settings and the wider historic environment?	SA/SEA, HIA

SA/SEA Objective No.	SA/SEA Objective	Decision Aiding Questions	Relevant Assessment Regime
		at risk?	SA/SEA
		Will the policy or proposal support and / or enhance local cultural activity?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal increase the social benefit, including health and well-being, derived from the historic environment?	SA/SEA, HIA
10	Protect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of valued landscapes in and around Somerset	Will the policy or proposal protect and / or enhance the character and distinctiveness of designated landscapes?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Will the policy or proposal protect and / or enhance the character and distinctiveness of undesignated landscapes?	SA/SEA, HIA
		Does the policy or proposal carry potential to facilitate access to valued landscapes and countryside?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
11	Promote a vibrant local economy in Somerset	Will the policy or proposal provide land for economic growth?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal support community economic vibrancy?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal improve the vitality and viability of town centres?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal promote accessible employment opportunities for Somerset's residents?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA
		Will the policy or proposal provide opportunities for improving skills and training, particularly in rural areas and the most deprived areas of Somerset?	SA/SEA, HIA, EqIA