

10.6 SETTLEMENT INSETS – DUNSTER MARSH

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Character (LC/3) Coastal Zone (CO/1)
Landscape Character Area:	Blue Anchor Bay ¹ (LC/3)

Location and Character

- 10.6.1 The village of Dunster is made up of two distinct parts. The area south of the A39 is within Exmoor National Park² and subject to planning policies set out in the Exmoor National Park Local Plan.³ The area north of the A39 is outside the National Park and within the Plan area. This part of Dunster lying to the seaward side of the main road is known as The Marsh. It is said that The Marsh was once the Avill Estuary and used as a sea-port,⁴ however it has since silted up and activities have moved to Minehead and Watchet.
- 10.6.2 Despite being divided by the A39 both parts of the village complement each other and are linked by a pedestrian subway. Dunster Marsh lies on high quality Grade 2 agricultural land with average quality Grade 3 land to the northeast and south and poorer quality Grade 4 land to the north-west.⁵

Settlement Policy

- 10.6.3 Dunster Marsh is identified as a Village in the Plan for planning purposes (Policy SP/1). Accordingly, a development limit boundary is drawn around the settlement.

Population and Housing

- 10.6.4 The resident population of Dunster Parish rose from 846 in the 1980's⁶ to 854 in 2001⁷ with new development at Bridges Mead and Haven Close in Dunster Marsh.

¹ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

² H.M. Government; National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; HMSO; 1949

³ Exmoor National Park Authority; Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2001 – 2011 (Adopted 2005); Exmoor National Park Authority; 2006

⁴ Somerset County Council; Somerset Historic Environment Record: Record 16620 – Possible Medieval Harbour, The Hawn, Dunster Beach; Somerset County Council; 2003

⁵ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁶ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3 (*The Census does not usually disaggregate data below Ward and/or Parish level, therefore the population data available refers to both Dunster village and Dunster Marsh*).

⁷ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set) (*The Census does not usually disaggregate data below Ward and/or Parish level, therefore the population data available refers to both Dunster village and Dunster Marsh*).

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The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals for development will be assessed against all the relevant policies

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- 10.6.5 Because of its designation as a Heritage Settlement⁸ and a Conservation Area,⁹ residential development in Dunster and in the National Park¹⁰ has, and will continue to be, limited to infilling.
- 10.6.6 Dunster Marsh is outside the conservation area, since it is principally comprised of relatively modern development, and not subject to the same level of control.
- 10.6.7 The village has the potential to provide for a measured level of additional housing development during the plan period. Appropriate sites may provide a suitable alternative to further growth on the southern edge of Minehead, but at a close enough distance of 1.5 miles from Minehead Enterprise Park to make journey times for shopping and services relatively convenient.
- 10.6.8 In addition, alternative transport modes to the car already serve the village in terms of cycleway and bus service along the A39 route into Minehead and a seasonal railway service from Dunster Station on the West Somerset Railway. The new housing will support provision of additional local services and facilities which presently do not exist, and are referred to below.

POLICY DM/1: Mixed-Use Development

Residential development at Higher Marsh Farm, Dunster Marsh, will be permitted subject to the following requirements:

- (i) **The design and layout of the development will observe the principles in Policy BD/2 and will provide for:-**
- (a) Public house/village shop or other appropriate community facility;**
 - (b) a number of live/work units as a proportion of the open market housing secured by a Section 106 Planning Obligation;**
 - (c) a recreation field and picnic area on Land South of Marsh Lane; and,**
- (ii) **The provision of related highway improvements including the provision of a footpath and cycle link along Marsh Lane to its junction with the A39 road.**

In considering the wider community and infrastructure requirements for the development of Site 7 regard will be paid to Policies H/5, PO/1 and T/14.

⁸ Somerset County Council; *Somerset Structure Plan: Report of Survey*; Somerset County Council; 1975.

⁹ Somerset County Council; *Dunster Conservation Area (as amended)*; Somerset County Council; 1973.

¹⁰ H.M. Government; *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949*; *op. cit.*

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Employment

- 10.6.9 Apart from the former Loxhole Saw-Mill site, employment opportunities are concentrated in various forms of services, trades and shops in Dunster village. Minehead Enterprise Park is considered to be the most appropriate location for business development and is a short distance from Dunster Marsh.

Shops and Services

- 10.6.10 Limited facilities are provided in the Marsh Street area including a mobile library service (fortnightly). However, Dunster village has a post office, various shops, visitor centre, St Georges Church, first school, doctors surgery, village garden, public toilets, two public car parks, sports field, hotels, public houses and restaurants. Dunster Marsh shares the local services provided within Dunster village.
- 10.6.11 As part of the development proposals for Higher Marsh Farm the Local Planning Authority will seek the conversion of the existing farmhouse or traditional buildings associated with it into a public house/village shop or will provide some other such appropriate community facility as a community hall. In addition, contributions for new recreation facilities will be sought in association with the housing scheme, which include the provision of a local recreation field and the provision of a local picnic area.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.6.12 Within the Marsh Street area a few buildings originate before and during the 18th century, more date back to the 19th century, but the majority have been built in the post war period. The older buildings front onto Marsh Street and are clustered about Higher Marsh Farm at the junction with Marsh Lane and Station Road.
- 10.6.13 In 1874 the West Somerset Railway was extended to Minehead from Watchet.¹¹ The line crossed The Marsh and a station was built.¹² The railway has had mixed fortunes and is presently operated as a private concern by the West Somerset Railway Association who run steam hauled trains in addition to diesel during the summer months. Historically the train carried holiday-makers, many of these stayed in the chalets on Dunster Beach, 'mini homes from home' which bring nostalgic memories of idyllic holidays. These are still in use today and should be protected in their traditional form.

¹¹ Minehead Railway Company; The Minehead Railway Act 1871; H.M.S.O.; 1871.

¹² Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Carhampton, Cutcombe, Dunster, Luccombe, Luxborough, Minehead Without, Timbersombe, Treborough, Withycombe and Wootton Courtney) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1985.

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- 10.6.14 The extensive areas of surrounding woodland and groups of specimen trees are an integral part of the landscape. Much of this agricultural land and woodland is in the ownership of the Crown Estate and therefore exempted from Tree Preservation Orders,¹³ but attempts will be made, where necessary, to retain as many as possible. Any development proposals will however be assessed against the provisions of Policy LC/3 and impact on the Blue Anchor Bay Landscape Character Area.¹⁴

¹³ H.M. Government; Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Chapter 8 – Part VIII (as amended and associated secondary legislation); HMSO; 1990; ISBN 0 10 540890 5

¹⁴ WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; op. cit.

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Proposed Modification No 6(i)
Amend Development Limits

DUNSTER MARSH
INSET MAP 6



Scale 1:2500

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Proposed Modification No 6(iv)

Delete Proposed Playing Field (Policy DM/1) - Station Road/WSR

DUNSTER MARSH

INSET MAP 6

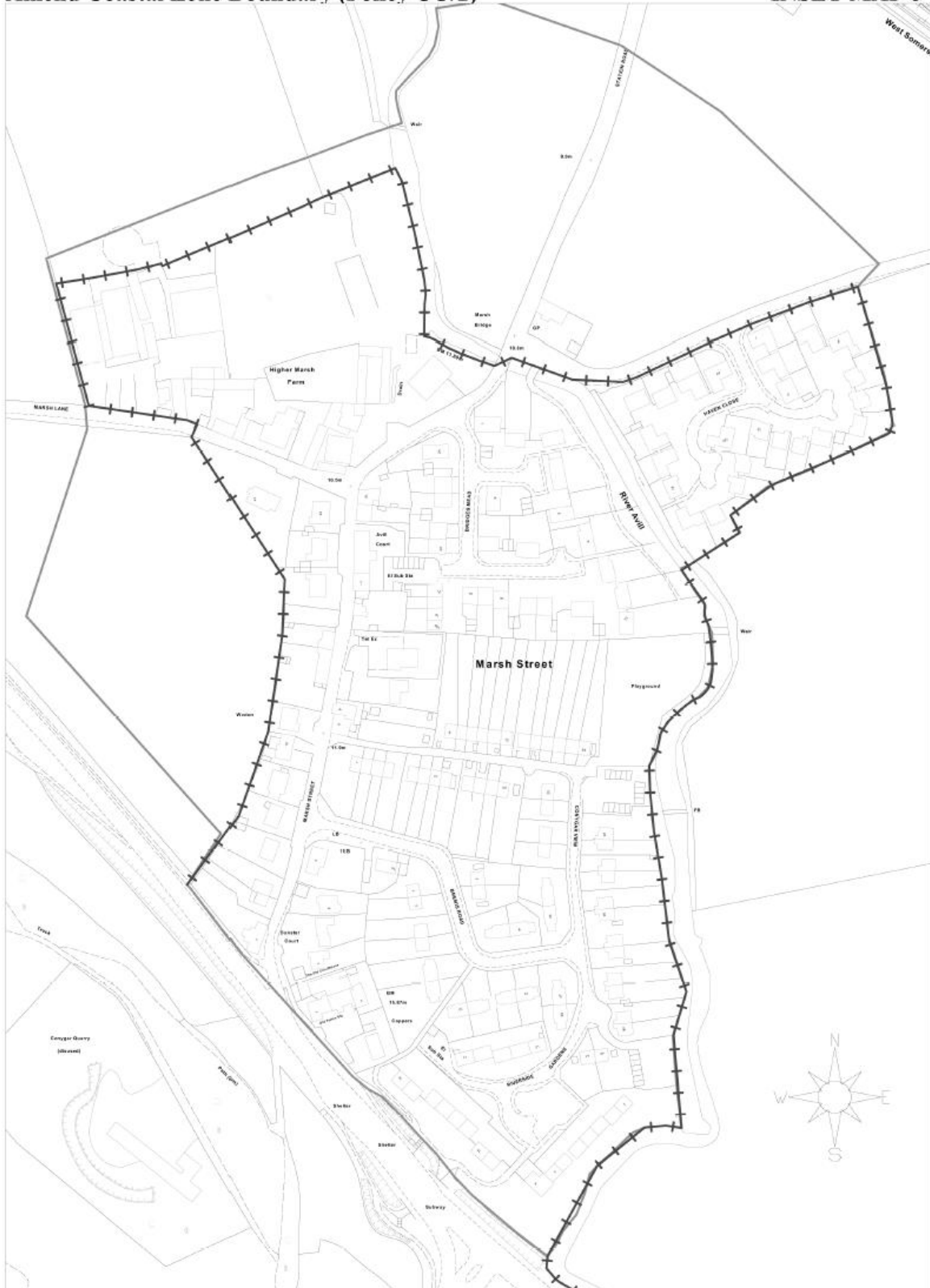


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Proposed Modification No 6(v)
Amend Coastal Zone Boundary (Policy CO/2)

DUNSTER MARSH
INSET MAP 6



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Proposed Modification No 6(vi)

DUNSTER MARSH

Add Proposed Playing Field (Policy DM/1) - Land South of Marsh Lane INSET MAP 6



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